# **HMP/YOI Isis**

Public Sector Prisons

London Region

**Family and Significant Others Strategy**

December 2024 – December 2025

**Governor**

E Thomas

**Date:**

December 2024

**Introduction**

Maintaining family relationships is paramount in achieving a reduction in re-offending. HMP /YOI Isis is committed to the fostering of good family relationships and the maintenance of existing relationships, in order to aid the resettlement of prisoners. The prison aims to provide a framework that enables positive outcomes and interactions for children and families with a close family member in our custody. The impact of any custodial sentence is not only felt on the prisoner but also on the family and friends of the prisoner.

We recognise the complex territory of family relationships of those in our care. For many, their family experiences may be negative and traumatic. Some will have been the perpetrators of harm to their families. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to supporting prisoners and their families at HMP/YOI Isis as we understand the dynamics for each family may be very different.

Safeguarding for Prisoners in custody of their families may be required in some instances. The Senior Probation Officers located in the establishment are the leads for safeguarding, supported by a Public Protection / OMU worker.

Families may include parents, partners, children, grandchildren and in some circumstances very close friends. Children may be young or grown up. The Person in custody may be the sole or primary carer for their children or have little or no contact with their children. They may be carers for older family members or those with a disability. Prisoners may have grown up in the care system with foster families and foster-siblings. In these cases, a Personal Advisor plays an essential supportive role to the care experienced individual.

**Assisted Prison Visits Scheme**

The Assisted Prison Visits Scheme (APVS) provides a contribution towards prison visit costs for close relatives, partners or sole visitors. The visitor must be on a low income.

Apply online at <http://www.gov.uk/helpwithprisonvisits>

Guidance on this process can be found by speaking to Visits Booking staff in our Visitors Centre. PACT Meet and Greet staff will also be able to provide information during Visit times.

**Accumulated Visits**

For prisoners who are not local to the London area we can facilitate accumulated visits at prisons closer to their home. In many cases it may be appropriate to transfer the prisoner on a permanent basis to a prison closer to home but not always (i.e. someone facing trial, engaging with a specific intervention or programme). Ensuring that repatriation occurs at the earliest opportunity is a further recommendation of the Lord Farmer report.

**Why focus on Families?**

Where this document refers to “families”, we are including all positive and supportive external relationships; parents, partners, carers, personal advisors to care leavers, siblings, close extended-family members, and those who hold significant roles in the lives of our young men.

Over 10 million children in the world have a parent in prison and Action for Prisoners Families estimates that in the United Kingdom approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year.

Research has shown that the children of prisoners are 3 times more likely to take part in anti-social and delinquent behaviour and it is estimated that 65% of boys who have a father in prison will go onto offend themselves.

Supportive families are a great resource for prisoners, and they often play a vital role in helping an individual move away from crime. A supportive family can also provide effective protective factors for prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. Having a stable family to return to on release can also encourage prisoners to engage in sentence planning interventions and maintain positive behaviour whilst in custody.

Families experience emotional distress with the loss of a loved one from the family home and/or family life: for example, families miss out on sharing family events such as birthdays and Christmas, or even simple family activities such as meals, with the imprisoned family member.

Research shows that a prisoner who receives visits from their family is 39% less likely to reoffend within a year than a prisoner who does not receive visits.

In a small number of cases, maintaining family ties may not be appropriate, possibly due to the risk of harm that a prisoner poses to the family. Safeguarding children and supporting victims will always be a priority for HMP/YOI Isis and we work in conjunction with the National Probation Service to achieve this.

At HMP/YOI Isis the Children and Families Pathway, aims to ensure the interests of prisoners and their families are addressed through:

* Working in partnership with PACT and the Routes to Change programme to enhance the family support offer considerably for prisoners at Isis through a team of Family support Workers who engage with prisoners from the point of their induction into the prison.
* Providing a welcoming, comfortable, and enjoyable visits experience,
* Providing family day visits to allow fathers time to develop relationships with their children.
* Working with partners to provide advice and guidance to families and prisoners.
* Developing a programme of activities within the prison to promote positive family relationships, involving the family in resettlement decisions.
* Helping to maintain family ties, where appropriate, supporting the young men in our care with issues they have no control over while they are locked up, offer them guidance and support.

**Governance and Management**

The Children and Families Pathway is overseen by our Head of Operations manager, with support from other departments and agencies such as: Social Workers, Novus, OMU, PACT & Residential. The Visits Custodial Manager will be the FaSO Champion who will support the Lead (Head of Ops). In order to ensure that the “family” remains the focus of our work towards the rehabilitation of our prisoners, the Pathway will be monitored through the following processes:

* Key Worker Supervision
* Routes to Change Family work. Building on Relationships, family work
* Performance Measures 2024/2025
* Contract Management with PACT
* Functional Mailbox for Family & Care Leavers

**Measuring our Success**

Outcomes and progress on areas for development will be measured through: -

* Visitors Survey
* Prisoner Council Meeting
* Reducing Reoffending Meetings
* HMIP inspections
* Prisoner MQPL
* Prisoner & Family Feedback
* Monitoring Complaints
* Prisoner Offender Management Feedback

**HMP/YOI Isis Improvements and vision**

Many changes have already been introduced to improve the visits experience at Isis. Our vision for the future is outlined below.

**Environment**

* Promote phone calls during induction with the use of PIN phones to facilitate family contact. Each cell has an in-cell phone and we have extended the amount of time on the calls to 30 minutes per call to maintain family contact.
* Maintain a clean, safe and child friendly environment in the hall with up-to-date information for prisoners and families.
* Provide children with a play area in the hall where, with support from Routes 2 Change fully trained staff, prisoners can play with their children.
* Continue to use the visits facility to invite families and significant others to attend and celebrate the success and achievements of our prisoners.
* Encourage the prisoners to use the Email a Prisoner, to maintain family contact with letters and photographs of their families and children.
* Using HMIP inspection reports and HMIP expectations document to identify and strengthen family provision.

**Routes to Change /Family Engagement worker & PACT**

* Routes to Change will embed a relational ‘family-first’ approach at HMP/YOI Isis by working with PACT to support the delivery of the Routes 2 Change project. The project will support men at HMP/YOI Isis and their families to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young men in our care at Isis, whilst implementing the full recommendations of the Lord Farmer Review. PACT in collaboration with the prison will provide support to prisoners and their families during their sentence, and in the community, up to 6 months post-release.
* PACT also provider wider support to our young men and their families throughout the prison.  A PACT caseworker is able to offer mediation to families who may need support to improve their relationships or to mend broken ties, where that is appropriate for both the family member and our residents.
* PACT gather information about young men who have received little or no visits over a defined period of time and will approach these individuals to discuss what support can be offered. PACT work in partnership with the prison to do this.
* PACT will carry out a visitor’s survey every 6 months, which is used to consider future changes to the services we provide. Visiting a family member or Significant other may be very difficult for the prisoner and the family and full of emotions, the visit Centre play a crucial role in supporting visitors and engaging in their individual needs, aiming to make the visiting experience a positive one for all.
* The Family Engagement Worker (FEW) provides individualised family support to prisoners that improves their emotional well-being, motivates compliance with the prison regime and reduces the risk of self-harm, violence, and disruptive behaviour.
* HMP/YOI Isis support PACT in the delivery of relationship courses to prisoners via in cell packs. This started in 2020, and PACT have been supporting prisoners to complete family-based courses, including ‘Going home’ and ‘Dads reconnected’.
* HMP/YOI Isis and PACT work as a team to identify and develop ways to improve their FaSO provision. This includes meetings to discuss how best to reinvest profits made from the Visits Tea Bar which would improve the impact this may have on families. This has included Table Football Tables, purchasing of a new Coffee Machine and a photograph booth which allows families to take photos at a relatively low cost. Photos can be taken form the Visits hall back with the prisoner to his cell, or by the family to take home.

**Care Leavers**

The definition of ‘Care Experienced people’, relates to all individuals that have spent any time in Local Authority care as a child, is not dependant on age, the duration of care or whether they meet the legal definition of a ‘Care Leaver’.

Being in care for most people is normally associated with being in foster care; a home with someone who is not a relative or friend. However, people can be placed in secure units, children’s homes, or semi-independent living accommodation.

Local authorities have a duty to young people leaving care to inform them of services available and provide support to successfully move onwards and upwards to independence. This is called a Local Offer for Care Leavers.

Care Leavers are identified as soon as they come into the establishment and are met with by the Care Leaver Orderly who will offer guidance and support and go over their entitlements from their local authority. Within 12 weeks prior to them leaving we ensure Housing, Bank Account and ID are in place as this helps to have a stable and structured life and somewhere to live and knows that people care about their wellbeing.

We concentrate on:

**Health:** If you have health problems, your pathway plan should say how they will help you manage them. It is not just for problems, its arranging, Doctors, Dentist, Mental health, and Health screening.

**My Emotional Well-being and Behaviour**: How do you feel about yourself? How do you get on with other people? Are there things that could help? Let your social worker or personal advisor know so they can follow up.

**Education:** Training and Employment: Your plan should make sure you have everything you need to succeed and are on track to achieve your educational and career goals. This includes clear aims for you to meet and how we will support you.

**Home:** This should be assessed before your release date and with the support from your Local Authority and through your Pathway Plan.

your accommodation (current or planned) and see if it is suitable for you, including location, safety, bills, and rent.

**Independent Living Skills**: This should look at how prepared you are for life as an adult. What do you need to learn to be ready to live independently? This can vary from cooking a meal to paying bills.

Family, Social and Community Relationships: Do you have a good relationship with your family? Have you got people to turn to when you need them? Your plan should identify who is available to help you.

**OXLEAS Interventions Family Service**

* This Family Service has been developed to strengthen family ties in whilst offenders are in custody and in the community upon their release.
* After assessment of the offender and family members in the community the Family Worker will develop a holistic package of support to improve communication, trust, and child development/wellbeing.
* The Family Worker will meet with people referred for an initial discussion or assessment and let both the client and the referrer know of the outcome.

When working with families in the community is not possible or appropriate, family orientated interventions will still be offered in custody, these include:

* Family Group Conferences (Held in Legal Visits and aims to outline what is working within the family, and how we can improve relationships whilst there is a family member in custody)
* Advice and information on maintaining relationships in prison
* Regular and structured “one to one” work on relationships and communication skills
* Holistic support focused on strengths and wellbeing as well as support with improving relationships, communication and resilience
* Referrals on to relevant services for family members

**Personal Advisors (PA)**

* 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. The support of a personal advisor is available for those who would find it of benefit it until their 25th birthday.
* Personal advisors take on the role of ‘corporate parents. Simply, this means that they should carry out as many of the roles of a parent that they can.
* They cannot do this alone, and we need to work with local authorities to support them in this role.
* Personal advisors offer support by maintaining contact, financial support, assistance with looking for accommodation.
* Personal advisors also prepare a pathway plan.
* There is a requirement for them to visit their care leaver whilst in custody every eight weeks.

**Visits to Care Leavers**

* The Personal Advisor is required to visit every 8 weeks.
* Care leavers may not have visits from family members for several reasons; they may not have anyone other than their Personal Advisor visit.
* Because of this care leavers may be socially isolated and subjected to victimisation and we should offer support to them
* Care leavers may be trying to re-establish relationships with parent, birth family or siblings and as such they may going through a range of emotions – we should be aware they can be vulnerable during this period.

When a care leaver is in custody we should:

* Ensure that we know about the visits from Personal Advisors and that the prisoner knows it is his Personal Advisor that is visiting, otherwise they may not attend.
* Offer the opportunity for Personal Advisors to meet their care leavers on a social visit; it provides a more relaxed setting and enables the care leaver to have refreshments.
* Consider a joint visit with the Personal Advisor and the Prison Offender Manager (or Key Worker) to discuss sentence / pathway plan or for release planning.
* Recognise that sometimes the Personal Advisor may be the only person who can bring the care leaver’s younger siblings to visit. We should consider possible sensitivities around this meeting, for example if it is the first time they have met for some time, or if their sibling is being adopted.
* Be flexible in our approach and offer a range of options depending on the circumstances; the Personal Advisor may need to visit in a different capacity at different times.
* Consider how volunteer schemes can be used to provide visitors to those who don’t have them.

**Family Law Advice at HMP Isis**

BPP’s Pro Bono service have identified capacity to offer support to offenders at HMP Isis that would benefit from Family legal advice and guidance. Support could include, but is not limited to, advice around child contact, contact restrictions and information around the Family courts or care system.

Family support services at HMP YOI Isis receive frequent referrals corresponding to accessing Family Solicitors and approaching the Family courts. As a result, Family Workers have identified a need for more specialist advice and expertise which could be offered by students, trainees, and staff at BPP Law School.

**Visits Times**

**Cut off time for entry will be 15:15**

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Day** | **AM Session Timings** | **PM Session Timings** | | Monday Tuesday |  | **No Visits**  14:30 -16:00. Doors open @ 13:30 | | Wednesday  Thursday  Friday |  | 14:30 -16:00. Doors open @ 13:30  14:30 -16:00. Doors open @ 13:30  **No Visits** | | Saturday  Sunday |  | 14:30 -16:00. Doors open @ 13:30  14:30 -16:00. Doors open @ 13:30 | |
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* Refreshments are available for purchase in the Visits Hall.
* Visitors have access to a wealth of information about activities, services, and courses on offer within the prison.  PACT provides a ‘First Time Visitor’ booklet that is very useful to those new to visiting a family member in prison. For those who require information in another language PACT provide this service online.
* The visits hall also provides some play equipment for children to use under their guardian’s supervision.
* The visits hall is a spacious environment, with seating designed to create an informal visiting atmosphere. During Family Day visits PACT provides a volunteer to support ‘facilitated play’ opportunities for young visitors.
* We work with partner charities Bright Horizons and GiveaBook.
* Bright Horizons have provided funding to stock the Visits play area in 2019. A further scheme of investment is being discussed to further improve the extended Visits play area.
* Give a Book is a charity dedicated to promoting books and the pleasure of reading in the hardest places. Our main work is in prisons, schools and with disadvantaged children.





Visits Hall at YOI Isis

**Chaplaincy**

* As well as meeting the religious needs of the various faiths represented at Isis, The Chaplaincy will also provide support to those prisoners who receive news of ill relatives or bereavements.
* Processes will be in place to support marriages, baptisms, and other significant events, where possible, they will include participation from families and significant others.
* Access to Crisis Fund from Faith Charities in prison for the children of young Dads. Each young Dad benefits from the Crisis Fund from the Catholic Children Society - his child/children receive a cheque paid to his partner to meet with practical domestic needs - e.g. new school uniforms, books, household items, etc.
* Families can use the Chaplaincy as a source of support when dealing with a loved one being in custody.

**Safer Custody Team**

* There is a Safer Prisons hotline that families can use to raise any concerns they may have for their family member. The number will be staffed during normal office hours and there will be an out of hours messaging service in operation. **02033564389**
* We will invite family members to take part in a review process for residents being managed by the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process or in the CSIP process.
* The Safer Custody team will support the training of prisoner Listeners in partnership with The Samaritans. They will celebrate the key role these individuals play in supporting those in crisis. Families will be invited to attend the Graduation events to share in the celebrations of success.
* **If you think a prisoner is at immediate risk, please call the switchboard on**

**0203 356 4000 and ask for the Orderly Officer and explain that your concern is an emergency.**

**Offender Management Unit (OMU)**

* HMP/YOI Isis recognises that Public Protection is one of the core functions of HMPPS and the MOJ. Public Protection is at the forefront of all that we do and is the responsibility of all staff.
* The OMU and National Probation Service will cultivate a collaborative, prison-wide approach to public protection. There will be clear communication between all departments of the establishment and partner agencies.
* On occasion, this risk will be to children or named adults who may be part of the prisoner’s family. This information will determine the ways in which family support can be access by the resident.
* Safeguarding of children will be a priority and depending on the risk level a prisoner poses to children, will determine the level of contact they can have with children whilst in custody. The management of these restrictions may involve mail and telephone PIN monitoring and monitoring of contact with children during visits.

**Available support/information for Children, families, significant others, and professionals working with them.**

* **Action for Prisoners’ Families** www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk – Action for Prisoners’ Families, works for the benefit of prisoners' and offenders' families by representing the views of families and those who work with them.
* **National Information Centre On Children Of Offenders (NICCO)** - www.nicco.org.uk established to provide an information service for all professionals who come into contact with the children and families of offenders, as well as academics and those responsible for strategic development and commissioning. The Centre is delivered by Barnardo’s in partnership with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).
* **AFFECT** – AFFECT provides services for the families of serious offenders and offers support groups to families in the south of England. [www.affect.org.uk](http://www.affect.org.uk)
* **Inside Time** – www.insidetime.org.uk – this website gives visiting and other advice
* **Prisoners’ Family Voices** is a web-based community which gives family members the opportunity to talk to each other. http://prisonersfamiliesvoices.blogspot.com
* **Offenders’ Families Helpline**: 0808 808 2003 [info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk](mailto:info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk)
* **Prisoners’ Families and Friends Service**: 0808 808 3444 info@pffs.org.uk
* **HMP/YOI Isis Safer custody concern line**: 0203 3564389
* **I HOP** ( Barnardo’s ) <https://www.i-hop.org.uk> i-HOP is a one-stop information and advice service to support all professionals (working with children and families of prisoners) and all families of prisoners, bringing together useful information in one place.
* **Bright Horizons Foundation -** [Bright Horizons | Work+Family Solutions](https://solutions.brighthorizons.co.uk/)
* **GiveaBook -** [Give a Book](https://giveabook.org.uk/)