

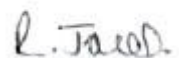
HMP GARTREE

Families & Significant Others

Strategy and Information

June 2025

Governor: Rachel Jones



Review Date: June 2026

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HMPPS Statement of Purpose

His Majesty's prison service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and help them lead law abiding and useful lives in custody and after release.

Equality Statement

At HMP Gartree we respect and value the diverse population of the individuals who live, work and visit the prison.

We recognise that differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexuality and age are strengths and that treating people with decency is right.

Our Families and Significant Others Strategy aims to ensure all prisoner with protected characteristics have fair and equal access to opportunities to engage with both internal and external support.

Improper discrimination, harassment and insulting words or behaviour on any of the above strands is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated from any individual, department or process.

HMP Gartree recognises its obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
2. Provide equal opportunities.
3. Foster good relations.

Introduction

HMP Gartree recognises the importance of a prisoner's family. These relationships are a key factor in preventing re-offending and reducing the likelihood of inter-generational crime.

In partnership with Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust), we support prisoners to develop meaningful and constructive relationships with their family or significant others. We ensure that all prisoners are aware of the available avenues to assist them in maintaining appropriate relationships with their families which will allow them to develop meaningful and constructive relationships prior to release.

We recognise that not all relationships between a prisoner and his family are positive and that some family members may sometimes be the direct or indirect victims of a prisoner's offence or may have acted as an enabler contributing to a prisoner's offending. Where this is identified, staff and key workers will work closely with the Offender Management Hub and partner agencies to ensure any public protection arrangements are maintained to protect victims.

We are committed to ensuring HMP Gartree is a place of safety and reform, recognising the need to provide those in custody with a stable environment. We aim to provide hope and opportunities to change their behaviour and turn away from a life of crime. We believe relationships with families can play a key role in achieving this goal.

We aim to offer better quality and more meaningful services for the prisoners at HMP Gartree, their families and significant others.

Acting Governing Governor	Rachel Martindale
Family Services Lead* (HMPPS)	Aidan McCabe
Family Services Champion* (HMPPS)	Vicky Bowen
Family Engagement Manager (Pact)	Hannah Woods
Family Engagement Worker (Pact)	Shamima Jogi
Family Support Worker (Pact)	Gianna Boiardi
Family Forum Coordinator (Pact)	Elizabeth Crook

(*Annex C)

Lord Farmer's Report

In September 2016, Lord Farmer was commissioned by the Government to investigate how connecting prisoners with their families can improve offender wellbeing, assist in keeping the public safe and reduce reoffending.

The report, *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, in partnership with the membership charity Clinks, was published on 10th August 2017 and made 19 Recommendations that put family and significant others at the heart of prison reform. It supports efforts to improve the relationships between prisoners and their families or significant others and the services that are provided.

Lord Farmer recommended the development of performance measures that will hold Governors to account for positive family work outcomes. These measures will be used to demonstrate how the prison and family services support the enhancement of relationships in preparation for prisoner's release and positive reintegration into society.



Study by Lord Michael Farmer calls family relationships “the golden thread” to help reduce reoffending.

Research shows prisoners who receive visits from a family member are 39 per cent less likely to reoffend.

Lord Farmer's report referred to a 'local family offer' recommending that all establishments deliver and develop provision in the following areas and that these are reflected in their local strategies which should be at minimum offer:

- Visitor Centre/Visitor Reception Services
- Staffing structure to ensure family work represents as an operational priority
- Extended Visits – to enable supportive relationships to flourish
- Family Learning – to equip prisoners to maintain and improve relationships
- “Gateway” communications system – to demonstrate how the establishment have responsive communication systems in place for families

HMP Gartree and our partners are committed in driving forward the family and significant others' agenda, incorporating the Lord Farmer review.

Family Services Provisions Provided by PACT

PACT is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families. We provide caring and life changing services at every stage of the criminal justice process: in court, in prison, on release, and in the community.



Our vision is of a society that understands justice as a process of restoration and healing, that uses prisons sparingly and as places of learning and rehabilitation, and that values the innate dignity and worth of every human being. We work for the common good of society, taking a public health-based approach. We work at the intersection of criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health and social care.

You can find our volunteers and staff in courts, prisons, probation services, and in communities across England and Wales. We are a diverse, inclusive, modern, and collaborative charity. We build effective partnerships and sustainable solutions based on our well-established understanding of the systems in which we work, and on our historic values and ethos developed through our 120+ years of service delivery.

Pact's Families and Visitors' Centre at HMP Gartree provides specialist trained staff, voluntary workers, and resources to ensure that the centre offers families, friends, and official visitors a warm welcome, and the support needed to ensure that their visit is as positive an experience as it can possibly be. As in all our services, Pact offers an inclusive service, with staff who are culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of prisoners and visitors

Our staff are on hand to offer emotional support to all visitors, as well as practical information about issues including travel and transport, explaining prison procedures in advance of entering the prison to go through to the visit's hall. We provide additional support and reassurance to first time visitors, who are likely to be very anxious, including an especially warm welcome, information packs, and personalised support. We may also be able to accompany particularly nervous visitors through the security checks on their first visit.

We provide a welcoming environment for prisoners' families and friends and ensure that visitors feel they can ask for any advice and information they need before and after their visit. As well as providing a friendly visiting space, a key outcome of this service is to link families with support in the community so that they can address issues outside of the prison including finance, debt, housing, mental health, domestic violence, childcare, parenting and more.

Our staff team also act as a vital support point for visitor's post- visit where the visit has not gone well, or they have concerns about the prisoner. Our staff can then liaise with Safer Custody and other teams within the prison where concerns over prisoner safety are shared.

Pact works closely alongside the prison to provide staff and resources to ensure that visitors have access to all the information they need in accessible formats. We also

provide toys and activities for children to make the visiting process less distressing for them and we can also organise family days and child-centred extended visits.

What does Pact do?

We build stronger families and safer communities.
We reduce the risk of harm to prisoners, their children & families.
We create solutions.
We inform policy and decision makers and promote evidence-based practice.

Understanding Family Needs

To tailor the delivery of family practice at HMP Gartree and ensure its effectiveness we need to understand the needs of the population. To achieve this, we will conduct regular information gathering exercises from which we can identify key areas.



To improve this, we will include.

- Annual establishment needs analysis which will be shared with Pact to help inform the service provision and ensure alignment with need
- 2 visitor surveys per year
- Forums with the families and/or significant others of prisoners held in our care
- Forums with prisoners held at HMP Gartree
- OMIC Key worker and POM feedback sessions linked to sentence plans
- HMIP, MPQL and OSAG visits for independent audits of our delivery

Supporting Family Needs

A family member or significant other being in custody can often cause significant upset to families, particularly children and dependents. As a result, it is vital that we support the family unit as soon as possible.

Providing key information and support at the point of arrival for both prisoner's and their families is critical to maintaining family ties effected or displaced by custody.



HMP Gartree will achieve this via:

- Providing positive and practical key information to families through documentation and via communication with Pact such as:
 - Methods of communication
 - A mailbox for families
 - Transport and travel information
 - Location and geographical information available through the Pact support workers based in the visits centre
 - Visiting times and process
- Supporting families who are experiencing difficulties with either emotional support or practical advice
- A 24hr safer prison phone line 01858 426886 where families can raise concern about loved ones and receive contact from staff in return to address these concerns and fears.
- Staff trained to support positive family relationships and recognise negative ones
- Screening prisoners for issues during the reception and first night process. Where issues are identified they are either resolved (where possible) or signposted to the appropriate agencies who can help.
- Providing effective and practical information to new arrivals to support and facilitate their communication needs with their families and significant others including:
 - PIN phone process and communications compact
 - Prisons mail system
 - E-mail a prisoner
 - Prison Voicemail
 - Visiting times and process
 - Contact from the Pact family service in the form of an information booklet that provides details of the services that they can offer. This information is also available on wing notice boards.
- Providing effective and practical information to new arrivals to help them adjust to HMP Gartree and the environment.
- Providing peer-led advice and support from the point of arrival.
- Ensuring that where safe to do so contact is made with families or significant others on arrival into custody via the facilitation of a phone call, or any needed phone calls.
- A focus from keyworkers on family contact.



Substance Misuse

Working with families is key to HMP Gartree's approach to tackling substance misuse. We will engage with families, friends and peers to help our men develop networks that will support them to avoid substance misuse.

HMP Gartree's substance misuse strategy aims to tackle the demand for drugs alongside restricting supply and supporting recovery. Reducing the demand for drugs relies upon prisoners understanding the consequences of drug use, both within the prison and the wider risks to themselves and their families, whilst offering opportunities that provide purpose and direction.

Lord Farmer's review of the importance of prisoners' family ties, highlighted links between family relationships and the use of illicit drugs. The role of families and fellow prisoners is acknowledged and understood at HMP Gartree and our attempts to support men to make and commit to good decisions and use positive influences is vital. Positive family contact can be a key supportive factor in drug recovery.

HMP Gartree acknowledges that drug misuse can also affect families and friends, as they try to support prisoners and can often find themselves under pressure to get into debt or to convey drugs into prisons. HMP Gartree will draw on a range of resources and provide education and awareness campaigns to help our men and their families and significant others make good decisions, including careful guidance about the risks of emerging harmful substances.

Developing and Maintaining Positive Relationships

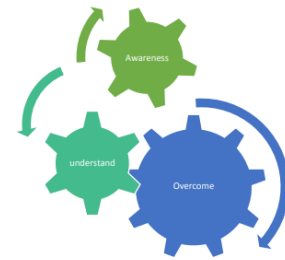
- **Developing Positive Relationships**

The development of family relationships will be a key element of sentence planning in both activity and targets set by Prison Offender Managers (POMS). This will also be supported and driven weekly by key workers under OMIC implementation.

POMs and Key workers will identify relationship issues where they arise and offer practical solutions and support to empower prisoners to take ownership of and improve relations with their families and significant others. They can draw on several progressive activities and advice/support services in this area where there is a need, such as:

- Financial and debt services or education
- Story Book Dad
- Translation services
- Religious and emotional support via chaplaincy
- Health or substance misuse interventions and treatment
- Legal phone calls or Rule 39 legal correspondence

- Psychology
- Health advisors



- **Breaking Down Barriers**

The creation, development and maintenance of effective, positive, and meaningful family relationships can often encounter difficult barriers or total breakdown for men coming into a custodial environment. There could be several reasons why this is happening so therefore it is critical that as an establishment we are aware of when this occurs at the earliest opportunity, the reasons behind it and where possible find a way to overcome these issues.

- **Being Aware**

Being aware of relationship issues or breakdown can be difficult and often prisoners are unwilling to disclose this information. Sometimes men are unaware that any breakdown is happening or has taken place. As such, the relationships, rapport building, and trust developed by key workers and POM's is vital to ensuring that disclosure is achieved.

Key workers will track and evaluate family situations during their regular supervision sessions under OMIC and where indicators are found to suggest family issues, explore this with the prisoner. They will check for prisoners who appear to be socially isolated (not receiving visits or making phone calls) which could be a sign of relationship breakdown and make relevant POMS and Pact aware, as well as offering support and where needed referring for mediation for prisoners with difficult family relationships.

- **Understanding the Issue**

Once a key worker has identified that a relationship breakdown is occurring, has occurred, or established current barriers it will be their responsibility to explore fully with the men and gain understanding and viewpoints. It is important for the key worker to explore issues and feelings as this can often be misunderstood due to a lack of key information or subject to underdeveloped thinking skills.

Once the key worker has a full understanding of the situation, they are required to consider it in consultation with the public protection team and POM, so that they are fully aware of any legislative requirements in place to protect victims or official requests for non-contact.

If no communication barriers exist, then the Key worker or POM will liaise with Pact who may contact the family member to ascertain their viewpoint. This allows for a full 360 view of the current situation which he can discuss with the POM to establish any effective solutions. This could be a phone call or assisting a prisoner to reach out via email or letters.

- **Overcoming Issues**

There are several issues that prisoners could experience affecting their ability to maintain effective family relationship and contact. As such there cannot be a single fix applied to resolve these. Each issue, or collection of issues require a bespoke solution to be applied by the Key worker, this then being further supported by Pact to overcome or improve the current issues.

Primary to this is ensuring that the prisoner (where possible) is fully aware of all the reasons that are contributing to his difficulties and is supported to develop an effective plan in overcoming these with the support of his key worker.

Examples of issues experienced by prisoners include:

- Non-contact requests by partners or family members
- Social stigma of certain offences and families' reactions to these
- Victims within the family
- Domestic violence
- Ability to visit effective by financial circumstances
- Relationship or marriage breakdown
- Cultural views



Care Leavers

A Care Leaver is someone who has previously spent time in the care of the Local Authority. Eligibility for Local Authority services depends on when and how long someone was in care. We sometimes also use the term care experienced people.

- **What do we know?**

Transition to adulthood is a difficult time for many young people. It can be especially so for young adults who have been in care. Often, they are without emotional, financial, and personal support from parents and other family.

Compared to the general population care leavers are:

- less likely to be in education, employment, or training - over a third of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment or training, although, with support, many achieve success in education and training in later life.
- more likely to be attempting to live independently - some are unable to remain in their placements beyond the age of 18. They are therefore likely to experience compressed and accelerated transitions to independence.
- more likely to have a criminal conviction and may have experienced unnecessary criminalisation. Care leavers are estimated to represent between 24% and 27% of the adult prison population. This is despite less than 1% of under 18s entering local authority care each year.

Young adults in the criminal justice system who are care leavers may need more support to help their transition to adulthood. They may also need help understanding differences between youth and adult justice systems.

Care leavers are a vulnerable group. We need to think about how we can minimise the impact of their experiences whilst in our custody. Inconsistency is not helpful, alongside potential trust issues. Due to this we may need to work harder to ensure we facilitate opportunities to develop or strengthen relationships

- **What this means for our strategy:**

- The appointment of a Care Leaver Lead and champions.
- Listen to our Care Leavers – consider setting up a support group.
- Consider providing Care Leaver awareness training for staff.
- Develop links with Local Authorities.
- Send representatives to a Regional Care Leavers forum if there is one in our area.
- Get involved with our Local Authorities Corporate Parenting Group.
- Consider Care Leavers as a protected characteristic – ensure our policies do not disadvantage them.
- Involve organisations who have expertise with Care Leavers e.g. Pact, SOVA, Care Leaver Association, Coram Voice.

- **Personal Advisors**

- Eligible care leavers up to their 21st Birthday will have a Personal Advisor from the Local Authority who were responsible for them when they were in care. From April 2018 the support of a personal advisor is available for those who want it until their 25th birthday.
- Personal Advisors take on the role of a ‘corporate parent’. This means, in simple terms, that they should carry out as many of the roles that they can that a parent would. They cannot do this alone, and we need to work with Local Authorities to support them in this role.
- Personal advisors can offer support by maintaining contact, writing a pathway plan, financial support and supporting Probation Offender Managers through the sentence planning process.
- There is a requirement for them to visit their care leaver every 8 weeks
- Local Authority Personal Advisors for the care experienced can choose to book a legal or domestic appointment, when visiting our Young Adult population.

- Eligible care leavers will have a Pathway Plan which is very similar to a Sentence Plan. It will highlight areas of assistance and will be used to record progression and achievements made, similar to a Progression Plan.
- **What this means for our strategy**
 - As 'corporate parent' it is essential the Personal Advisor's details should be obtained and recorded on DPS.
 - Developing relationships between the prison and the PA often helps to support and manage care leavers through custody and prepare them for release, so look at processes to ensure these relationships develop (often with Key worker, Prison Offender Manager, or community Offender Manager).
 - Although they are professional, they also take on the role of 'parent'. This should be considered when family members are invited to be involved in prison activities for example ACCT reviews, post programme reviews, celebration events.
 - They may have known the young for a long time and may be a source of support and information.

- **Visits**

Care Leavers may not have visits from family members for several reasons:

- Their Personal Advisor is required to visit every 8 weeks, this
- Care leavers may not have anyone other than their PA visit them.
- Because of this they may be socially isolated and subjected to victimisation.

What this means for our strategy:

- Often the only means for Personal Advisors to visit is via Legal or Professional Visits. Chances are you won't even be aware they are visiting. Feedback around these visits suggest that sometimes the care leaver will not attend as often we don't tell them who is visiting, and they think it's the police so refuse to attend.
- Both PAs and care leavers tell us that their preference would be to meet on a social or domestic visit – it may be the only visit the young person has and as such the only chance of a 'normal' visit where they can be in a more relaxed setting.

- Sometimes a joint visit in OMU with the PA and the OS is a good option – for example to discuss their sentence/Pathway Plan or for release planning.
- Sometimes the PA may be the only person who can bring the care leavers younger siblings to visit. We may want to think about a different setting if there are sensitivities around this meeting for example the first time they have met for some time, or if their sibling is being adopted.
- Best practice would be to offer a range of options depending on the circumstances and be aware of the obstacles and try to find ways of overcoming them for example, the PA may need to visit in different capacity at different times so some flexibility is needed.
- Consider how volunteer schemes can be used to provide visitors to those who don't have them.
- Consider how pen pal schemes, email a prisoner, prisoner voice mail, video conferencing could be used to improve outcomes for care leavers.
- Ask for a Pathway Plan (with Care Leavers consent) which may provide helpful background information such as relationships, next of kin, and any relationships with family members which we could support in strengthening.
- Ensure regular feedback is provided to PA.
- **Family**
 - Care Leavers may not have a traditional family as we know it and there may be some important, supportive relationships with people who are not immediate family or indeed related to them at all.
 - They may still be in contact with their birth parents and have a relationship with them.
- **What this means for our strategy:**
 - Consider each person's individual circumstances when making decisions for example, visits to dying relatives, funeral applications, etc.
 - An aunt or grandparents for example, may have been the only stable relationship for someone in care even if they were not 'loco parentis'. Even long-term family friends may have been that only constant. Their Personal Advisor will be able to advise.

- Acknowledge the family they still have and encourage/facilitate those links where possible and appropriate under the guidance of the Local Authority.
- Accept they may want to reconnect with their family, and this may be an emotional time.
- Their Personal Advisor may be their only family.
- Think about how we can create 'safe proxy family support'. This could include peers, buddies, prison visitors.

Young Adults

HMP Gartree is committed to meeting the needs of our diverse population, including our young adult (YA) cohort. As such the family day criteria was adjusted to increase participation from young adults, a specific family day for young adults was held and we continue to look at ways to contribute to the YA Strategy via the children and family's pathway.

Foreign Nationals

With the support of the Foreign National Officer and our Offender Management unit, all efforts will be made to support those with family who reside overseas. This may include a foreign national PIN, increased prison video access and opportunity to have block visits if family travel to this country.

ISP and IPP Prisoners

There are two types of ISPS in prison, those serving Life Sentences (ISP) and those serving IPP sentences. In custody both groups are managed similarly, with both requiring assessments via OASys and an Individuals Sentence Plan. The IPP sentence was abolished in December in 2012 but not retrospectively, which means that those serving these sentences will continue to do so in custody until released by the parole board.

Due to some of the complex behavioural issues faced by many ISP and IPP prisoners, the difficulties settling into their sentences and the ability to access Offending Behaviour courses and PD pathways, they may have to serve beyond their minimum tariff. Prisoners who receive an indeterminate sentence will need close support, particularly during the early stages of custody. As with other prisoners, newly sentenced ISP prisoners present a higher risk of suicide or self-harm

- **What this means for our strategy:**

- Nominate a staff and prisoner IPP 'Lead' through which communications, advice and activities can be channelled.
- Staff and prisoner IPP Leads to ensure all IPP prisoners newly arrived in the prison have an introductory conversation, covering how the prison can support their efforts to make progress in their sentence.
- Staff and prisoner IPP Leads to meet regularly, to discuss any issues and actions.
- Produce and deliver an Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (Life and IPP) Strategy and Action Plan, to improve the prison's ability to support the progression of prisoners.
- Provide appropriate support to Lifers and IPP prisoners in the lead up to a parole hearing including, for example, mock parole boards.
- All parole board decisions to be delivered and discussed, in person by a POM (or Key Worker if not available), especially where immediate support is required, following a negative decision. Staff to ensure follow up engagement and support is provided, to reduce likelihood of the set-back affecting future progression prospects.
- Key Workers and Offender Supervisors (or POMs) to focus on preparing individuals for new environments, where Lifers/IPP prisoners have secured a move to open conditions, or a release decision.
- Engage/include families and significant others in the support and progression of IPP prisoners and Lifers.
- Hold at least two IPP forums/community days per annum, ensuring attendance from members of staff from functions affecting progression, and prisoners' families where possible.
- Establish advice and support groups for IPP prisoners and appropriate prisoner mentors for individuals to access.
- All staff working with IPP prisoners to have awareness briefings on the challenges experienced by IPP prisoners and on current available initiatives to support progression.
- Prison to collate and share data and information on the prison's IPP population to the SMT regularly, for wider dissemination by all SMT members.

Public Protection

HMP Gartree recognises that public protection and child safeguarding is at the forefront of our FaSO strategy and is the responsibility of all staff regardless of grade or role. Training is provided on induction by the PACT team, and ongoing work to manage risk is a collaborative approach from the wider prison. Information sharing between OMU, safety, security, keyworkers and the operation team is vital.

This approach enables prisoners' risk to be identified. Often this risk will be to children or named adults (who may be from the prisoner's family). Those who pose the most significant risk will be managed through the MAPPA process.

Safeguarding of children is a priority and depending on the level of risk a prisoner presents, will determine the level of contact they can have with children whilst at HMP Gartree. The management of these restrictions can involve mail and telephone PIN monitoring and monitoring of contact with children during visits.

Any staff that have concerns about safeguarding during a visit will:

- Share with the visits supervisor/manager and PACT.
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviours appropriately.
- Arrange for them to be spoken to in private and with sensitivity.
- Seek authority for the visit to continue in closed conditions or be terminated.
- Report concerns to OMU, Security, Duty Manager and children services.

Further information can be found in the Public Protection framework and via:

[NSPCC Helpline](#) | [NSPCC Learning](#)

[Report child abuse - GOV.UK](#)

Visiting Experience

HMP Gartree has a Families and Visitors' Centre that is located opposite the prison's main reception for the public.

The Visits centre and PACT team offer:

- A 'meet and greet' service for domestic visitors by Pact staff.
- An initial 'booking-in' service by Pact staff, which includes checking prison generated Visit Orders against the visitor present, checking the visitor's appropriate identification and logging the visitor's attendance onto the system with a finger or thumb prints scan as part of an initial security check.
- Initial advice from Pact staff about any possible dress code issues.
- The ability to purchase refreshment tokens through Pact staff, which are used to obtain a selection of hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, hot food, crisps and confectionary in the main Visits Hall.



- You can only purchase tokens using cash and there is no ATM facility at Gartree. The token purchase limit is £50.00. Any refreshments left over after the visit can be retained by you as a visitor. Prisoners are not allowed to take any of the excess refreshments back to their cells.
- Toilet and baby change facilities with disabled access.
- A children's play area with craft activities that are overseen by Pact play workers.
- Information, advice and guidance.
- Lockable lockers which are free of charge to use.
- Data collection
- Signposting services i.e., housing, finances

- **Domestic visit times**

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday: 2pm to 4pm.*

*Please note the visiting times include entry into the prison and the search process. We endeavour to ensure everyone gets a minimum of 60 minutes in the Visits Hall.

The Families and Visitors' Centre is open for booking-in from 1pm and you must be booked in by 2:45pm or you may be refused entry into the main Visits Hall.

- **Booking a visit**

To visit someone in Gartree you must:

- be on that person's visitor list
- book your visit in advance
- have the required ID with you when you go

At least one visitor must be aged 18 or older at every visit.

Please see Annex A for further information.

The number of visits a prisoner can have a month depends on their privilege level.

To book you will need:

- the name and date of birth of the person you would like to visit.
- their prison number.
- dates of births for all the visitors coming with you, including children.
- the dates and times of the requested visits.

You can book your visit **online**: www.gov.uk/prison-visits

You can book your visit by **email**: socialvisits.gartree@justice.gov.uk

At HMP Gartree you can also book your visit by **telephone** by calling **01858 426727**. The booking line is open on Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 16:00.

Prisoners can also book their own visits by speaking to a wing officer and completing the application forms.

- **Getting to HMP Gartree**

[Find Gartree on a map](#)

The closest railway station is Market Harborough which is about 4 miles from the prison. From the station, you can get a bus (except on Sundays) straight to the prison or you can get a taxi.

To plan your journey by public transport:

- use [National Rail Enquiries](#)
- use [Traveline for local bus times](#)



There is limited parking at the prison including spaces for Blue Badge holders

- **Help with the cost of your visit**

If you get certain benefits or have an NHS health certificate, you might be able to [get help with the costs of your visit](#). This is known as the Assisted Prison Scheme and may include:

- travel to Gartree
- somewhere to stay overnight
- meals.

- **Entering Gartree**

All visitors, aged 16 or older must prove their identity before entering the prison. [Read the list of acceptable forms of ID when visiting a prison](#).

Local policy states that **all** children must also provide an acceptable form of ID. If you cannot provide a birth certificate, then you can contact the Pact team in advance to discuss alternatives.

All visitors, including children, will be searched as per local policy to ensure everyone's safety and establishment security. This will include a dog search, metal detector archway and rub down search. All staff are trained to carry these tasks out whilst maintaining a high standard of professionalism, and respecting decency and individual needs.

- **Dress code policy**

HMP Gartree has a strict dress code policy for visitors. The purpose of the policy is to ensure safety and decency during visits; it sets out to safeguard an appropriate family environment, free from trafficking and other inappropriate behaviour. Please adhere to the following:

- No low-cut tops that reveal cleavage and no unbuttoned shirts. Your shoulders and back must also be covered
- No midriff must show, tops/shirts must be long enough to cover the waist of your trousers/shorts/skirts
- No see-through clothing
- No clothing that displays offensive or inappropriate pictures and/or writing.
- No sports team clothing, i.e. football shirts
- No hooded clothing or clothing with full length zips. Quarter zips are permitted.
- No coats, jackets (including suit jackets/blazers) or cardigans. If you are wearing an inappropriate top underneath your coat, jacket or cardigan and this is all you have to wear, your visit will be refused. Suitable lockers are available in the Families and Visitors' Centre
- There must be no rips or tears in your clothing, i.e. ripped jeans
- No shorts, skirts or dresses that are shorter than knee length and expose any part of the leg above the knee
- No headwear unless for religious or medical purposes; this may be subject to searching in private by staff considered appropriate for the task. If the headwear is for a medical purpose, then proof must be shown at initial
- Footwear must not have a heel height of more than 2 inches and no stiletto heels can be worn
- No scarves or gloves. Suitable lockers are available in the Families and Visitors' Centre
- No watch of any kind. Suitable lockers are available in the Families and Visitors' Centre
- No non-prescription glasses and/or sunglasses can be worn. Suitable lockers are available in the Families and Visitors'

This dress code policy is specific to HMP Gartree and may differ from the dress code at our prison establishments. The above list is not exhaustive.

- **Personal belongings:**

There are strict controls on what you can take into Gartree. You will have to leave almost all the things you have with you including bags, keys, phones and cameras, in a locker in the Families and Visitors' Centre. The lockers are free to use. You may take your locker key into the prison along with your proof of ID, which is shown again at the prison reception.

Pushchairs and car seats brought into the Families and Visitors' Centre cannot be taken into the prison. There is a highchair available for use in the Visits Hall.

If you are visiting with a young child, you may also bring in the following items:

- dummies
- baby wipes
- nappies
- milk powder
- prescribed medication.

Please note that some of these items may be bagged and tagged in the Families and Visitors' Centre prior to entry into the prison. You will need to leave items for your young child at the main desk in the Visits Hall.

There are items that are prohibited from entering the prison. For a list of prohibited items please see Annex B for further information.

- **During the visit**

If you are a first-time visitor, you will be informed of the visiting process by the local Pact team in the Families and Visitors' Centre before the start of your visit.

There are rules and regulations in place to ensure that everyone has a safe, secure and decent experience. You will be told the rules by an officer at the start of your visit. Please ensure these are adhered to so that visit restrictions are not put in place.

- **Family Days**

In addition to regular family and friends' visits, HMP Gartree aims to hold 12 Family Days a year, the majority of which are for prisoners with young relatives under the age of 18. Individual circumstances are considered. We aim to meet the needs of our population and schedule around school holidays. Priority groups such as Young Adults have their own day, with adjusted criteria. These are also linked via themes to key cultural events throughout the year.

The Family Days are organised and run by the PACT staff and allow prisoners to have a more interactive visit with their younger visitors, through play and craft activities.

The Family Days must be applied for by the prisoner and pre-approved before the visitors confirm their attendance. Criteria will no longer be directly linked to adjudication history or incentive level but will be based on assessment of risk that will consider conduct in visits, involvement in the illicit economy and safeguarding concerns. More details on the Family Days and the booking procedure can be obtained by contacting the Pact team directly at gartree@prisonadvice.org.uk

- **All for One Days**

Pact provides activity days for prisoners that do not receive any visits. It is an opportunity for these prisoners to come together in the Visits Hall to socialise and participate in fun activities. Whilst also meeting up with all areas that can provide ongoing support and may be able to assist in regaining family contact. Those present include teams from Safety, Chaplaincy, Offender Management and Psychology/Programmes.

Keep in Touch with Someone at Gartree

There are several ways you can keep in touch with someone during their time at HMP Gartree:

- **Secure video calls**

To have a secure video call with someone in this prison you need to:

- Download the [Prison Video app](#)
- Create an account
- Register all visitors
- Add the prisoner to your contact list.



To book a secure video call the prisoner must apply to our booking team, you will then be notified on the app.

Video calls are available during visit days at:

- 14:15pm to 15:00pm
- 15:15pm to 16:00pm

[Read more about how it works](#)

- **Phone calls**

Prisoners have phones in their cells and can make calls whenever they wish to whilst in their cell.

Phones do not accept incoming calls so they will always have to call you. They must buy phone credits to do this.

They can phone anyone named on their list of friends and family. This list is checked by security when they first arrive so it may take a few days before they are able to call.

Officers may listen to phone calls as a way of preventing crime and helping keep people safe.

If a prisoner does not use their visiting orders for 6 months, they may apply to exchange these for phone credit.

- **Email**



You can send emails to someone in Gartree using the [Email a Prisoner service](#).

You might also be able to attach photos and receive replies, depending on the rules at Gartree.

- **Letters**



You can write at any time.

Include the person's name and prisoner number on the envelope. If you do not know the prisoner number, use his date of birth instead.

All post, apart from legal letters, will be opened and checked by officers.

- **Send in money**

You can use the free and fast [online service to send money to someone in prison](#).

You can no longer send money by bank transfer, cheque, postal order or send cash by post.

If you cannot use the online service, you may be able to [apply for an exemption](#) - for example if you:

- are unable to use a computer, a smart phone or the internet
- do not have a debit card.

This exemption would allow you to send money by post.

- **Gifts and parcels**

The only items that you can bring into the prison for a prisoner are books. The books will be collected from you in the search area and given to the prisoner after they have been checked by security.

Family and friends of prisoners are also permitted to send books directly to their loved ones, or can order books from approved retailers, which can source and send the books on to prisoners.

Gartree does not accept clothing parcels into the establishment for the general population or allow families to purchase items from our suppliers to be sent here. Enhanced 2 prisoners may apply for a parcel internally.

However, additional access to private cash is available on birthdays, first 28 days after arrival and upon gaining Enhanced 2 status.

Prisoners are given a list of items that they can buy from approved suppliers and must order themselves.

- **Official Prison Visitors (OPV)**



People in our care who do not have anyone who is able to visit can request to have a volunteer prison visitor called an 'Official Prison Visitor (OPV)' who will visit and provide support. This service is offered through the Chaplaincy department.

Life at Gartree

Gartree is committed to providing a safe, decent and educational environment where men can learn new skills to help them on release. It is focussed on reducing reoffending and promoting a rehabilitative culture.

Security and safeguarding

Every prisoner at Gartree has a right to feel safe. The staff are responsible for their safeguarding and welfare at all times.

For further information about what to do when you are worried or concerned about someone in prison [visit the Prisoners' Families helpline website](#).

Arrival and first night

When someone first arrives at Gartree, they will get to speak to a trained member of staff who will check how they're feeling and ask about any immediate health and wellbeing needs. They will also be seen by a clinical healthcare professional.

They will get an information pack and usually be issued with any property that arrived with them.

After the reception process, they will be moved to the induction unit where they can take a shower and make phone calls.

Induction

Each prisoner who arrives at Gartree gets an induction that lasts two weeks. This will cater for any individual needs including:

- health and wellbeing, including mental and sexual health
- any substance misuse issues, including drugs and alcohol
- personal development in custody and on release, including skills, education and training
- other support (sometimes called 'interventions'), such as managing difficult emotions

They will be shown the library and gym. Everyone also finds out about Gartree's therapeutic community, prison rules, fire safety, and how things like calls and visits work.

Education and work

All programmes and services at Gartree are designed to help prisoners adapt their behaviour and lower their risk of reoffending. There is support for those with learning disabilities, help with thinking skills, reducing violence and maintaining healthy relationships.

Gartree has a range of workshops that include textiles, gardening, laundry and bike repair. Some offer qualifications, whilst all provide engagement in purposeful activity.

[Milton Keynes College](#) delivers a range of courses, starting with literacy and numeracy. Other courses include art, cookery, IT, barbering and construction skills. Further education opportunities are offered through distance learning and the Open University.



Organisations Gartree works with

Leicestershire Libraries provide the library facility at Gartree. All areas promote our commitment to the reading strategy. There is a programme of craft sessions, wellbeing days and speakers along with the books.

The Shannon Trust helps prisoners at Gartree develop their reading skills, build confidence and progress to educational qualifications

Asda provides crafts for our family days; Mother's Union provides gifts at Christmas and Prison Reader Group donates children's books.

We have links with local Education and Social Service authorities.

Governance and Management of the Strategy

To ensure that the "family" remains the focus of our work towards the rehabilitation of our prisoners at HMP Gartree, the commitments listed in the strategy will be monitored through the following processes:

- Quarterly Meetings with the Families and Significant others Pathway lead and the contracted provider (PACT). This meeting is used to evaluate data, and survey/forum feedback. It also looks at the ongoing FaSO strategy considering all performance and audit requirements.
- Performance submissions by the Head of Operations in monthly SMT reports and quarterly SAR submissions.
- HMIP expectations and action plan.
- Rehabilitative Culture Committee meetings and action plan.
- Reducing Reoffending & Drug Strategy meetings.

Measuring our success in developing the Children's and Families pathway

- Prisoner & Family Forums/Surveys
- Prisoner Consultative Committee
- IMB reports
- HMIP (His Majesty Inspectors of Prisons)
- Prisoner MQPL (measuring the quality of prison life)
- Family and significant others scoring measure return (yearly)

Achievements in 2024/25

- Delivery of a full family day calendar, including events for those on specialist wings, with neurodiverse needs and those who do not receive visits.
- Increased Family and Significant others scoring measure, taking us to a high performing Level 4.
- Positive IMB feedback.
- Review of clothing policy for prisoners and visitors.
- Increase in prison video time from 30 to 45 minutes.
- A procedurally just approach to improving the conduct of prisoners during visits, resulting in a safe, secure and decent experience for all.
- Continued support from local companies who provide books and gifts for family days.
- Engagement with local authorities during education and social services forums.
- All family Forum actions resolved which included:
 - Improvements to refreshments on offer with introduction of hot snacks and packaged sandwiches.
 - Availability of parking.
 - Family day photos available on the day.
 - Improved entry process, timelier without compromising security risks.
 - Onsite/online information updated to ensure accuracy

Aims for 2025/26

- Deliver an increased amount of family day events with an enhanced experience for all. Linking in cultural events throughout the year.
- Involve our priority cohorts that include IPP prisoners, young adults and those with individual needs.
- Ensure focus groups and surveys capture the needs of our prisoners and visitors.
- Continue to deliver and develop days for those that do not receive visits.
- Increase the opportunities for prison video contact, thus meeting the needs of our population.
- Develop opportunities for families to participate in celebratory events such as programme completion, education achievements and success on the Acorn wing.
- Increase staff awareness and provide training for staff regarding PACT services, public protection and safeguarding issues.
- To continue to integrate the Families and Significant Others into a collaborative approach with teams in safety, chaplaincy, offender management and reducing reoffending.
- Increase prisoner awareness of family support services via the induction process and key work sessions.
- To develop the wider stakeholder engagement and involvement in the Families and Significant Others pathway.
- Increase the delivery of structured 1:1 sessions with prisoners by our PACT engagement worker.
- Continue to promote the reading strategy.

Available Help & Support

You can speak to PACT directly on:

Telephone: 01858 461134 or 01858 466614

Or by emailing: gartree@prisonadvice.org.uk

Safer Custody at Risk hotline: 01858 426886

Prisoners' Families Helpline: 0808 808 2003

Emergency Line: 01858 426600

Annex A

All visitors to prisons in England and Wales, other than accompanied children under the age of 16, whether visiting for social, or official purposes, are required to prove their identity before entry.

This list defines the accepted forms of ID when visiting a prison in England and Wales.

Visitors under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult, who must adhere to the ID requirement set out above. The accompanying adult has responsibility for the child, supporting the child's relationship with the prisoner, and for giving assurances of the child's identity.

You may use any one form of ID from [List A](#).

If you are unable to do this, you can use one document from [List B](#) and one form of ID from [List C](#).

If you are unable to produce any forms of ID from these lists, you may still be able to [apply under exceptional circumstances](#).

You are likely to be turned away from the prison if you are unable to produce any of the required ID documents at the time of your visit, or if you have not made arrangements with the prison, prior to your visit.1. **List A**

- passports
- identity cards from an EU or European Economic Area (EEA) country
- UK photocard driving licences
- EU or EEA driving licences
- NI Electoral identity cards
- a US passport card
- a proof of age card recognised under PASS with a unique reference number (This includes the Citizen ID card)
- an armed forces identity card
- a UK biometric residence permit (BRP).

2. List B

One form of ID from this list, together with list C.

- a Home Office travel document (convention travel document, stateless person's document, one-way document or certificate of travel)
- an older person's bus pass
- a Freedom Pass
- a proof of age card recognised under the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) without a unique reference number (please refer to List A where a unique reference number is present).

3. List C

One form of ID from this list, together with list B.

- a birth or adoption certificate
- an education certificate from a regulated and recognised educational institution (such as an NVQ, SQA, GCSE, A level or degree certificate)
- a rental or purchase agreement for a residential property (signed and dated)
- a marriage or civil partnership certificate
- a bank, building society or credit union current account card (on which the claimed identity is shown).

4. Exceptional Circumstances

If you do not have access to the above listed ID, you may still be able to attend a visit with advanced permission from the prison. Please contact the prison direct to arrange this. Contact details for prisons are available on the [prison information pages](#).

5. Official Visitors - Acceptable Forms of Identification

The following documents are examples of acceptable forms of identification for professional visitors:

1. Members of either House of Parliament: Houses of Parliament ID card or HMG ID cards
2. Legal advisers: Identification document from the above List A, or from Lists B and C. This must be in conjunction with either a. a headed document from their legal practice stating that they are representing




the prisoner they are requesting to visit, or b. should they not yet be representing the prisoner, a headed document from their legal practice explaining the purpose of the visit

3. Police, UK Border Agency and HM Revenue & Customs officers: warrant card
4. Probation and Youth Offending Team officers: probation / YOT department ID card
5. Staff from other prisons, HQ, the Children's & Young People's Secure Estate, the inspectorates (including Lay Observers) or Home Office: photo security pass issued by (or on behalf of) Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, or Home Office
6. Consular officials: consular ID card
7. Other public officials: departmental or local authority pass or ID card (but must show the name of the visitor and the name of the department or local authority)
8. Social workers: social worker identification cards
9. Researchers: Security Photo pass or official letter (visits must be pre-arranged)
10. Healthcare staff: NHS photographic identification badge/card or independent sector healthcare photographic identification badge/card.

This information is from Annex A of the [Management of security at visits Policy Framework: Open estate](#)

Annex B

Prohibited articles are graded according to their seriousness and perceived threat to security and safety within a prison. Prohibited articles are classified as List A, List B or List C articles:

Grading of Articles		Article Type	Offences/Penalties*
A		Drugs Explosives Firearms Ammunition Any other offensive weapon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years • An unlimited fine • Both
B		Alcohol Mobile telephones Cameras Sound recording devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years • An unlimited fine • Both
C		Tobacco Vapes and e-cigarettes Money Clothing Food Drink Letters Papers Books Tools Information Technology equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum penalty is a fine not exceeding level 3 (currently £1000).

List A and B articles:

A person (including prisoners, staff, social and professional visitors) commits an offence if they carry out any of the following listed activities without obtaining prior authorisation:

- brings or throws or otherwise conveys List A or B items in or out of a prison by whatever means
- causes another person to do so
- leaves a List A or B item in any place (in or out of the prison) intending it to come into the possession of a prisoner
- knowing a person to be a prisoner gives a List A or B item to them.

List C articles:

A person (including prisoners, staff, social and professional visitors) commits an offence if they carry out any of the following listed activities without obtaining prior authorisation:

- brings, throws or otherwise conveys a List C article into a prison intending it to come into the possession of a prisoner
- causes another person to bring, throw or otherwise convey a List C article into a prison intending it to come into the possession of a prisoner
- brings, throws or otherwise conveys a List C article out of a prison on behalf of a prisoner
- causes another person to bring, throw or otherwise convey a List C article out of a prison on behalf of a prisoner
- leaves a List C article in any place (whether inside or outside a prison) intending it to come into the possession of a prisoner
- or while inside a prison, gives a List C article to a prisoner.

Authorisations for legitimate use and possession

Sound recording devices:

- Solicitors and other legal advisers to prisoners have been issued with central authority to bring and/or possess in prison sound recording devices to allow them to record interviews with their clients.
- They have also been given central authority to take sound recordings out of the prison. There is, therefore, no need for prisons to issue local authorisations for these devices.
- These recording devices can be digital or mechanical devices. They must not contain a camera, video recorder or mobile phone.

- These devices must not be passed to prisoners.
- They must be logged on entry and again on exit to the prison to ensure that they are not left behind.

Annex C – FaSO Champion and Lead Roles

Job title:	Family and Significant Other Lead
Person Responsible	Governor Aidan McCabe
Department/Group:	Head of Operations
Location:	HMP Gartree
Address:	Gallow Field Road Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7RP
Telephone Number	01858 426600
Job description	
<p>The role of the Family and Significant Other lead is assigned to a member of the senior management team who is the functional head for the visits department at HMP Gartree. The family and significant other lead is there to support prisoners to build and maintain strong family ties to reduce reoffending and reduce intergenerational offending.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the responsibility of the family and significant others lead to ensure that the family and significant others strategy is reviewed and amended annually to reflect any changes to our delivery of service. 2. The family and significant others lead will be responsible for the management of the contract with our family services provider. 3. The family and significant other lead is responsible for the performance measure. 	

Job title:	Family and Significant Other Champion
Person Responsible	Custodial Manager Victoria Bowen
Department/Group:	Visits Department
Location:	HMP Gartree
Address:	Gallow Field Road Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7RP
Telephone Number	01858 426600
Job description	
<p>The role of the Family and Significant Other Champion is to support the FASO lead. They will have direct oversight of all family services and collaborate with our family service provider. They will manage this area for the FASO lead.</p>	

