

Integrated family support project 2013 to 2016

Final year evaluation

Carried out by:



April 2016

About Nepacs

The North East Prisoner After Care Society or Nepacs as they are now known, has been working in the North East of England for 130 years. Nepacs works to support a positive future for prisoners and their families. Nepacs deliver a number of services in prisons and in the community, including running the visitor centres at the region's prisons, providing play workers at prison visits, and family support at court and in the prisons. Nepacs believe that investment must be made in resettlement and rehabilitation to ensure that there are fewer victims of crime in the future and less prospect of family life being disrupted and damaged by a prison sentence.

More information: www.nepacs.co.uk



About the authors

Barefoot Research and Evaluation is a social research organisation based in Newcastle upon Tyne, working across the North East. They have carried out work on a diverse range of social welfare and criminal justice programmes in the voluntary and public sector. Dr. Christopher Hartworth, who set up Barefoot, has 20 years' experience of research and evaluation, beginning in developing countries in poverty alleviation programmes and continuing in the North East of England in work with disadvantaged communities. Joanne Hartworth has a First Class Honours Degree in Sociology, is a qualified teacher and an accomplished project manager, having managed projects in East and West Newcastle.

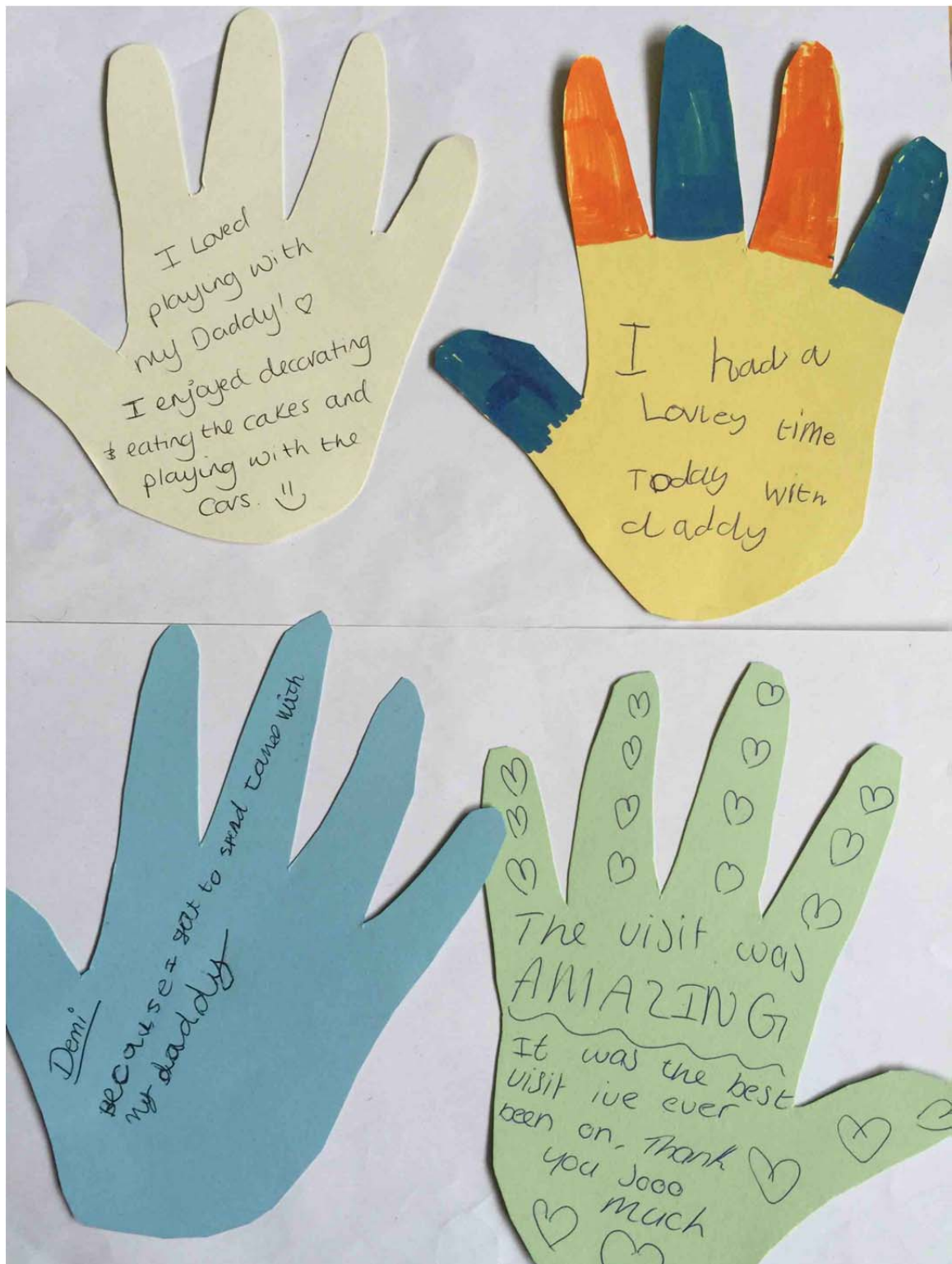
More information: www.barefootresearch.org.uk



Acknowledgements

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Children's feedback about a Nepacs family day



i. Executive summary

This is the end of year three evaluation report for Nepacs' Integrated Family Support project 2013 to 2016. It represents the final report of a three year intervention period which has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The evaluation finds a project which has developed into a mature family support intervention model and which is well integrated into prison regimes. It has become a central feature of Nepacs family support offer in a selection of the region's prisons and the community alongside support offered at the courts, in the visitor centres, to young people who have a parent in prison and now when the prisoner is heading home.

The project

The project consists of three Family Support Workers (FSWs) and two Integrated Family Support Advocates (IFSAs). FSWs are located in three prisons in the North East of England: HMP Holme House; HMYOI Deerbolt; and HMP Kirklevington Grange. These provide prison-based family focused casework to inmates, most of whom self refer into the project. The IFSAs are located in the north and the south of the region. Their objectives are to raise awareness within community agencies of the needs of prisoners' families and their support requirements and to help them develop and deliver services. A key way of achieving this has been through the delivery of Hidden Sentence training, which highlights the impact of a prison sentence on the family. The family support work has been instrumental in supporting and improving conditions for prisoners who are parents, creating new or adding value to existing visiting opportunities such as parent child visits, creating parenting courses and advocating for the needs of prisoners' families at strategic opportunities in prisons.

Outputs

The substantive outputs of the project between 2013 and 2016 have been: across all establishments, support provided to a total of 1,379 prisoners focusing on maintaining and strengthening family relationships; similar support provided to a total of 301 families in the community; Hidden Sentence training delivered to a total

of 594 people in community venues and in prison. There were also a number of agreed Big Lottery Fund targets, which were successfully achieved.

Findings

Based upon the last three years of project outputs and outcomes data, the evaluation makes the following substantive findings.

- **Family support work is now embedded in the host prisons:** this project has enabled the Nepacs' work in prisons to become integrated into the prison system and its regimes. Prison senior and operational staff have developed familiarity, trust and respect for the organisation and the work, which has facilitated effective delivery. This demonstrates that there is a 'fit' between the project and a prison regime with key objectives of safety and humanely holding a custodial population and reducing future reoffending. Prison governors in all the establishments where family support is located spoke highly of Nepacs' work and placed value on its impact on: safer custody and supporting vulnerable prisoners through increasing the support available to them, ensuring where possible the involvement of the family and improving their mental health and wellbeing; taking pressure off prison staff who are increasingly only able to focus on their security role as a result of diminishing staff numbers; and improving prisoner behaviour and regime compliance, through a calming, advocacy and information giving role.
- **Increased awareness of the issues of parental imprisonment and family impact:** as the regional lead organisation for prisoners' families, a key organisational objective is to build awareness of the issues and hardships experienced by those families and the importance of maintaining relationships. Through the advocacy work funded by the Big Lottery, and in particular through the Hidden Sentence training, there has been considerable success in this area over the last three years. There are more organisations now who have an

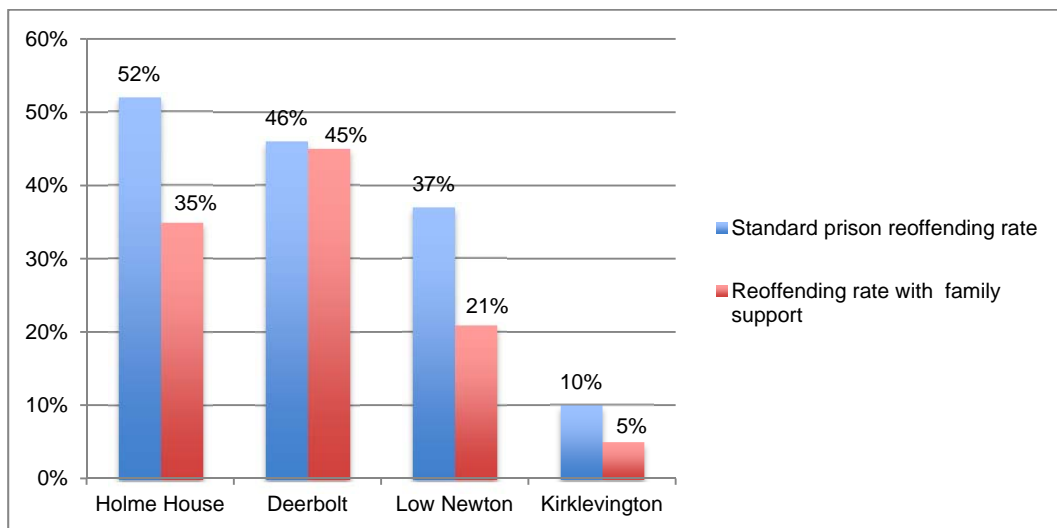
awareness of these issues, there are more services, better existing services and more strategic linkages concerning prisoners' families than before the project.

- **An effective delivery model:** the Big Lottery funded project period has enabled Nepacs to confirm, consolidate and refine the family support intervention model. The Nepacs model was first developed between 2011 and 2013 with pilot funding from the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education and grant support from the Pilgrim Trust and Lankelly Chase Foundation; this current Big Lottery funding has enabled it to become a more mature and sophisticated initiative. There is now a confidence that a model has been developed and tested which has proved to be effective and can be transferred to other prisons. This has created a foundation which can be built upon and continually improved, which indeed has been happening over the last year in the development of the homework clubs, fathers wings and new fathers visits. An important aspect to this refining of a delivery model has been a recognition that there are effectively two types of family support intervention: a brief intervention; and a longer, more substantive support intervention.

- **Evidenced beneficiary impact:** the project has been responsible for important outcomes for prisoners and their families. As a result of the family support work, there are:
 - Prisoners who have either started family relationships where previously there were none or have improved and stronger family relationships, and as a result, they have improved wellbeing and are more regime compliant (more likely to behave themselves because they are less angry/stressed about important situations which they previously felt were beyond their control);
 - Prisoners and families are better prepared for release because they have more realistic expectations of each other and with support they have been able to better communicate with one another;

- Prisoners involved in care proceedings have a greater understanding of the process and as a result they are better able to process what is happening to them and have subsequent improved mental health and are less likely to self harm;
- Children have seen more of their parents in constructive situations, spending more quality time with each other. As a result of the project there have been more child parent and family visits, family days and homework clubs. Increased contact leads to greater understanding and being better able to process and come to terms with having a parent in prison, which has subsequent psycho social benefits. We are relying on child psychology research and evidence as a measure of the benefit of the intervention for children; we are able to independently verify that as a result of the project, more children have been able to spend longer times with their parents in prison and they have judged this contact to be beneficial.
- **Impact on reducing reoffending:** we have been able to access police data that indicates the project is having an impact in reducing reoffending with the prisoners who receive support. Using the standard Home Office measure of reducing reoffending (offences committed in the 12 months following release from prison): we identified 140 prisoners who had received family support and who were released in the 2013/14 calendar year and who spent a minimum of 12 months in the community. We put these names through the Police National Computer to look at their offending behaviour post release (number of convictions). As can be seen, comparing the individual prison rates of reoffending with prisoners who have received support, the project has had positive impact on reducing reoffending in all of the prisons where family support is provided by Nepacs (we also looked at HMP&YOI Low Newton as Nepacs deliver a Ministry of Justice funded family support service).

The project's impact on reoffending rates, 2013 to 2016



We also compared Nepacs' brief with substantive interventions and found that the more in-depth and longer term support has more of an effect on reducing reoffending. Although not surprising, this is valuable information as it indicates that reducing reoffending works better when longer term support is provided. Again, this is important to consider when and if family support contracts specify a certain number of prisoners in a worker's caseload, i.e. higher numbers mean only brief interventions can be delivered, whereas low caseloads mean substantive work can be provided and hence have a meaningful impact on reoffending.

- **Continued to build organisational reputation:** over this three year period and with the consolidation of the workstream, Nepacs has developed their reputation; both building an awareness of the existence of the organisation in agencies who did not know about them, and increasing the strength of reputation amongst others who were able to witness the delivery of this project. During the project period, the organisation has delivered two high profile regional events, one in conjunction with i-HOP Barnardo's about supporting children affected by parental imprisonment and the other in partnership with Open Gate about women in prison. Nepacs was also a winner in the 2015 North East Charity Awards and was a national CLINKS case study of best practice in voluntary sector criminal justice work. Thus, the Big Lottery investment has

contributed significantly to the strengthening of an important North East voluntary sector organisation.

- **An effective and cohesive project team:** it is a considerable achievement to maintain a committed and high performing project team in such a pressured environment with a dispersed staff contingent. In spite of some significant periods of sick leave due to serious illness in two staff members, Nepacs has been able to maintain a team where morale is high, stress related sickness is low and performance is of a high standard. This has ensured that project outcomes have been achieved. Working in a prison environment in the male custodial estate can be challenging on a professional and personal level; staff can face intimidation from both prisoners and prison officers. In addition to this, they are the only Nepacs staff member working inside the prison and can feel isolated. Also, the nature of the work can be very emotionally draining and they need to feel supported and able to offload any issues. The Nepacs' management structure and the supporting ethos of the organisation has created and maintained a highly professional and effective staff team.

Conclusion

We have been fortunate to be able to evaluate the Integrated Family Support Project over the last three years. We now understand many of the impacts of the programme on prisoner and family behaviour and wellbeing. We also understand that Nepacs has played a driving role in the development of a North East family support programme, which is the subject of a forthcoming article in a special edition of The Probation Journal on children and families of offenders (September 2016). We need to further understand the impact on reducing reoffending and on children with whom they work: what are the effects of support in mitigating the negative impacts of having a parent in prison.

From a funding perspective, the evaluation has demonstrated that Nepacs has fulfilled the agreed targets of the funding agreement. These have been achieved

during a three year project period which has been affected by staff sickness and some staff turnover, demonstrating a proactive and effective management system. This has been noteworthy; that Nepacs has a sufficiently resourced and effective management structure to ensure good project morale and smooth delivery in an often pressurised prison-based environment. We look forward to the next three years.

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1.0 Introduction

This is the end of year three evaluation report for Nepacs' Integrated Family Support project 2013 to 2016. It represents the final report of a three year intervention period which has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Evaluation reports have also been produced at the end of year one and two and can be provided upon request. In these previous reports, there has been a presentation and analysis of the operational delivery model, and as such, is not repeated here. In this final report we look at global outputs and outcomes over the three years and we look at reoffending data, examining what impact the project has had on the reoffending rates of the people with whom they work.

The evaluation finds a project which has developed into a mature family support intervention model and which is well integrated into prison regimes. It has become a central feature of Nepacs family support offer in a selection of the region's prisons and community alongside support offered at the courts, in the visitor centres, to young people who have a parent in prison and now when the prisoner is heading home. For the first time in the North East, an analysis of the reoffending patterns of those supported has taken place. The indications are that the project does have an impact on the reoffending rates of the prisons where the support is located, of between a one and 17% reduction, depending on establishment. This is a highly encouraging and significant finding and one which will be continued to be monitored from this point onwards.

1.1 About the project

The project consists of three Family Support Workers (FSWs) and two Integrated Family Support Advocates (IFSAs). FSWs are located in three prisons in the North East of England:

- One full time worker in HMP Holme House, a large category C male prison in Stockton on Tees, with a capacity of 1,210.
- One full time (since April 2013) in HMYOI Deerbolt, a category C young male offenders institute housing around 500 prisons located in Barnard Castle.
- One part time (0.5 full time equivalent) in HMP Kirklevington Grange, an open prison with a capacity of approximately 300 adult male prisoners.

The IFSA's are located in the north (0.5 full time equivalent) and the south of the region (full time). The objectives of the advocates are to raise awareness within community agencies of the needs of prisoners' families and their support requirements and to help them develop and deliver services. As stated, the previous evaluation reports of the project look at the intervention model in more detail and can be referred to if more information is required.

1.2 Background and context

The Criminal Justice System is a highly politicised element of British society and changes in political administration bring major changes in delivery and organisation. The previous and most recent change in Government has been no different and the last five years have seen significant change in how we manage our offenders. These changes have included: the privatisation of the National Probation Service (NPS) and the formation of Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs); the privatisation of a number of prisons (which has seen the local HMP Northumberland change into a privately run prison); and reduction in the investment in Government run prisons which has seen significant reductions in staff to prisoner ratios. The context has thus been one of rising prison populations and reduced investment, making prisons highly pressurised and contested environments.

The value and importance of family support work continues to be recognised as being important to the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda. This is explicitly

recognised by the current government, as illustrated in direct communication between the Under Secretary of State for Justice and Nepacs in June 2015:

I intend to make the maintenance of family ties whilst in prison one of my priorities in the new Parliament and I recognise the importance of organisations such as Nepacs which provide helpful support for the families of offenders.

On a national level we now have the *Prison Family Support Alliance* (PFSA), created in 2013, made up of four charities - Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust), POPS (Partners of Prisoners), Jigsaw and Nepacs. The aim of the Alliance is to share good practice and learning, and to encourage the government, local authorities, and the private and voluntary sectors, to focus on families as part of the wider strategy to reduce reoffending. In July 2013, the PFSA was selected by the Ministry of Justice to be the 'framework providers' of prison-based family support work in England and Wales. In September 2014, NOMS funded the PFSA to provide custody-based Family Engagement Workers (FEWs) to specifically help and support women and young people serving custodial sentences (this resulted in Nepacs delivering FEW in HMP&YOI Low Newton). The significance of this is that family support work taking place in prison is no longer out of the ordinary; although there is no common model and/or standard, there are increasing numbers of prisons which have some level of family support.

From a community and local authority perspective, the context has radically changed since the beginning of the project in 2013. It was initially intended that a major role of the Integrated Family Support Advocates would be to link prisoners and their families to support that exists in the community. However, in the light of reductions to the budgets of local government, there is now a dearth of services which exist, with the exception of the Troubled Families initiative (which is under pressure from other areas as one of the last remaining intervention services for vulnerable families in need). However, agencies such as Children's Social Care and of course schools still continue to operate and are important organisations in the

lives of prisoners' families and the project has been working well with these, although progress is sometimes slow.

The potential of the CRCs, as agencies responsible for reducing reoffending, to become involved in family support work, or commission others to do so, has become a reality. And indeed, Nepacs was commissioned by Northumbria CRC in mid 2015 to provide some family support work in the community on a small scale. There is a concern here that the work will not be given adequate time or resources to demonstrate its effectiveness; already Nepacs has seen a reduction in funding after four months because targets had not been met. There is also the potential of the recently proposed reform prisons with greater autonomous budgets and decision making to become involved in family support work commissioning, which they have been less able to in the past. The key to both these factors is to what degree does family support work reduce reoffending? In this report, we attempt to answer that question; in one of the few instances that we know of in England and Wales.

Another important piece of context is the range and differentiation of the services Nepacs provide to prisoners and their families, to the extent that if you are a visitor to a North East prison, you will almost certainly use one or more of their services. The range of projects is important as it means that people in need of support can be identified and provided with that support, whether they are a partner, parent or child. For example, a family identified at court can be given the information they need to visit, the parent can be visited in prison by a Family Support Worker who can arrange for special visits, the youth project can engage with teenagers in the family and when the prisoner is released they can access support to negotiate the challenges faced when 'Heading Home'. Their differentiated services enable prisoners and families to receive an integrated service, at the beginning of sentence, during custody and upon resettlement.

1.3 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation has been ongoing since the beginning of the project in 2013 and has played formative and summative functions, contributing both to project effectiveness through a review process and to sustainability, providing evidence to demonstrate impact to commissioners and funders. Throughout that time we have used a number of research methods including:

- Indepth interviews with prisoners and families;
- Semi structured interviews (SSIs) with project staff;
- SSIs with partner agencies and prison governors;
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of significant numbers of self completed beneficiary (prisoners and families) outcome monitoring questionnaires (based on a model of Goal Based Outcome monitoring);
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of FSW completed database and recording systems;
- Partner agency surveys;
- Policy and secondary research review;
- Analysis of data provided by the Police National Computer.

As can be seen, the evaluation was able to use a considerable amount of data, both qualitative and quantitative, upon which to base its judgements. This provides a significant evidence base to demonstrate the impact of an increasingly knowledgeable and sophisticated service.

2.0 Project outputs and outcomes

This is the most significant part of evaluation as we present the project's outputs and outcomes between 2013 and 2015. Outputs are the numbers associated with the project, e.g. how many prisoners used the service, their ethnicity, what was the nature of the support provided. Outcomes are understood to be the effects of the intervention, e.g. what changes have happened because of the project, either changes in behaviour (in prisoners and families) or in practice (for professionals). Both sets of data have been possible to present because of the project comprehensive output and outcome monitoring systems.

2.1 Outputs

Output data is collected by internal project recording systems, which are overseen by Nepacs' Operations Manager.

2.1.1 Big Lottery Fund targets

Nepacs agreed a number of outcomes with associated milestones at the beginning of the project in March 2013 which were to be fulfilled by March 2016. A summary of these is presented in table 2. As is shown, Nepacs has fulfilled their estimated targets in four out of 12 cases, reached just under the figure in three and exceeded targets in five of the Big Lottery Fund targets. The areas where targets have been greatly exceeded include the numbers of children benefitting¹ from the project, the number of professionals participating in Hidden Sentence training and number of prisoners attending special family-friendly visits. All represent value added gains for the project.

¹ Even taking into consideration the project recording numbers of attendances and not unique individuals.

Table 2.0 Summary of Big Lottery Fund outcomes, change indicators and achievements

Outcome 1: Prisoners demonstrate improved relationships and parenting skills which lead to increased contact with family members during a prison sentence		
<i>Change indicators</i>	Amount of change	Achieved
Number of prisoners attending special family-friendly visits	300	783
Numbers of prisoners accessing parenting and/or relationship courses	210	170
Numbers of prisoners visited by children chaperoned by Nepacs	30	27
Outcome 2: Prisoners families gain more knowledge and confidence enabling them to influence sentence planning and leading to improved resettlement outcomes.		
<i>Change indicators</i>	Amount of change	Achieved
Numbers of family members engaged with FSW who report increased confidence	210	182
Numbers of families enabled to influence sentence planning	105	108
Number of family members providing peer support via Visitors Voice	20	151
Outcome 3: Children report more positive contact with a parent in prison and demonstrate improved wellbeing, more confidence and improved behaviour		
<i>Change indicators</i>	Amount of change	Achieved
Numbers of children attending special child friendly visits	450	1912*
Numbers of pre-school children who are observed to be reassured by parental contact	360	459
Numbers of school aged children who report improved well-being, confidence and/or behaviour as a result of contact with parent in prison	90	111
Outcome 4: Appropriate agencies (including schools) have increased awareness of the Hidden Sentence and report better understanding of issues facing prisoners families		
<i>Change indicators</i>	Amount of change	Achieved
Case studies gathered to illustrate impact of training in supporting individuals/improving practice	45	45
Hidden Sentence evaluation forms indicate increased awareness better understanding of issues	435	480
Numbers of professionals attending Hidden Sentence training	450	594

* These are the number of attendances not unique individuals.

2.1.2 Family support outputs

Across all establishments, a total of 1,379 prisoners have benefited from the project in three years (figure 2.0 and 2.1). The project has also supported a total of 301 families. As can be seen, the total number of prisoners supported has seen a decline since 2013. This is due to several factors including an increasing number of complex cases, which entail more focused work from the FSWs, and a change of staff in two prisons (HMP Kirklevington and Holme House) in 2014 and 2015, which resulted in slightly less prisoners being supported.

Figure 2.0 Total FSW beneficiaries, 2013 to 2016

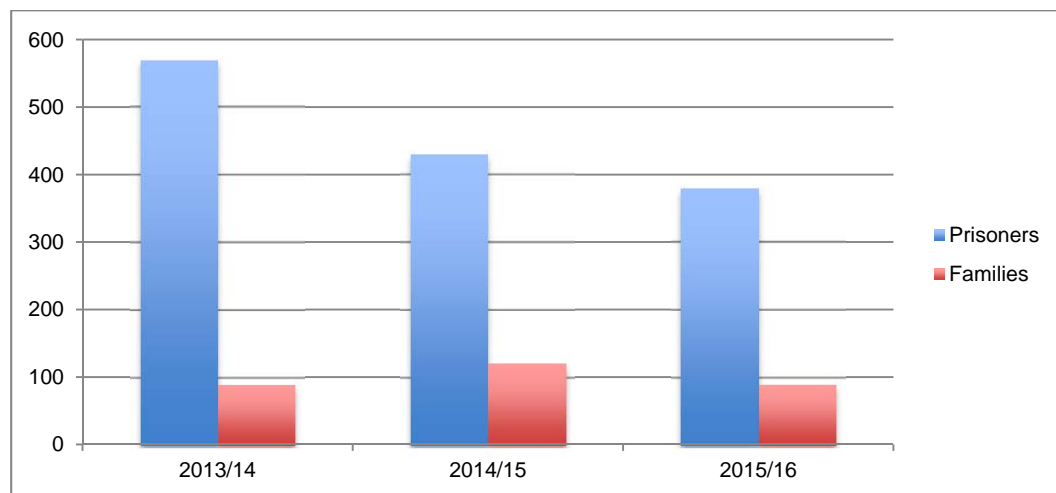
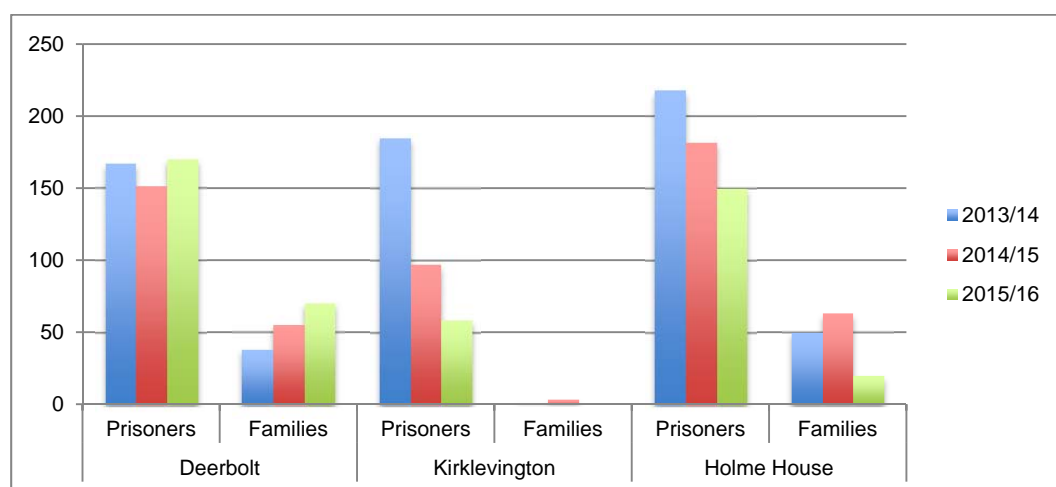


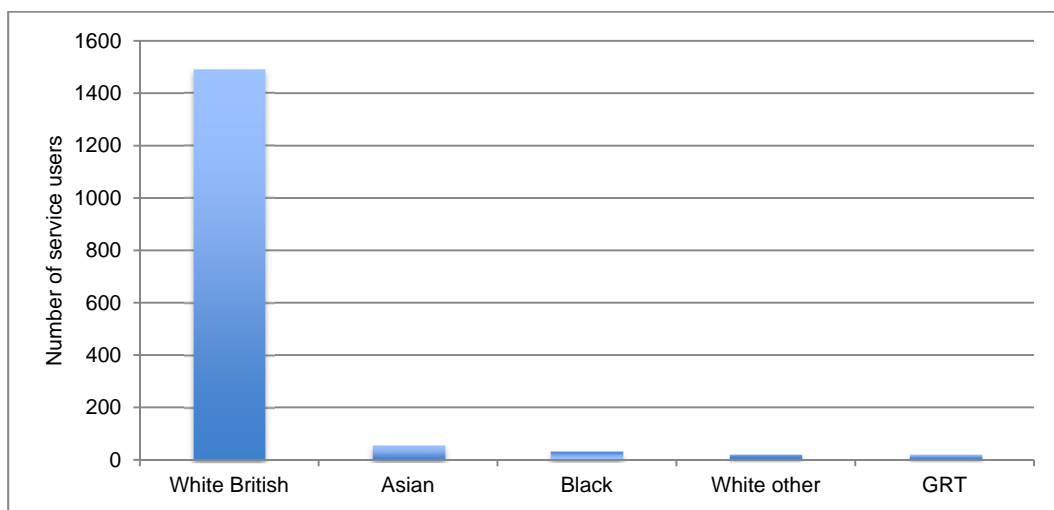
Figure 2.1 FSW beneficiaries by establishment, 2013 to 2016



The reason that very few families were supported at HMP Kirklevington is that the prison lacks a visitor centre, which means that few families present themselves as requiring support.

Figure 2.2 shows the ethnicity of project beneficiaries. As can be seen most were White British, with small proportions of Asian, Black, White Other and Gypsy and Traveller groups.

Figure 2.2 Ethnicity of total FSW beneficiaries, 2013 to 2016



The following figure shows the proportion of project beneficiaries who have a self-declared disability (not including mental health). The figure of just over 10% is in agreement with Ministry of Justice estimations².

² Ministry of Justice Research Summary 4/12

Figure 2.3 Percentage of disabled people in total FSW beneficiaries, 2013 to 2016

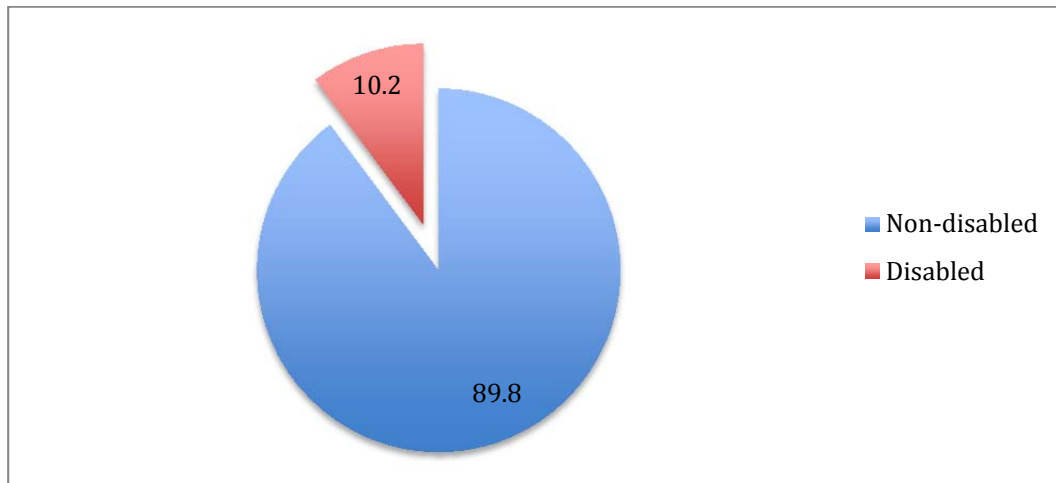
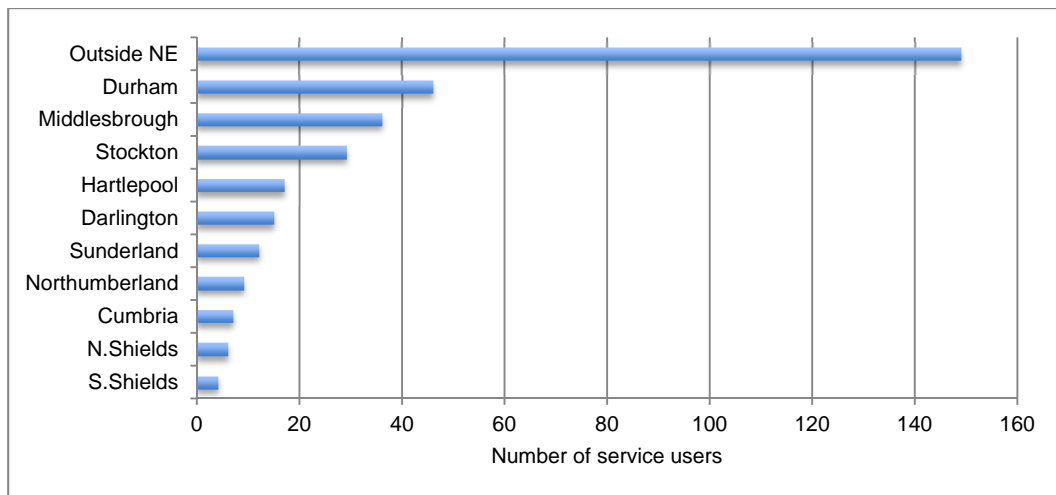


Figure 2.4 shows the area of residence for the project beneficiaries. As can be seen, most are from outside of the North East region, followed by County Durham, Middlesbrough and Stockton. This is explained as a result of two of the host prisons being specialist establishments (young offenders and an open prison) that take prisoners from across the country.

Figure 2.4 Area of residence of total prisoner beneficiaries, 2013 to 2016



Box 2.0 Family Support Worker case study one

A prisoner contacted me as he had applied for the Father Child and Sibling visit but was concerned about taking his step son out of school as the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) had questioned his attendance, querying why he was already always off on a Thursday afternoon (when routine visits took place). I explained to him that Nepacs works closely with schools to highlight the importance of visiting; if children cannot visit parents it can feel like a bereavement and lead to other problems in the future.

I contacted the school in question and spoke to the head teacher. We had a long chat about children with a loved one in prison; she was unaware that any children in her school had someone in prison. I told her the statistics and she was really quite shocked. I explained the importance of special visits and that we can incorporate education into the visit, and that the school could send homework for the family to do together. She said she was interested and asked for some information leaflets to be sent, and I sent her the dates for the year ahead of our special visits so they would know when they are on.

She said she would update the EWO so there should be no more issues re attendance, I said they could ring and check with me to see if the child attended if they ever did have any doubts. The conversation was really positive and the school was invited to one of our 'Hidden Sentence' training days.

The family support work has been instrumental in improving conditions for prisoners who are parents, creating new or adding value to existing visiting opportunities such as parent child visits, creating parenting courses and advocating for the needs of prisoners' families at strategic opportunities in prisons. For example:

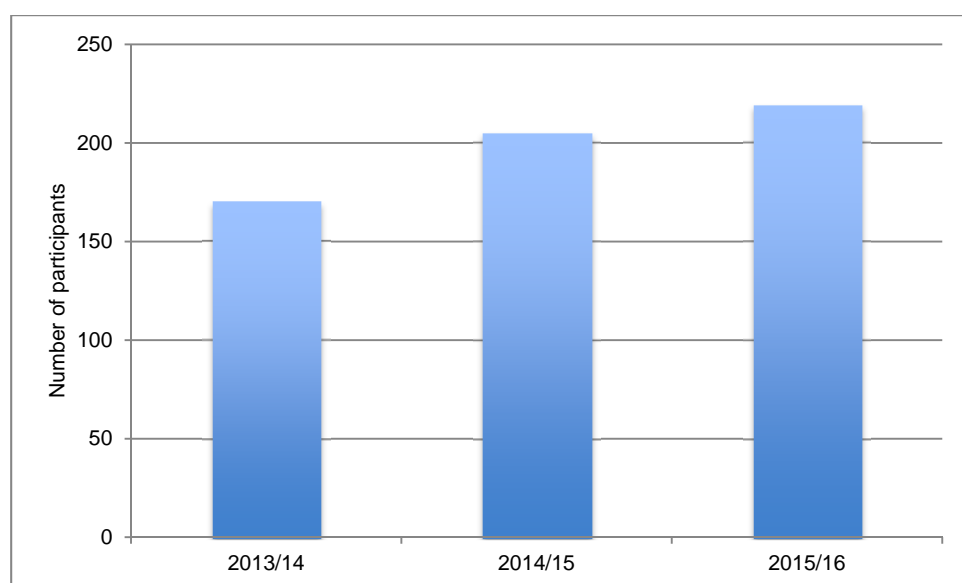
- At HMYOI Deerbolt a new residential wing area has been created for expecting or new fathers who can receive focused support and intervention;
- A Homework club has been started in HMP Kirklevington, where children bring their homework in to complete with their fathers. This has also been supported by local schools;
- New Family Nurturing courses to improve parenting and bonding;
- Contributing to or coordinating Children and Families Pathways in the prisons where they are located (these are strategic reducing reoffending meetings which direct and inform the work that takes place with prisoners and their families).

We reiterate our findings in the year two evaluation which found that FSWs improved general provision for prisoners, their children and families in the establishments where they worked.

2.1.3 Hidden Sentence training

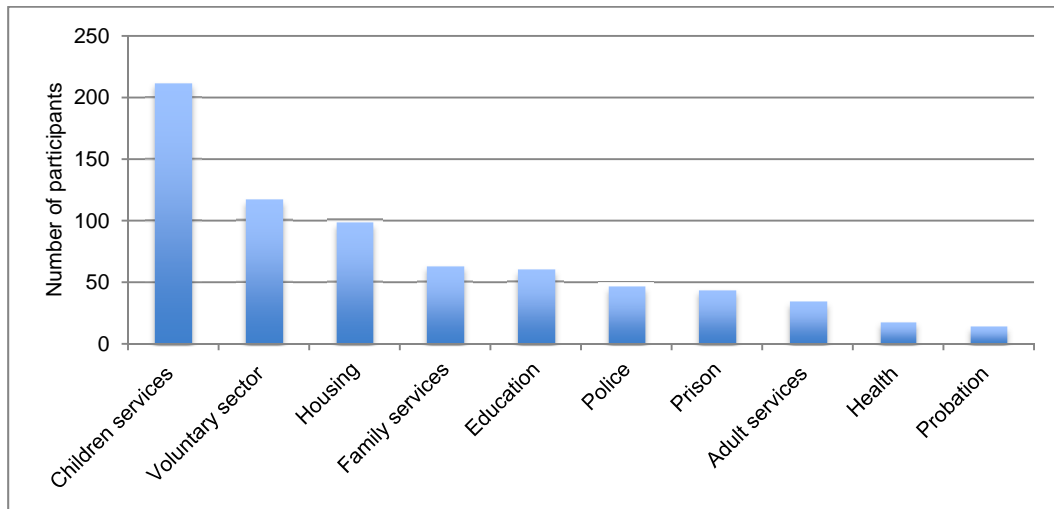
There has been a total of 594 participants on Hidden Sentence training between 2013 and 2016. The majority of the training has been delivered in community venues, although in the last two years of the project, the training has been delivered from inside HMP Holme House with input from prisoners. This has been a highly effective development in the training options available.

Figure 2.5 Hidden Sentence participants, 2013 to 2016



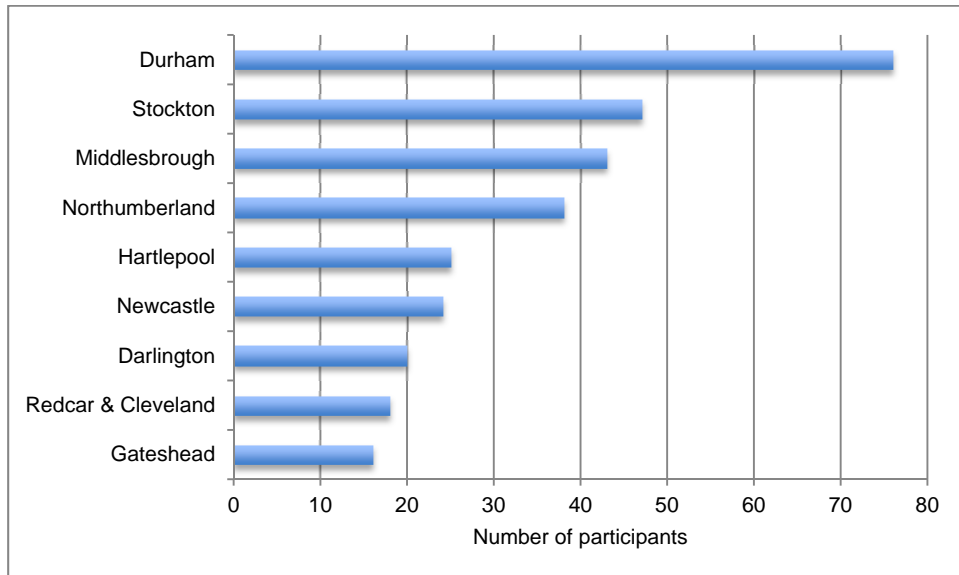
Hidden Sentence participants have come from a range of different agencies, as is shown in figure 2.6. There is good representation from a broad range of community and prison services, with the most common of these being children services, followed by voluntary sector representatives, housing, family services and then importantly schools. There is also representation from health and probation services.

Figure 2.6 Hidden Sentence participants by agency, 2013 to 2016³



The following figure shows that the participants have come from across the North East, with most participants coming from Durham, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Northumberland.

Figure 2.7 Hidden Sentence participants by area, 2013 to 2016



³Where given by participants; occasionally details of agency would be omitted.

2.2 Outcomes

Data on project outcomes has a number of sources, including: internal project outcome monitoring which systematically collects distance travelled information from prisoners and families; reflective recording by project workers post intervention; and interviews and surveys with partner agencies, including prisons, local authority and voluntary sector agencies. These comprehensive systems are overseen by the project evaluator and by Nepacs' Operations Manager.

Over the project's three year lifetime, a considerable volume of data has been gathered which provides a significant evidence base upon which to base judgements about the impact of the project. This section presents an analysis of this outcome data.

Table 2.1 Completed evaluation questionnaires, 2013 to 2016

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
Families receiving family support	17	71	65	153
Prisoners receiving family support	53	60	49	162
Prisoners attending special visits	73	183	56	312
Children attending special visits	71	326	221	618

2.2.1 Outcomes for prisoners

The following graphs demonstrate a wide ranging impact of the support on prisoners as reported by both prisoners themselves and as observed by FSWs. Firstly, and perhaps most significantly, is the finding that the majority of prisoners receiving an intervention from the Family Support Worker, report stronger relationships with their children and family (figure 2.10).

There are also a range of other impacts of the project, including: increased knowledge of and involvement in what is happening with their family; reduced stress and improved mental health; and feelings of being a better parent. A particular finding was that prisoners felt that as a result of the project, they had a voice and an influence from inside prison. Many of these impacts were confirmed by the FSWs (figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8 Self reported outcomes for prisoners, 2013 to 2016

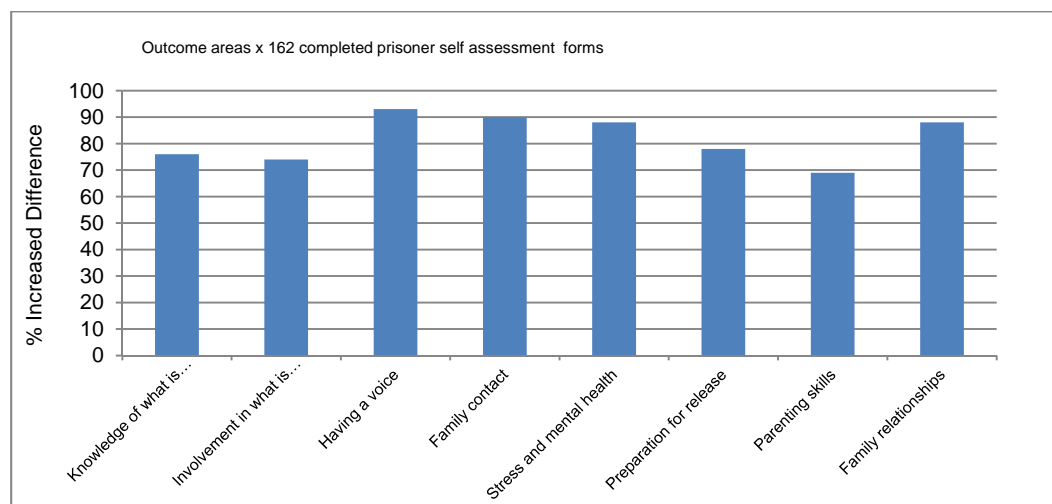


Figure 2.9 Project recorded outcomes for prisoner beneficiaries, 2013 to 2016

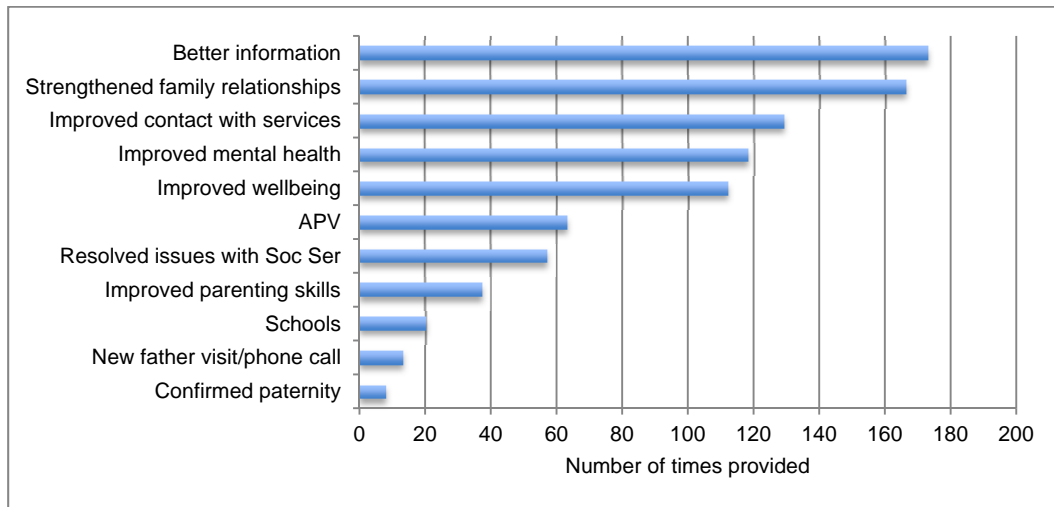
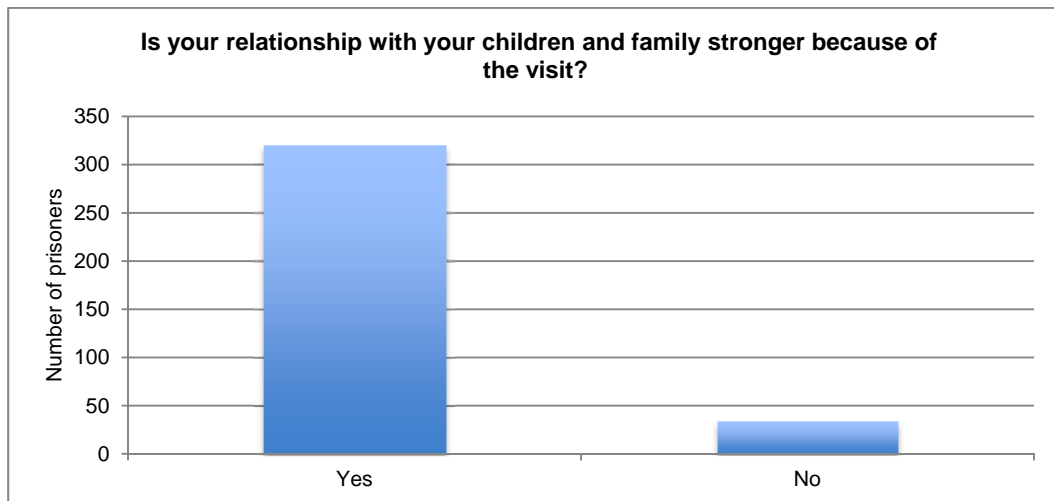


Figure 2.10 Is your relationship with your children and family stronger because of the visit?, 2013 to 2016



Outcomes for prisoners are also explored in detail in the year two evaluation report. The outcomes that relate to the reduction of reoffending within the FSW cohort are addressed in section 3.1.

Box 2.1 Family Support Worker case study two

I was asked to work with one prisoner by a member of the mental health team in prison as he had been told that his grandfather had been in hospital for the last few months. He was very close to his grandfather and had wondered why he could not get hold of him on the telephone; his worries were increased because his grandmother whom he was also close to had died a year earlier whilst he was in custody, so he was worried his grandfather was also going to die. When I discussed things further it became apparent there were other underlying issues as he was frightened to come off the wing and had not had a visit for six months when he used to have regular visits. I probed further and found out that another prisoner had broken his jaw six months earlier, he was frightened of this prisoner and told me that he had lost three stone in weight with worry and had not told anyone about it. I asked him to tell me who the prisoner was and explained nobody could help stop what was happening unless he said who the other person was. He confided in me and I immediately acted on this information and the prison dealt with it swiftly.

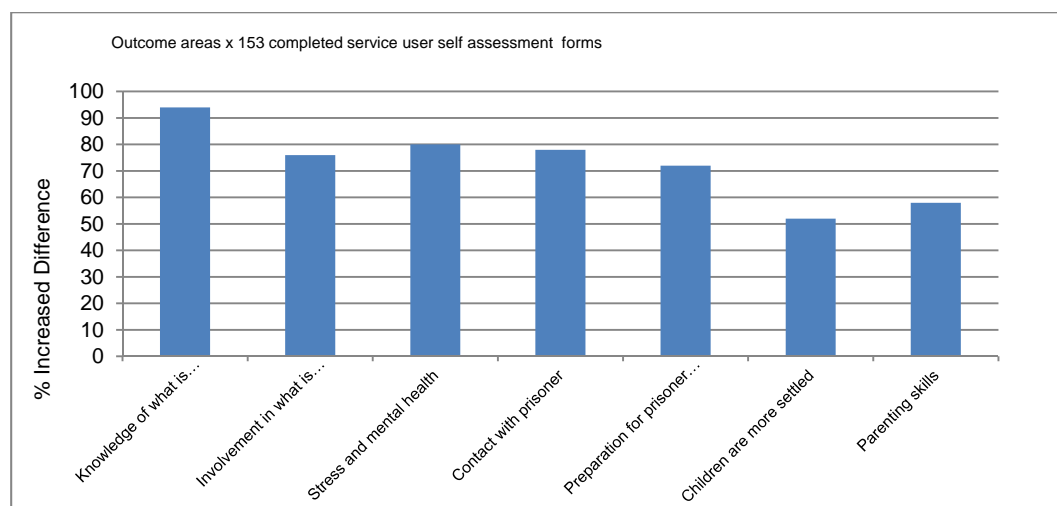
He agreed to a special visit and I contacted his mother to arrange things. She was overjoyed that the situation had been resolved and she could not wait to see her son. The visit went ahead as planned; it was very emotional but just what everyone needed after not seeing each other for six months. They said that normal domestic visits would resume.

2.2.2 Outcomes for families

Similar to the outcomes experienced by the prisoners, the families also experience a range of impacts associated with the support they receive. Again this is demonstrated by self completed Goal Based Outcome questionnaires (figure 2.10). Families have received support from the FSWs and other Nepacs staff working in the prison visitor centres. This support is needs-led and directed by the family. Families also benefit from the family days, which are opportunities where prisoners' families can spend a whole day together. The individual support by the FSW can either be in conjunction with these family days or can be stand alone support.

For those that have received support, families report improved knowledge about the situation and welfare of their loved one, they report more involvement and contact with the prisoner and improved mental health. In cases where a family member who has received support and who has caring duties for the children of the prisoner, they report that the children are more settled and that their parenting/caring skills have improved.

Figure 2.11 Outcomes for prisoners' families, 2013 to 2016

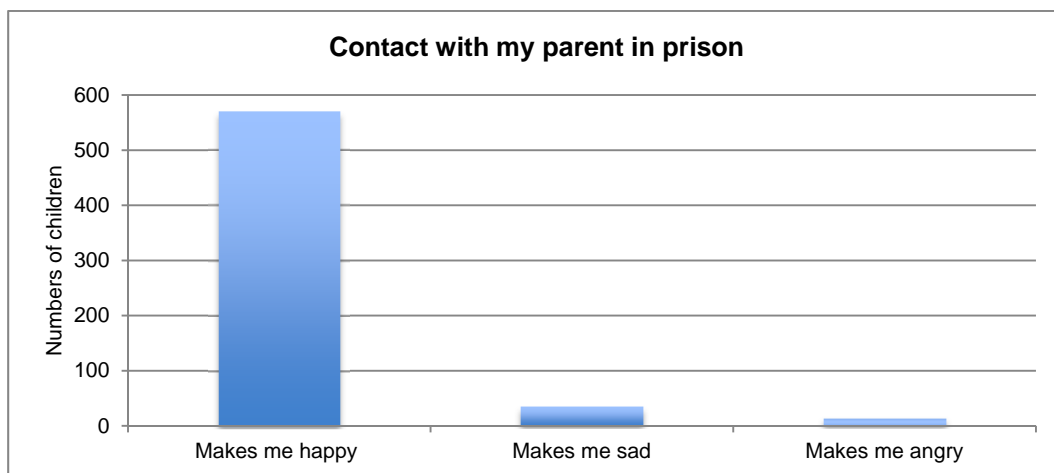


Outcomes for families are also explored in detail in the year two evaluation report.

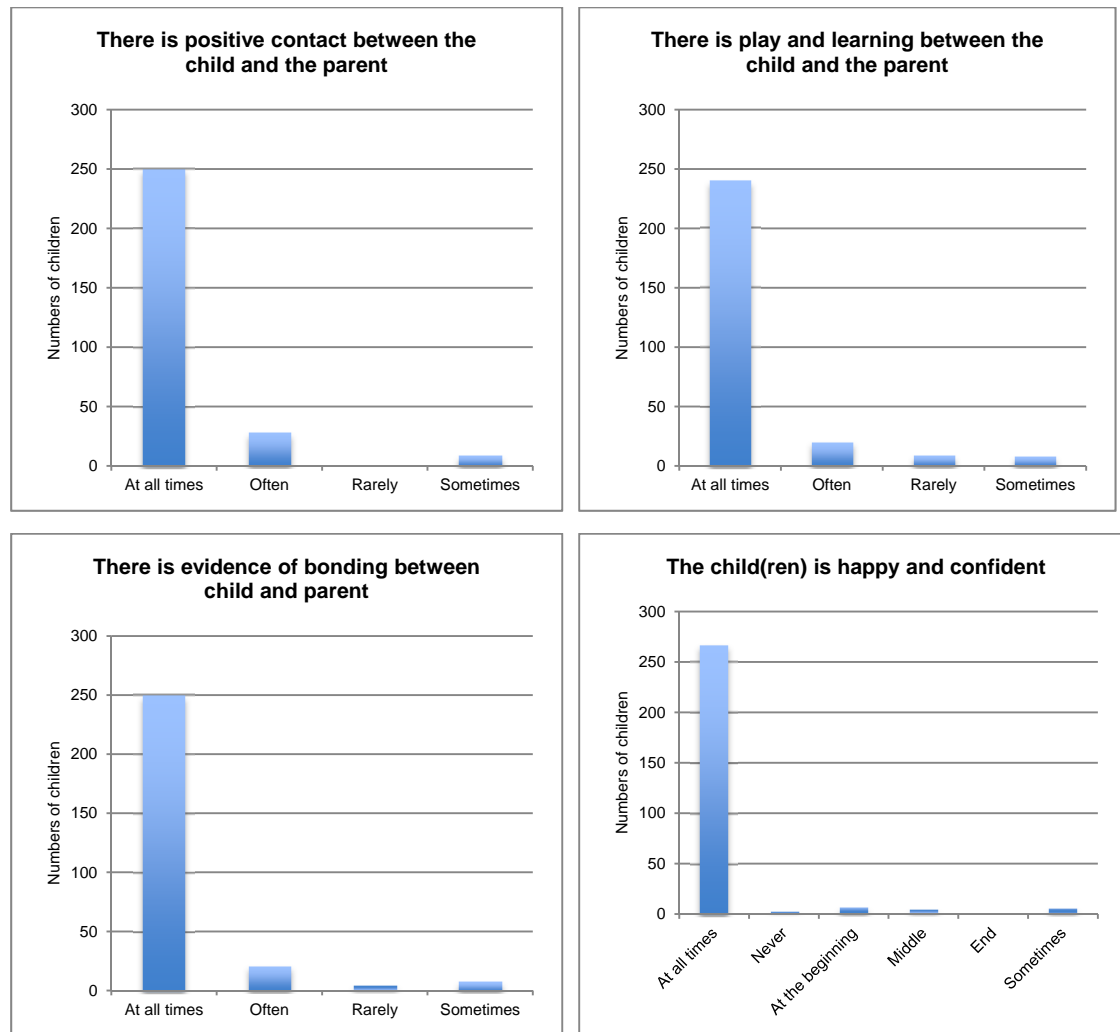
2.2.3 Outcomes for children

The project also collected data on the outcomes experienced by the children of the prisoners who have received support from the project. Much of this support has been in the form of increased contact during special visits. As can be seen in the following figures, children have reported that the additional special visits have had positive impacts on their emotional wellbeing. For pre-school children, they were observed by play workers during the visits and these noted the quality of interaction between child(ren) and parent (in prison). As can be seen from the four separate outcome areas in figure 2.12, contact was almost always constructive and positive.

Figure 2.12 Children's reaction to contact with parents in prison, 2013 to 2016



Figures 2.13 The nature and the quality of contact between a child and their parent in prison during a special visit⁴, 2013 to 2016



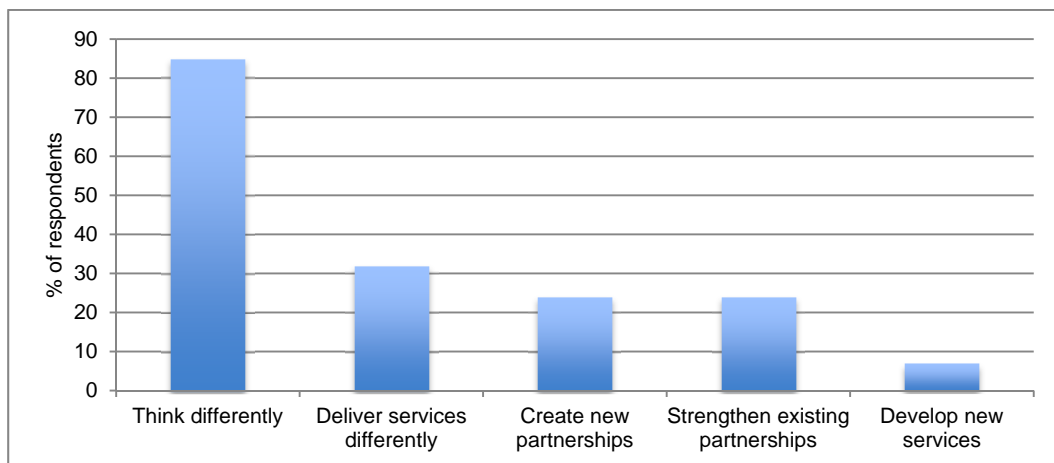
2.2.4 Outcomes for agencies

For the evaluation, we carried out a survey of 300 organisations who had participated in Hidden Sentence training as a way of determining impact on agencies. There was a 20% (n=59) return rate of questionnaires from local authority agencies, prisons and the voluntary sector. The results included:

⁴ Special visits are occasions where children can spend prolonged periods with their parent in prison, and they can engage in play and have substantial physical contact.

- **Improved knowledge and understanding:** a total of 95% of organisations reported that they learned things about the impact of imprisonment on families that they did not previously know; and
- **Improved how services are delivered to families affected by imprisonment:** as the following figure demonstrates, not only did the training allow participants to think differently, but it also resulted in adapting the delivery of existing services, the creation of new partnerships and strengthening of existing relationships and in some cases the development and delivery of new services to families.

Figure 2.14 Impact of the Hidden Sentence training, 2013 to 2016



It was clear that the training had had significant impact. For example, there were sophisticated answers to the question: Bearing in mind what you learnt at the training, what is the most important thing that families affected by imprisonment need? Answers included:

Lots of support and good communication to enable them to move forward, also to enable them to face the stigma they may be suffering that is attached to families who have a parent serving a sentence.

Support from family and friends and other organisations to learn how to cope with their loved one being in prison, the financial issues, what and how to tell the children, also help and support on release

Understanding. Also to be better equipped for time of release to put in place support to prevent reoffending. No good just releasing someone back into the same chaos.

Finally, over half of participants reported that they would like more training. There were a range of reasons given, from broadening and increasing their depth of knowledge about the impacts that prison has on children and families, to knowing more about what they can do to help families. Over three quarters of participants felt that the training would be beneficial to other members of their own organisations in other services areas, particularly to frontline staff such as teachers, family workers and prison staff.

3.0 Evaluation findings and learning

3.1 Findings

Based upon the last three years of project outputs and outcomes data, the evaluation makes the following substantive findings.

- **Family support work is now embedded in the host prisons:** this project has enabled the Nepacs' work in prisons to become integrated into the prison system and its regimes. Prison senior and operational staff have developed familiarity, trust and respect for the organisation and the work, which has facilitated effective delivery. This is apparent in both practical arrangements, testimonies from the prison and a growing respect for the nature of the work. This demonstrates that there is a 'fit' between the project and a prison regime with key objectives of safety and humanely holding a custodial population and reducing future reoffending. Prison governors in all the establishments where family support is located spoke highly of Nepacs' work and placed value on its impact on: safer custody and supporting vulnerable prisoners through increasing the support available to them, ensuring where possible the involvement of the family and improving their mental health and wellbeing; taking pressure off prison staff who are increasingly only able to focus on their security role as a result of diminishing staff numbers; and improving prisoner behaviour and regime compliance, through a calming, advocacy and information giving role.
- **Increased awareness of the issues of parental imprisonment and family impact:** as the regional lead organisation for prisoners' families, a key organisational objective is to build awareness of the issues and hardships experienced by those families and the importance of maintaining relationships. Through the advocacy work funded by the Big Lottery, and in particular through the Hidden Sentence training, there has been considerable success in this area over the last three years. There are more organisations now who have an

awareness of these issues, there are more services, better existing services and more strategic linkages concerning prisoners' families than before the project. We know this because of the surveys of the organisations who have attended Hidden Sentence.

Box 3.0 Family Support Worker case study three

The Chaplain rang me to ask if I was aware of a prisoner that had received a letter stating that his 14 year old sister had died over the weekend. We decided that we would both go and see the prisoner together. He appeared to have taken the news well and stated he did not want to go to the funeral but would like to attend the chapel and light a candle the day of the funeral to mark his respects.

The prisoner went on to tell me he was going to become a father and that his partner was heavily pregnant. He became agitated and visibly upset. I calmed him down by explaining all the things we offer to fathers at the prison. He said his partner's placenta was not in the right place and that could cause complications with the birth which he was worried about.

I contacted his partner the following Monday after she had her scan and she told me the placenta was back to where it should be and the baby's head had engaged and all was well. I relayed all of this back to the father to be, who was relieved. He stressed his concerns at becoming a father and he said he did not want to be a "*shit father*" like his own. I put him on the 'Dads at Deerbolt' parenting class, he completed this and really enjoyed it. He has also completed Storybook Dads and is attending our father focus group. He would like a labour phone call and wants to attend all of our special visits; New Father, Father Child and Family days. He really does want to be a positive role model in his child's life and he is engaging well.

- **An effective delivery model:** the Big Lottery funded project period has enabled Nepacs to confirm, consolidate and refine the family support intervention model. The Nepacs model was first developed between 2011 and 2013 with funding from the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education; this current Big Lottery funding has enabled it to become a more mature and sophisticated

initiative. There is now a confidence that a model has been developed and tested which has proved to be effective and can be transferred to other prisons. This has created a foundation which can be built upon and continually improved, which indeed has been happening over the last year in the development of the homework clubs, fathers wings and new fathers visits. An important aspect to this refining of a delivery model has been a recognition that there are effectively two types of family support intervention: a brief intervention; and a longer, more substantive support intervention. These have time and caseload implications and are discussed at length in the year two evaluation report (available upon request).

- **Evidenced beneficiary impact:** the project has been responsible for important outcomes for prisoners and their families. As a result of the family support work, there are:
 - Prisoners who have either started family relationships where previously there were none, or have improved and stronger family relationships and as a result of this they have improved wellbeing and are more regime compliant (more likely to behave themselves because they are less angry/stressed about important situations which they previously felt were beyond their control);
 - Prisoners and families are better prepared for release because they have more realistic expectations of each other and with support they have been able to better communicate with one another;
 - Prisoners involved in care proceedings have a greater understanding of the process and as a result they are better able to process what is happening to them and have subsequent improved mental health and less likely to self harm;
 - Children have seen more of their parents in constructive situations, spending more quality time with each other. As a result of the project there has been more child parent and family visits, family days and homework clubs. Increased contact leads to greater understanding and

being better able to process and come to terms with having a parent in prison, which has subsequent psycho social benefits. We are relying on child psychology research and evidence as a measure of the benefit of the intervention for children; we are able to independently verify that as a result of the project, more children have been able to spend longer times with their parents in prison and they have judged this contact to be beneficial.

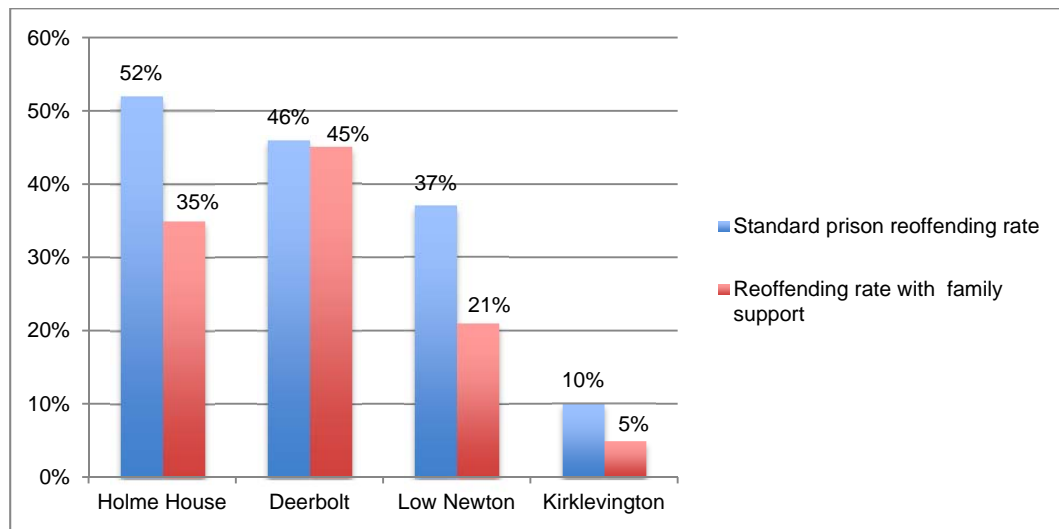
- **Impact on reducing reoffending:** we have been able to access police data that indicates the project is having an impact in reducing reoffending with the prisoners who receive support. There are two important publications which are repetitively referred to and which have historically provided the evidence base upon which to base statements about the impact of family support on recidivism. These are: May *et al*, 2008⁵, a Ministry of Justice publication which concluded that prisoners who received regular family contact were 39% less likely to reoffend; and Ditchfield, 1994⁶, who concluded that if prisoners are released with no family support, they are six times more likely to offend again. There are no other sources which connect family support and reducing reoffending. Thus we were interested to investigate reoffending rates using real-time data. The standard Home Office measure of reducing reoffending is whether an individual commits an offence in the 12 months after they have been released from prison: if they have not, then an intervention is said to have been successful in reducing reoffending. Although there is a national percentage of the average rate of reoffending, each establishment has their own percentage figure, which is significantly more representative of the particular prison population (as there are considerable variations in rate depending on gender, age, offence type, etc.). We identified 140 prisoners who had received family support and who were released in the 2013/14 calendar year and who spent a

⁵May, C., Sharma, N. and Stewart, D. 2004. Factors linked to reoffending: a one-year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004, Research Summary 5, Ministry of Justice, HM Government.

⁶Ditchfield, J. 1994. Family Ties and Recidivism. Home Office Research Bulletin, No. 36, HM Government.

minimum of 12 months in the community. We put these names through the Police National Computer to look at their offending behaviour post release (number of convictions). The results are shown in the following figures. As can be seen, the project has had positive impact on reducing reoffending in all of the prisons⁷ where family support is provided by Nepacs.

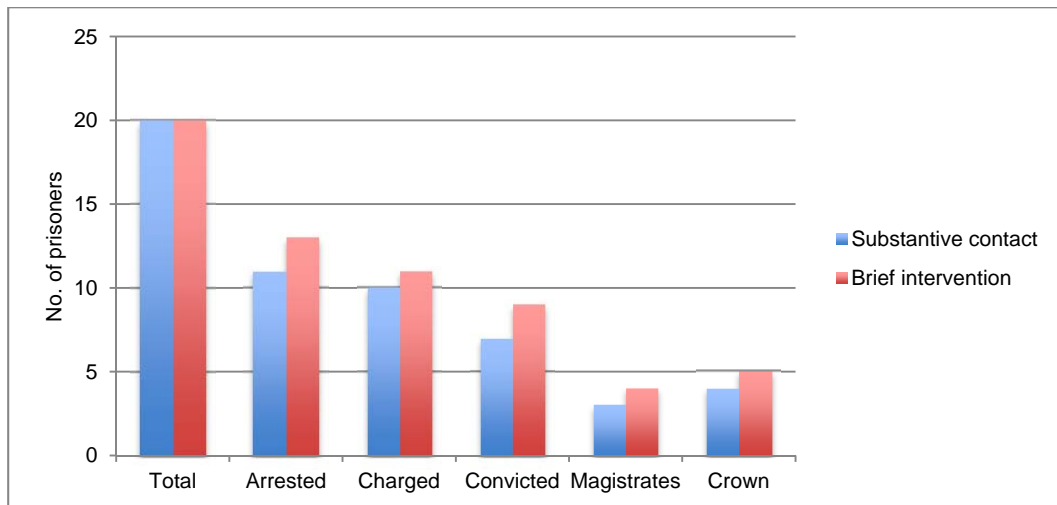
Figure 3.0 The project's impact on reoffending rates, 2013 to 2016



The following figure compares Nepacs' brief with substantive interventions in one prison and demonstrates that the more indepth and longer term support has more of effect on reducing reoffending. Although not surprising, this is valuable information as it indicates that reducing reoffending works better when longer term support is provided. Again, this is important to consider when and if family support contracts specify a certain number of prisoners in a workers caseload, i.e. higher numbers mean only brief interventions can be delivered, whereas low caseloads mean substantive work can be provided and hence have a meaningful impact on reoffending.

⁷ This includes the female prison HMP&YOI Low Newton, which is part of the Family Engagement Work (FEW) Ministry of justice funded contract. Although a different name and funder, the content and delivery of the work is the same (although as a female establishment the nature of the work is different, but the working model is the same).

Figure 3.1 Difference in reoffending rates comparing substantive contact and brief interventions in HMP Holme House, 2013 to 2016



- Continued to build organisational reputation:** over this three year period and with the consolidation of the workstream, Nepacs has developed their reputation; both building an awareness of the existence of the organisation in agencies who did not know about them, and increasing the strength of reputation amongst others who were able to witness the delivery of this project. During the project period, the organisation has delivered two high profile regional events, one in conjunction with i-HOP Barnardo's about supporting children affected by parental imprisonment and the other in partnership with Open Gate about women in prison. Nepacs was also a winner in the 2015 North East Charity Awards and was a national CLINKS case study of best practice in voluntary sector criminal justice work. Thus, the Big Lottery investment has contributed significantly to the strengthening of an important North East voluntary sector organisation.
- An effective and cohesive project team:** it is a considerable achievement to maintain a committed and high performing project team in such a pressured environment with a dispersed staff contingent. In spite of some significant periods of sick leave due to serious illness in two staff members, Nepacs has been able to maintain a team where morale is high, stress related sickness is low and performance is of a high standard. This has ensured that project outcomes

have been achieved. Working in a prison environment in the male custodial estate can be challenging on a professional and personal level; staff can face intimidation from both prisoners and prison officers. In addition to this, they are the only Nepacs staff member working inside the prison and can feel isolated. Also, the nature of the work can be very emotionally draining and they need to feel supported and able to offload any issues. The Nepacs' management structure and the supporting ethos of the organisation has created and maintained a highly professional and effective staff team.

3.1 Learning

The project has demonstrated considerable learning throughout its lifetime, in subject areas which include project management and administration, outcome monitoring and delivery techniques. For this evaluation, we have identified the following learning points to take forwards to the next project delivery phase.

Challenging preconceptions: there is still more work to be done changing attitudes of some prison operational staff, which is more a task for the prison system, than Nepacs. There has been considerable movement in attitudes of prison staff over the last 10 years about the 'rights' of prisoners to receive any social welfare service. Instead of a blanket response that prisoners do not 'deserve' any support, there now exists a greater awareness of the importance of support in efforts to reduce reoffending. This has been particularly the case for family support work, i.e. some prison staff have felt that prisoners and their families should not receive support and because of this a negative attitude can be displaced onto the delivery organisation. Much of the shift has been due to the Hidden Sentence training as well as the knowledge transfer which comes from co-delivery of services. However, there are some areas where attitudes continue to be entrenched and continued attention should play a part of any continuing professional development programme and be given to all new prison staff.

- Services for remand prisoners: prison estate re-organisation currently being negotiated may offer opportunities for Nepacs and their family support work. One potential area for this is family support for the remand population, if this population is separated and concentrated in one or two establishments. It was identified by one prison governor that this is a population which has high numbers of at-risk and vulnerable prisoners. Remand prisoners and their families often have very little grasp of what is happening to them and may need support which, as remand prisoners, may pass them by. There may therefore be a potential to design/develop a specific family support service for this group, particularly if governors have more control over prison budgets and can pay for such a service. Continuing to examine reoffending data: we have just started to look at the impact that the family support work has on reducing reoffending rates as demonstrated by the Police National Computer. With the help of the police, we need to continue to quantitatively monitor the work's impact on rates of recidivism. This includes monitoring the effects on reoffending of different types of family support, for example, brief compared with substantive interventions, and also looking in more detail at the offender profiles and the effects of the work. This will lead to greater understanding about the impact of family support work which will have national significance.

4.0 Conclusion

We have been fortunate to be able to evaluate the Integrated Family Support programme over the last three years. We now understand many of the impacts of the programme on prisoner and family behaviour and wellbeing. We also understand that Nepacs has played a driving role in the development of a North East family support programme, which is the subject of a forthcoming article in a special edition of The Probation Journal on children and families of offenders (September 2016). We need to further understand the impact on reducing reoffending and on children with whom they work: what are the effects of support in mitigating the negative impacts of having a parent in prison.

From a funding perspective, the evaluation has demonstrated that Nepacs has fulfilled the agreed targets of the funding agreement. These have been achieved during a three year project period which has been effected by staff sickness and some staff turnover, demonstrating a proactive and effective management system. This has been noteworthy; that Nepacs has a sufficiently resourced and effective management structure to ensure good project morale and smooth delivery in an often pressurised prison-based environment. We look forward to the next three years.