

HMP Forest Bank

Families & Significant Others (FaSO) Strategy

2026/27

OUR MISSION: CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER

Our mission is to change lives for the better, and it is this which lies at the core of everything that we do:

- We work with clients and partners to protect the public;
- We seek to reduce crime by challenging offending behaviour; and
- We offer individuals the opportunity to change

OUR BELIEFS:

Sodexo Justice Services believes that:

- Everyone can change for the better;
- Everyone has the right to be treated humanely, decently, respectfully and fairly; and
- Everyone has the right to live and work in a safe environment.

OUR VALUES

We have a reputation for delivering outstanding justice services, based on our values which are reflected in everything we do: safety, dignity & opportunity.

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INTRODUCTION

The Families and Significant Others (FaSO) strategy at HMP Forest Bank is dedicated to understanding the needs of families affected by imprisonment and widening the scope of meaningful and effective interventions offered to prisoners and their families. Sodexo Justice Services (SJS) acknowledges the importance of engaging families in a prisoner's rehabilitation and through partnership working we look to tackle entrenched problems to improve the well-being of the whole family to aide successful prisoner resettlement and desist from a life of crime.

HMP Forest Bank recognise the importance of the role of FaSOs in rehabilitation and has prioritised family work for a number of years. Since 2012, there has been a dedicated Children and Families Manager in place to drive the FaSO strategy forward and embed the work into the day-to-day work of the prison. Currently, we have a dedicated team of family workers delivering our Pathway. Lord Farmer's 2017 report *'The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime'* cites HMP Forest Bank as delivering areas of best practice demonstrating the commitment to family work in the establishment.

This strategy is structured in response to Lord Farmer's report and his main recommendations:

1. Visitor Centre
2. Staffing Structure
3. Extended Visits
4. Family Learning
5. Gateway Communications

Consideration has also been given to HMIP Expectations, feedback from the Independence Monitoring Board (IMB), HMPPS and a wider context of workforce development and partnership working.

The FaSO pathway is under constant review. The strategy reflects the work we have previously completed and the work we aim to complete going forward. The strategy will be updated at least every twelve months to incorporate the developments that occur in the year pending.

Note: For the purpose of this strategy, we adhere to guidance from HMPPS 'Delivering Effective Family Practice': *"Family is defined as either a blood relative, legal or significant persons that a prisoner identifies as their next of kin. For care-leavers this may be someone that provides a statutory service, friend or associate."* Further to this we recognise that many of our prisoners will have experienced a non-traditional upbringing and we endeavour to accommodate all family circumstances.

For ease of reading this strategy, we refer to 'family' throughout the strategy with the above understanding of different situations.

HISTORY OF THE FaSO PATHWAY (2012 – Present):

Over the last 12 years, the Children and Family pathway has grown and developed, learning from examples of good practice in other prisons, to now provide an outward facing, meaningful and effective family support service.

This strategy focuses on the resettlement work carried out by the Families team. It is written and aligned to wider prison strategies and policies such as:

- Visits Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Custody Policies and Procedures
- Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties Policy Framework
- Vulnerable Prisoners Policy
- Reducing Reoffending Strategy

Current FaSO team structure and supporting departments:

1 x Head of Reducing Reoffending
(Sarah Evans)
1 x Head of Reducing Reoffending/HOMS
(Lynsey Wright)
1 x Family Pathway Manager
(Natalie Buckley)
1 x Senior Family Pathway Worker
3 x Family Pathway Workers
EGS
SJS Visits Staff

Development of the Pathway:

Historically, interventions offered by the Families Team focused on families with young children, limiting the family sessions offered to 'Baby Bonding' (typically for children aged 0-12mths). A gap in interventions offered to older children was identified. During 2023/24 the Families Team service reviewed the family sessions offered, increasing the number of activities available to ensure the service was more inclusive of the whole family unit. Activities suitable for children of all ages were introduced. These included Tots TV sessions (for children aged 1-4yrs), Family Sports sessions (for children of all ages), Games sessions (for children aged 5yrs+), and the continuation of Baby Bonding sessions (for children aged 0-12mths). We ensure that all family sessions are offered in addition to a prisoner's regular social visits allocation, maximising family time.

2025 - Present

Family activities introduced in 2023/24 continue to run successfully to date, however, it was highlighted that some families with multiple children found it difficult to find childcare for a child's siblings if they were for example, attending a baby-bonding session (for babies aged 0-12mths) but they also have a six-year-old child. Due to this, throughout 2025, sessions were opened to children of all ages. We are mindful of managing risk and complete dynamic risk assessments in preparation for each session. Feedback from surveys completed in 2026/27 will be used to continue to develop these activities.

Activity sessions for prisoners with little or no family support were introduced in January 2026. Sessions coined 'No Social Visit' (NSV) sessions were originally offered monthly to these prisoners. The vision being for prisoners with limited family contact to join us to engage in group activities so that they could expand their social network and spend time in a safe, positive environment. We quickly found it was beneficial to invite 'confident' prisoners to these sessions (regardless of their social connections) in addition to our NSV prisoners so that they could encourage positive discussion and socialisation. NSV sessions have been extremely well received by prisoners and as a result, we now run weekly sessions. NSV sessions will continue to be developed throughout 2026.

A positive change going into 2026 saw Family Day sessions increase from 1.5hrs to 2hrs. Historically, the criteria for Family Days was very strict which alienated much of the prison population. At this time only prisoners with an Enhanced IEP status and those that had been on site for three months or more were able to apply. Positive behaviour is also essential. Behaviour is monitored by reviewing negative comments recorded on a prisoner's NOMIS profile. Whilst positive behaviour remains a must, the criteria surrounding a prisoners IEP status has been relaxed. Now both Standard and Enhanced prisoners may apply. Prisoners on Basic regime are not eligible as Basic indicates a prisoner has not acted favourably. The Security criteria will also be reviewed to help maximise attendance at these events.

A focus for 2026/27 is support offered to care leavers and veterans. Over the past year Sodexo have invested a lot of time and resource developing the support offered to both demographics. Charters for both have been created which outline the expectation of support offered to each. The ongoing aim of these initiatives is to raise awareness amongst staff and prisoners alike, to ensure they receive the support they need and deserve. Work with Care Leavers and Veterans is discussed further in this strategy.

To further enhance the FaSO offer for 2026/27, we are working alongside other Sodexo establishments (HMP Altcourse, HMP Peterborough, HMP Northumberland etc) to utilise their knowledge and skills around work with FaSOs as well as sharing ideas for positive family contact. Staff at each establishment have been encouraged to complete investigative visits to partner establishments to see firsthand the positive work carried out there.

VISITORS CENTRE

HMP Forest Bank has a well-run and friendly Visitor's Centre, purpose built in 2006. SJS colleagues ensure the visits process is seamless and accessible to engage with all our visitors, ensuring they feel safe and welcomed whilst building relationships visitors have with prison colleagues.



Visitor Centre

The Families Team are widespread across the prison and have Family Workers based both in the Visitor's Centre and the Visits Hall. There is a dedicated office in the Visitor's Centre with facilities to support confidential discussions between staff and visitors as and when required. The idea being that staff are readily available to support families prior to them entering the prison. The additional office in the Visits Hall ensures Family Workers are also on hand should support be required on a social visit.

Enhanced Gate Security

The Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) was introduced to HMP Forest Bank in 2021/22. This initiative saw the gate security team merge with the Visitor's Centre to help make the visiting experience seamless and more controlled. Visitors are now searched and processed more efficiently which helps to reduce waiting times. Feedback from this change has been positive with visitors reporting they feel safer going through the process.

More information on the visiting process and how we meet HMIP expectations can be found in HMP Forest Bank's Visits Policy. The Families Team also offer a Family Information booklet with information on various processes within the prison (inc. the search process and visits experience).

The Visiting Experience for Children

Using regular feedback from visitors and prisoners, we continue to develop and enhance the visiting environment with a particular focus on children. To further enhance the visits experience, colourful images are used in areas throughout the visiting process to brighten up the space. The hall is also decorated for Family Day events to help the space feel more inviting and child friendly.

Play activities are available in the Visits Hall during social visits. There are craft packs and activity type sheets such as crosswords, Sudoku puzzles for older children and adults. We are continuing to develop our play activities considering visitor and prisoner feedback to ensure children feel safe and confident when they visit. Whilst we encourage children to spend time with their families during visits, there is a small play area available for children and visitors to use.



Entrance to Visitor Centre



Forest Bank Visits Hall

Bright Space Play Area:

Forest Bank proudly worked alongside Bright Horizons to provide a new 'bright space' play area in the Visits Hall. The 'bright space' was officially opened in January 2024. Children and visitors are free to use the bright space if they wish to. For security reasons prisoners are required to remain seated at their allocated table.



Since the opening of the play area, it has been difficult to ensure it remains well stocked with toys and games etc. Sadly, we have found some children do not respect the space and have destroyed the toys on display. If families do use the Bright Space we kindly ask that they respect the toys and equipment.

Supporting Anxious/Vulnerable Visitors:

The Families Team aim to support families visiting the establishment by offering supportive sessions referred to as 'New to You' sessions. These sessions take place outside of regular visiting hours and so are an opportunity for children or visitors who are apprehensive about visiting the establishment to have a quieter tour of the Visitors Centre, search process and Visits Hall. More information on supportive measures is available upon request.

Forest Bank also recognises the importance of supporting prisoners with additional needs. The visits hall can sometimes be noisy which can be a difficult environment for children / families with neurodiversity (e.g. Autism or hearing impairments etc). We offer use of the 'Diversity Booth' which is a sound proofed pod large enough to fit 4-6 individuals. The booth offers security and a quieter space for those who need it. To request use of the booth prisoners can send an app to the Visits department via the kiosk when booking their social visit. Similarly, families may also email the Booking Line (FB.Booking@sodexgov.co.uk) to request use of the booth. Families must provide proof of their need on their first visit. A note will then be added to the system highlighting evidence has been provided. To date we only have one booth available and so it may not always be available upon request.



Diversity Booth (photo 1)



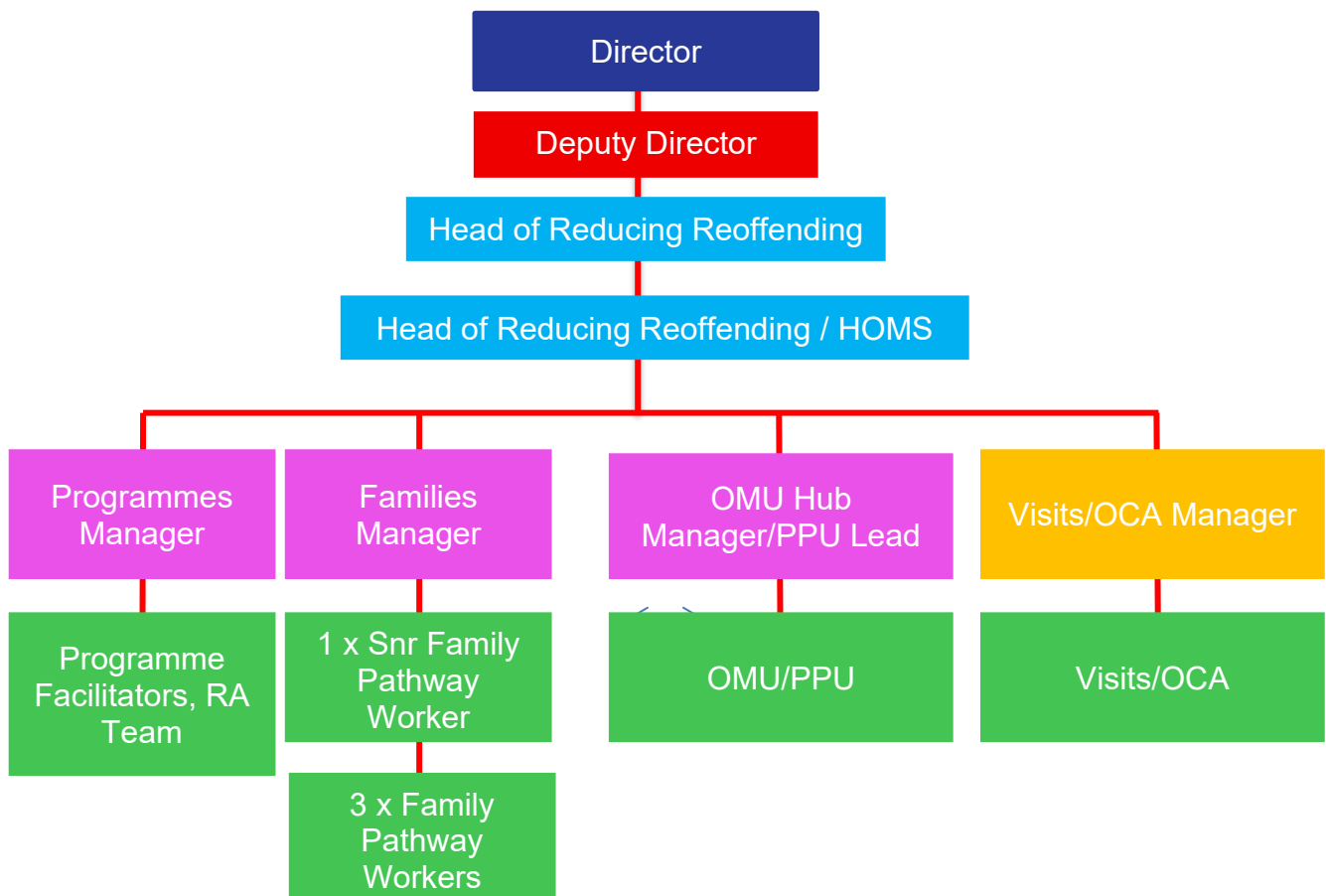
Diversity Booth (photo 2)

The Visits Hall also has a photobooth available for families to use upon request. Tokens to use the booth are available to purchase from the Tea Bar at a cost of £2.

STAFFING STRUCTURE

Throughout 2026, Sodexo will roll out the new contract awarded at the back end of 2025. Changes to the staffing structure may be observed during this process but at present, the staffing structure is as below. Family work within HMP Forest Bank is recognised for its positive impact on prisoners, their families and resettlement as whole. A staffing structure is in place which lends itself to the successful functioning of a Families service.

The Families Team currently have a Family Pathway Manager supported by 1 x Senior Family Worker and 3 x Family Pathway Workers.



The Children and Families Pathway is governed through quarterly Reducing Reoffending meetings attended by a range of functions involved in the delivery of family work. In addition, the FaSO pathway contributes to other key meetings within the prison such as ACCT reviews and the Inter Departmental Risk Management meeting (SIM/CSIP). Feedback from the Families team contributes to the effective management of prisoners.

PERFORMANCE & MEASURES

The Families Team closely monitor their outcomes and report them on a monthly basis to senior management as well as the Controller's Team. The data recorded is extensive and highlights the positive work completed by the team. An example of the data recorded is as follows:

Performance Data – Feb 2026 Overview:

- **4 families currently on the team case load** – complex cases receiving intense support from a dedicated Family Worker.
- **534 New Inductions** contacted within 2 days of their reception. Welfare check completed and information on Families Team service given.
- **31 x Welfare checks/121s** completed
- **4 x Multi-Agency visits** facilitated with complex cases.
- **4 x Baby Bonding** sessions completed (14 families in total)
- **4 x Tots TV** sessions completed (15 families in total)
- **3 x Games** Sessions (11 families in total)
- **3 x Family Sports** sessions (24 families)
- **4 x Craft Sessions** (14 families in total) – extended session
- **3 x NSV Support Groups** (64 prisoners in total) – A session for prisoners who do not receive social visits.
- **572 x Family Information booklets** issued
- **1 x VIC Forum**
- **1 x Family Forum**
- **300 families supported in the Visitors Centre** (311 contacts in total)
- **284 families supported via email or telephone** (296 contacts in total)
- **Special Event** – 1 x Family Focus event hosted in support of Children's Mental Health Awareness week (29 families in total).

Groupwork delivered:

- **2 x Positive Thinking** sessions (18 Prisoners in total)
- **2 x Positive Parenting** sessions (18 Prisoners in total)
- **2 x Pre-Release** sessions (25 prisoners in total)

In addition to monthly feedback reports, the FaSO pathway is assessed annually via a set of performance measures. The measures are used nationally and consist of 12 targets, each designed to measure the establishments performance in a range of different areas. Each area is thought to have a significant impact on the overall service/support offered to prisoners and their families. To date the HMP Forest Bank FaSO pathway has been reviewed three times using these measures. The service was proud to report it achieved full marks in the measures, scoring a total of 144/144. The service strives to maintain this level of scoring in the 2026/27 review.

EXTENDED VISITS

HMP Forest Bank offer a good level of social visits, above the expected standard. All social visits take place in the Visits Hall (see image below). Historically, prisoners would send a visiting order (VO) to friends and family allowing them to book a social visit. The current process requires prisoners to book social visits via an electronic kiosk system available on every houseblock.

The prison also moved to a block booking system meaning prisoners have set times/dates they are able to book a visit. This change meant a better staffing structure could be implemented to oversee each visiting session, ultimately increasing the safety of prisoners and their families.

The number of social visits a prisoner receives is determined by several factors. This includes their prison status i.e. whether they are sentenced or on remand. The entitlement for remand prisoners is higher than that for those that are sentenced. The prisoners' IEP level (Incentives and Earned Privileges) also affects their social visits entitlement. Prisoners are categorised as either Basic, Standard or Enhanced. The allocation for Enhanced prisoners is more favourable. Upon arrival at the prison all prisoners are given a Standard categorisation.



Forest Bank Visits Hall

The prison recently introduced an extended social visits session which takes place once per week. This session is 2hrs long (in comparison to the standard 1hr visiting session) and only available for prisoners with an Enhanced IEP status. Extended visits may also be requested by prisoners/family members in exceptional

circumstances e.g. where families have travelled long distances. The Families Team and Visits staff work together to accommodate these requests where possible.

Purple Visits:

Purple Visits (video calling) was introduced during the COVID pandemic as an alternative to face-to-face visits. The set-up of these sessions is very similar to Face-Time or Skype. Appropriate contact is monitored by Visits staff. Purple Visits are now used as a regular visiting option (i.e. prisoners can choose to have either a face-to-face visit or a Purple Visit), the only difference being that the family member is responsible for booking the Purple Visit and prisoners are responsible for booking face-to-face visits.

The initial set up of Purple Visits was very primitive as the computer terminals were separated by dividers. Concerns were raised regarding privacy and confidentiality and so the set up was upgraded. We now offer five private, soundproof booths.



Purple Visits (Video Calling Booths)

Family Contact:

We recognise that family contact thrives beyond social visits and so in addition to these there are several ways we encourage family contact. These resources are available to all prisoners:

- **Email a prisoner** (family members can use this service to send an email to a prisoner). Prisoners are now able to send replies.
- **In-cell phones** (prisoners have access to a telephone in their cell). Prisoners are only able to dial out; they cannot accept incoming calls.
- **Post/Mail**

The Families Team offer a range of family sessions designed to promote family contact. Sessions offered are considered to be 'extended visits' for prisoners and their families as they are offered in addition to the regular visits entitlement. Sessions include Baby Bonding sessions, Family Days etc. For the full list of sessions offered by the Families Team please see annex 1.

All prisoners are eligible to apply for sessions offered by the Families Team. In addition to family sessions the team also provide a more intense level of support to families that need it e.g. where there is Social Care involvement or conflict within relationships etc. These families are taken onto the Families Team case load and are allocated a specific case worker to oversee the package of support offered. This is referred to as casework.

Where appropriate, families are encouraged to engage in a prisoner's rehabilitation. Attending relevant multi-agency meetings arranged in the prison may help to strengthen family bonds which is considered to be an important part of a prisoner's rehabilitation. Examples of multi-agency meetings may include (list not exhaustive):

- Social Care contact visits
- Final contact visits (before adoption)
- ACCT/C-SIP reviews
- Pre-release meetings
- Post programme reviews
- Recovery client's casework
- Compassionate visits (e.g. following a bereavement, terminal illness etc)

Prisoners may request that family members are invited to attend these meetings (if they aren't already part of these). Where such requests are made, the Families Team contact family members to make arrangements

FAMILY LEARNING

The Families team are flexible in their approach to the support offered to prisoners and their families and aim to adapt to their everchanging needs. We understand that some of our prisoners may benefit from education and learning around their relationships and their interactions within those relationships. To promote positive relationships with family members and/or professionals they may encounter, the team offer support on a 1-1 basis as well as a range of interventions. 1-1 sessions are used to discuss progress made against identified issues (dependent on individual circumstances) as well as being an opportunity to affirm positive thinking/behaviour within a relationship. Rigid views/thinking would also be challenged as part of this process.

In addition to 1-1 support, the team also offer a range of family focused interventions, all designed to help maintain and nurture family bonds (see appendix 1). The Families team are flexible in their approach to the support offered and aim to adapt their approach in an effort to remain current.

As part of the wider Reducing Reoffending function within HMP Forest Bank, prisoners also have access to a range of additional interventions. There is a strong emphasis on family involvement throughout the Reducing Reoffending team and wider prison with interventions and services such as:

- Accredited post programme reviews.
- Joint working for those prisoners reducing harm and/or achieving abstinence within the Recovery pathway. The recovery service is now delivered by CGL (Change, Grow, Live).
- Debt pathway – Multi-agency working between CGL and the Families Team to support prisoners with identified drug debt issues. Support is extended to family members.
- Chaplaincy offering immediate communication with families where a crisis or concern is raised and pastoral care.

Any prisoner who chooses protective custody on our vulnerable prisoner unit or those who reside in Healthcare or Care and Separation, also have access to these interventions, including group work and family days, following a risk assessment. Work is ongoing to support prisoners without family contact. Prisoners can also access group work sessions to improve their own wellbeing and skills in preparation for such a time where they may rebuild their family links. Our Family workers can also signpost prisoners who have lost contact to community organisations who can support in finding estranged family members.

Access to the Families team is accessible to all prisoners through the kiosk system. Referrals from all departments within the prison are also accepted. The Diversity and Inclusion Lead at HMP Forest Bank works closely with the family workers to ensure any prisoners who need support with accessing the service can do so.

GATEWAY COMMUNICATION

The Families Team welcome feedback from prisoners and visitors to help drive the family pathway forward. It is important to gain consumer feedback to ensure the FaSO provision is fit for purpose. Feedback is collected in several ways:

- **Family Forums** – A bi-monthly forum giving families the opportunity to discuss the Families Team service, the visits experience and the prison as a whole.
- **Surveys** – Completed bi-annually with prisoners and visitors to explore their views on the families & significant others provision, the visits experience and the prison as a whole.
- **Feedback** (written and verbal) from family interventions. Feedback is also received via email.

Feedback is gained and reported on bi-annually. Any actions or feedback is formulated into an action plan and reviewed with function leads. Feedback is also reviewed as part of the quarterly Reducing Reoffending group, contract meetings and monthly performance meetings.

The Families service offers a 'Family Information Booklet' detailing support available within the prison and information on various processes and procedures. This information is available to both prisoners and family members. Both paper and electronic copies are available.

Contacting the Prison:

There are several ways to contact the prison.

GENERAL FAMILY QUERIES:

If you have a general query or would like support and advice regarding family matters, you can contact the Families Team via email: FBFamilies@sodexogov.co.uk

Alternatively, you can phone 0161 925 7000 and ask the operator to put you through to the Families Team. If no one is available to take your call, please leave a voicemail and the Families Team will contact you as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY CONTACT (Safer Custody):

If you have an urgent safety concern about the welfare of a person in custody at HMP Forest Bank such as a risk to life to either themselves or others, you can contact our **Safer Custody** team on:

0161 925 7000, extension **2183**.

This line is manned from 07.30am-04.00pm, if you need to get in touch out of those hours, please ring 0161 925 7000 and ask for comms stating it is an Urgent Resident Safety concern.

Alternatively, if it can wait until the next working day, please leave a voicemail and the Safer Custody Team will get back to you in the morning.

You can also contact the prison Safer Custody team using the web form via the link below. The team will pick up all communications within 72hrs.

<https://www.prisonersfamilies.org/forms/hmp-forest-bank-safer-custody-contact-form>

For all contact, please have the prisoner's name and prisoner number to hand.

CONCERNS REGARDING THE WELFARE OF A CHILD:

If you are concerned about a child's welfare or safety, you should make a safeguarding referral to the Local Authority. The person that has the concerns should make the referral themselves – do not pass the information onto someone else and assume they will make the referral for you.

A simple internet search for the contact details for children's services (for the borough where the child resides) will pull up contact telephone numbers and/or email addresses for the relevant service. Please note, some boroughs prefer you to fill in an online form to make the referral.

Ensure the information you provide is as factual as possible. Reporting the full name of parents, children, prisoners is beneficial as well as DOBs and home addresses. Details of how to make a safeguarding referral for each borough can be found online.

If you think the risk to the child is imminent or life threatening, call 999 and ask for the Police.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

HMP Forest Bank considers partnership working to be a key feature of family work. As part of the service offered to prisoners and family members, Family Pathway workers regularly liaise with other departments within the prison e.g. the Offender Management Unit (OMU), Recovery, Inreach, Healthcare etc. Inter-departmental working helps to ensure prisoners receive the appropriate level of care in addition to effectively managing risk.

Debtline:

The Families Team work closely with Security to ensure prisoners and their families are safe when they visit the establishment. The two teams work closely to support prisoners and families struggling with issues around debt and/or bullying. An initiative known as Debtline was introduced to help tackle these issues. Debtline is a confidential phonenumber / mailbox service family members can contact and express their concerns. It is available any time of the day or night. Family members are encouraged to leave a message which will be picked up by the Families Team between the hours of 07:30-16:00. Appropriate action is taken pending the information received.

Anyone wanting to highlight concerns can contact Debtline directly – 0161 925 7898

External Partnerships:

HMP Forest Bank has an excellent relationship for outward facing partnership work. Over the years, we have strengthened our relationship with GMCA and in particular the Criminal Justice and Partnership Sector around family work. This ensures that the work we deliver is relevant and appropriate to meet the needs of Greater Manchester prisoners.

A priority for our Family workers has been building relationships with Statutory Services in Greater Manchester and beyond. We have a portfolio of contacts within these services allowing our prisoners access to information and interventions where their children are involved in statutory care. We regularly hold child centred visits, focusing on the needs of the child. We are also able to advise prisoners on where they can access legal advice when needed.

In addition to this we have expanded support available to prisoners and family members by engaging with non-statutory services (e.g. the Out There charity). We maintain regular contact with these agencies and aim to include them (where appropriate) with events held at the prison e.g. Family Days, information sessions and Reducing Reoffending events.

Our current partners are the Out There Charity & Early Break (Holding Families+).

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Family Pathway workers receive monthly line management supervision as well as annual Performance Development Reviews. Supervision allows for quality assurance of work to be completed, an opportunity to identify training and development needs and feedback to be given. Training needs are met through a range of options including self-research, formal training, shadowing internal and external organisations and visiting areas of best practice.

The Families Team deliver Hidden Sentence training to the wider prison staff group as part of staff awareness sessions. The Families team also deliver this training to new PCO (operational) and OSO (non-operational) ITC courses. The training package has been developed to meet the needs of this particular staffing group. We encourage colleagues to consider how they can be involved in family work wherever they work in the prison and believe contributions made by them are paramount to help build and strengthen family bonds.

The team are striving to raise the profile of Families team within the prison by delivering staff awareness (refresher) sessions to departments throughout the prison.

Safeguarding training is also fundamental within the staff induction. All colleagues are informed of their responsibility in being vigilant and reporting safeguarding concerns. The Safeguarding Policy is available on the prison IT network to be referred to. Family Pathway workers are also required to attend regular Safeguarding training provided by local Safeguarding boards.

Salford
**Safeguarding
Children Board**

Salford
**Safeguarding
Children Partnership**

CARE LEAVERS

At HMP Forest Bank we have understood the need for Care Leavers to be identified and supported when they find themselves in custody. With the introduction of new legislation, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and direction from HM Prison and Probation Service, we have reviewed the way we identify and support our Care Leavers to ensure Local Authority statutory obligations are met and our eligible prisoners have a robust and comprehensive offer.

The Sodexo Care Leaver Charter was introduced in 2025 and outlines the way in which we work with this demographic. The model that has now been introduced ensures that Care Leavers are identified at the earliest opportunity during the Basic Custody Screening Tool assessment. We are working to ensure colleagues who complete these assessments are aware of how to ask appropriate questions to ascertain whether a prisoner may be a care leaver eligible for statutory support. There is a difference between prisoners who may have care experience and those under statutory services. To support the correct identification and recording of care leavers, we have committed our Families Team Manager as a single point of contact for care leavers to make initial contact with Local Authorities, consent driven, to confirm our assessments.

Having single points of contact in the prison and within Local Authorities ensures a smooth transition of sharing of information and 'opens the door' for Local Authority workers to access the prison and meet their statutory obligations of seeing their clients every 8 weeks. Keyworkers and Family Pathway workers will monitor the individuals through their time here and engage with their community case workers prior to release and involve in the multi-agency exit plans from custody, led by Local Authority workers.

We are committed to upskilling our colleagues and educating them on Care Leavers and their experiences. We will do this with the support of Local Authorities and the CRC/NPS through staff awareness sessions, information documents and attendance at Regional forums such as Care Leavers Forums and Workshops. As an example of good practice, the Families Team attend bi-monthly multi-agency meetings with Salford City Council taking the lead. Individuals of concern are reviewed and supportive measures are implemented. New links have been made with Manchester Leaving Care service who now engage regularly with the prison.

The governance of work around Care Leavers will be monitored through the Reducing Reoffending Group and Reducing Reoffending Strategy with a specific emphasis through the Children and Families Pathway and the Young Offenders Case workers.



We will:

- Help staff understand what care experience is like and what support is available
- Develop networks and relationships with local authorities
- Take time to develop relationships and build trust
- Explain why we are asking questions and ensure prisoners feel safe to talk about their experience, when they are ready
- Respect that not all who have experienced care will want to share this with us
- Assume everyone may have experienced care and provide information regarding support available
- Look for signs of care experienced, including no visits
- Ensure there is a dedicated SPOC and peer support who receive training and supervision
- Hold bi-monthly focus groups to enable those who have experienced care to come together
- Use the care experienced flag on NOMIS to add information including personal advisor details
- Contact the local authority/PA to inform them their young adult is in custody (with consent)
- Explain their financial, accommodation, education and health entitlements linked to their local offer via their POM
- Liaise with the local authority prior to a young person's 21st birthday to ensure they can stay with their current personal advisor rather than a duty worker each time
- Let eligible people up to 25 know they can request support and help them to request it

Care
Experienced

On arrival all prisoners will be:

- Asked about their family circumstances and whether they have had contact with their local authority
- Asked to consent to contact their personal advisor on their behalf
- Helped to understand what support is available and provided specific information about support relevant to them
- Encouraged and supported to add their personal advisor to their Pin phone and visitor list
- Shown positive examples of people with care and custodial experience who have overcome difficulties

Contact support. We will:

- Provide support to communicate with their personal advisor and/or other significant others
- Utilise and promote digital communication such as Purple Visits and Emailprisoner
- Enable contact to meet with their personal advisor outside of legal visits (visits, Purple Visits and Emailprisoner)
- With consent, invite their personal advisor to events and celebrations such as family days and sentence planning meetings
- Inform personal advisors of transfers to other prisons
- Assist with disputes about entitlements and statutory services
- Ensure personal advisors are aware of procedures for providing financial support and clothing

Resettlement. We will:

- Inform the personal advisor of key dates and significant events (with consent)
- Identify need and support access to activities such as basic life skills
- Support access to open bank accounts and obtain ID
- Work collaboratively with local authorities to contribute to pathway/care planning
- Liaise with other services such as health and pre-release team to determine what support is needed on release, such as safe and appropriate accommodation
- Consider the use of ROTL or virtual meetings so the young person can see where they might be living
- Ensure a handover meeting takes place with the POM/COM and young person prior to release
- Provide details of support in the discharge information
- Provide items on release such as clothing and toiletries



VETERANS IN CUSTODY

At HMP Forest Bank, along with Care Leavers, support for Veterans is also viewed as a priority. As such, the Sodexo Veterans Charter was introduced in 2025. The charter outlines the expected level of support for this demographic. Ex-servicemen are identified at the earliest opportunity using the Basic Custody Screening Tool assessment upon their arrival to the establishment. Similarly, to the work completed with Care Leavers, we are working to ensure colleagues who complete these assessments are aware of how to ask appropriate questions to ascertain whether a prisoner may be a veteran who is eligible for an enhanced level of support.

At HMP Forest Bank we understand that peer support may be beneficial for this target group and so strive to hold regular group forums led by veterans from external support agencies such as Veterans HQ and Care After Combat. This is an opportunity for individuals that may have shared similar experiences to come together. 1-1 support is also offered to veterans by dedicated workers who ascertain their support needs and take action to ensure their needs are met. In addition to this, monthly welfare calls/checks are completed by the Families team.

The governance of work around veterans in custody will be monitored through the Reducing Reoffending Group and Reducing Reoffending Strategy with a specific emphasis through the FaSO Pathway.

Our current external partners for Veterans are:

- Care After Combat
- Veterans HQ
- SSAFA
- Op Nova



Sodexo Justice - Veterans Charter



We will:

- Help staff understand the definition of a veteran and what support is available Take time to develop relationships and build trust with veterans,
- respecting that not all veterans will want to share information with us Ensure there is a dedicated SPOC, staff champions and peer support Develop
- networks and relationships with support services such as CFO (Creating Future Opportunities) Op Nova and SSAFA Maintain strong links with Prison Employment Leads (PELs), Prison Offender Managers (POMs), Strategic Housing Specialists (SHSs), Healthcare and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Promote inclusivity by providing tailored support to both the general population and vulnerable prisoners.
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- Hold a purposeful 'Veteran hubs' at least monthly inviting relevant support services which is inclusive of foreign military veterans
- Organise and promote important events such as remembrance services
- Use the veteran flag on NOMIS to add information and maintain detailed information
- Provide veterans with items which identify them as veterans to develop a sense of pride and belonging
- Promote wellbeing and support available by our Chaplaincy team

Supporting Veterans



On arrival all prisoners will be:

- Asked by a POM if they have served in UK Armed Forces, Reserves or Merchant Navy and record this on the Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST)
- Referred to the SPOC who will complete an initial interview to complete the Veterans Personal Profile
- Provided with an induction pack and Informed about the 'Veterans hub'
- Informed that we will verify service and once confirmed, we will complete XXX
- Helped to understand support available and asked to provide consent so referrals to support services can take place

Contact support - we will:

- Arrange dedicated family and significant other events in collaboration with the partners we work with
- Refer to relevant support services such as Healthcare, POM (Prison Offender Manager) and PEL (Prison Employment Lead)
- Promote the importance of maintaining contact with family and significant others via Purple Visits, telephone, email prisoner and face-to-face visits
- Inform support services of transfers to other prisons
- Ensure support services are enabled to provide continued support both in prison and community

Resettlement support – we will:

- Inform support services of key dates and significant events (with consent)
- Identify need and support access to activities such as basic life skills
- Recognise that some veterans may have lived in single living or married quarters where housing has always been provided and may require additional support
- Support access to employment opportunities
- Work collaboratively with support services to contribute to resettlement planning
- Liaise with other services such as health and pre-release team to determine what support is needed on release, such as safe and appropriate accommodation
- Ensure a handover meeting takes place with support services and veteran prior to release
- Provide details of support in the discharge information
- Provide items on release such as clothing and toiletries

Families Team Interventions/Support Provided:

As previously discussed, family sessions are now not restricted by age. Families may attend any sessions they feel are appropriate.

- **Baby Bonding Sessions:** An opportunity for Dad/Grandad/Uncles to bond with their child/grandchild/Nieces/Nephews etc. An opportunity for prisoners to explore the likes and dislikes of their child in a comfortable and safe environment. We encourage the use of family keepsakes e.g. taking baby's handprints, family photos etc. Ideally for babies aged approx. 0-11mths.
- **Family TV:** Families are invited to watch a movie in the Families Team room.
- **Tots TV:** Prisoners are encouraged to engage in age-appropriate activities with their child. Nursery rhymes are played on the interactive TV.
- **Games Session:** We have a range of games consoles and board games for families to use. We encourage families to interact with one another in a fun, safe environment.
- **Family Sports Session:** Families are invited to attend a mini sports session in the Visits Hall. Families are free to leave their tables and engage in a range of sports activities.
- **Craft Session** – An extended visit held on Wednesday mornings. This session is 2hrs long (compared to the standard 1hr session).
- **Storybook Dads:** Prisoners are given the opportunity to record a bedtime story for their child, niece, nephew, grandchild etc. The recording is sent externally to have music and sound effects added to transform the recording into something magical. Completed CDs are posted to the child's carer/guardian.
- **SWAPS:** Prisoners and their children complete and then 'swap' a set of fun activity sheets so they can learn interesting and fun things about one another. Activity sheets are completed in cell, at the leisure of those taking part (there is no set time in which the sheets must be completed). More suited to children aged 5-17yrs old.
- **Family Days:** – 4 x events held per year. Events comprise of both AM and PM sessions. Prisoners are invited to apply for either an AM or PM session. Family Days are a huge event in the Families Team/prison calendar. Prisoners and their families are invited to attend a family fun event in the Visits Hall. Prisoners are free to leave their table and engage with their families in fun sports and craft activities. A buffet and drinks are provided free of charge. Families have the opportunity to have a family photo taken as a keepsake from the event. **Family Day slots are limited and so there is an attendance criteria. The criteria is currently under review to ensure it is more inclusive of the wider prison estate.** A notice to Prisoners is placed on the kiosk when applications for the day are sent out.

Group Sessions (Prisoners only):

- **Positive Parenting:** A non-accredited course (group session) for parents wanting to learn more about a child's development, explore barriers and difficulties that may occur when parenting and positive ways to try and overcome these issues.
- **Positive Thinking:** A non-accredited goal setting course (group session) focused on exploring positive, future family plans.
- **Pre-Release Course:** A non-accredited, pre-release course (group session) exploring the issues prisoners may face when leaving prison and re-entering the family home. Explores the impact of imprisonment on family members, partners and children.
- **In-Cell Work Booklets:** The team offer 2 in-cell work booklets. A certificate is issued upon completion.
 - **Forward Thinking** (in-cell work booklet) – A goal setting course focused on exploring positive future family plans. A certificate is issued upon completion.
 - **Building Positive Relationships** (in-cell work booklet) – A course for any prisoner wanting to develop better communication skills within their relationships (pending a check of restrictions). A certificate is issued upon completion.

In addition to interventions, prisoners can request 1-1 support on a range of different issues. Prisoners requesting support will be triaged and given appropriate advice/guidance. Those requiring further support will be taken onto the Families Team case load and allocated a Family Pathway Worker. Family Pathway Workers may liaise with external services on the prisoners' behalf e.g. Children's Social Care, Personal Advisors (for care experienced prisoners) etc.

Where necessary, Family Pathway Workers can facilitate multi-agency meetings between family members and external professionals. A facilitated session is generally used where there are complex issues.