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A study into the role of prison-based Family Support Workers

• Study the prison-based Family Support systems operating in the English and Scottish Prisons with a view to implementing similar prison-based family support systems in Risdon Prison (Tasmania).

• Investigate current practices in caring for and supporting children of prisoners with a view to better understand, respond to and represent the needs of a vulnerable segment of society.

• Undertake training with 'Safe Ground' (a charity conducting family support programmes in prison) with a view to introducing the Family Man and Fathers on the Inside programmes in Risdon Prison.

• Investigate the use of Video Visit arrangements in a Scottish Prison in Aberdeen and the current practices in Changi Prison, Singapore, with a view to expanding the current programme at Risdon Prison; and propose to TPS (Tasmanian Prison Service) a framework for future developments of this form of visits.
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Abbreviations used in this report (arranged alphabetically)

- AFP (Action for Prisoners’ Families)
- COPE (Children of Prisoners Europe)
- CRC (Community Rehabilitation Companies)
- FCDO (Family Contact Development Officer)
- FCO (Family Contact Officer)
- FEM (Family Engagement Manager)
- FEW (Family Engagement Worker)
- FIU (Family Intervention Unit)
- FRC (Family Resource Centre)
- FSW (Family Support Worker)
- HMP (Her Majesty’s Prison)
- IFS (Integrated Family Support)
- IFSA (Integrated Family Support Advocate)
- IFSS (Integrated Family Support Service)
- IOM (Integrated Offender Management)
- IWW (Invisible Walls Wales)
- KIP (Kids In Play)
- MHWP (Mary Hutchinson Women’s Prison)
- MoJ (Ministry of Justice)
- NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- NEPACS (The North East Prison After Care Society)
- NOMS (National Offender Management Service)
- PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust)
- PSF (Parc Supporting Families)
- POPS (Partners of Prisoners and Family Support Group)
- REPR (Relais Enfants-Parents Romands)
- RBMSP (Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison)
- RPC (Risdon Prison Complex)
- RVC (Regional Visit Centre)
- SMSR (Sentence Management Support and Re-integration)
- SPS (Scottish Prison Service)
- TPS (Tasmanian Prison Service)
- TR (Transforming Rehabilitation)
- VACRO (Victorian Association for the Care & Resettlement of offenders)
- YOI (Young Offender Institutes)
- YRP (Yellow Ribbon Project)
UK Statistics

- Among those in custody 27% were in care as a child, with 41% reporting domestic violence in the home as a child and 29% emotional, sexual or physical abuse as a child.

- A majority of offenders are parents, 54% have children under 18 when they enter custody and two thirds of women prisoners are mothers. 19% of male offenders aged 18–20 are fathers, compared to 4% of the wider population, 10% of boys and 9% of girls aged 15–18 in prison have children themselves. Significant numbers of children are impacted by parents’ imprisonment.

- Children of offenders are three times more likely to experience mental health problems, exhibit anti-social behaviour and more likely also to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

- There are approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales with a parent in prison, with 17,000 children separated from their mother by imprisonment. Some 7% of children will experience their father’s imprisonment during their time at school. Some 45% of prisoners lose contact with their family whilst in prison.

- Women prisoners are more likely than men to be held a hundred miles or more away from home. Only 9% of children whose mothers are in prison are cared for by their fathers while their mother is in custody and just 5% of children stay in their own homes while their mother is in custody. The cycle of re-offending transmits disadvantage and offending behaviour across generations.

- The cycle of re-offending perpetuates disadvantage, particularly for younger prisoners and those serving shorter sentences. Almost half (47%) of prisoners are re-convicted within 12 months, rising to 57% of those serving sentences of less than a year.

- Re-offending is also a function of age. Re-conviction within 12 months peaks at 70% for 18-20 year olds, declining thereafter with each age cohort, being 35% for over 40 year olds.

- A pattern of intergenerational transmission of disadvantage and reduced life-chances for the families of offenders also transmits criminogenic drivers and offending behaviour across generation.

- Critically, 65% of boys who have had a father in prison, go on to offend themselves. Over a third of prisoners have someone else in their family who has been convicted of a non-motoring offence.

- Offenders who had received at least one visit during their time in custody were 39% less likely to re-offend than those who had received no visits.\(^2\)

- Creating and encouraging healthy family contact whilst in custody, can reduce the likelihood of offending by up to 6 times.\(^3\)

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1. UK MoJ BIS-Polics Parenting and Relationship Support programmes for offenders and their families
2. The MOJ Resettlement Survey 2008
3. Social Exclusion Unit report 2002
“The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

Introduction

My involvement in Risdon Prison, Tasmania, was conceived when I moved to Tasmania in early 2009 to care for a small church that neighbours the prison. Motivated daily by the view of the prison that is tucked away on the outskirts of Hobart (a few minutes from the site of the first settlement in Tasmania) and haunted by the words of Jesus “…I was in prison and you never visited Me”, I have attempted to ‘break into’ prison. Over recent years our meagre incursions have grown and today we have a good partnership with the prison and provide some meaningful family support programmes.

However when it comes to working within the prison system I’m the first to admit I am a relative novice. The prison system is diverse and complicated. It is constantly in a state of flux and labours under a burden of ever increasing expansion in a climate of dwindling resources. Prisons are not popular and they don’t win votes. They are a necessary evil that society finds difficult to embrace and is quick to criticise.

Australia had its origin, in part, to England’s endeavour to find a solution to the overcrowding prison problem and Tasmania, which would receive 67,000 convicts in the first 50 years of settlement, became a further experiment in how to manage a problem that society wanted to put out of sight and out of mind.

There is an elephant in society’s living room. And my trip, across the prison estate in Singapore, England, Wales, Scotland, France, Belgium and Switzerland, which took in 21 prisons, could be likened a little to that of the story of the blind men who each grabbed part of an elephant and tried to describe what it was. While none of the men got the full picture they each got a glimpse of some part of the anatomy that when put together helped to describe the elephant.

And while I, a novice, might be limited in any advice I could offer the ‘powers that be’ I would hope that my broad attempt to lay hold on a number of parts of the anatomy of this beast, the opportunity to listen to the description and prescriptions provided by practitioners and experts in their field, and the privilege of being inspired with glimpses of a positive future, would make this report of some value to my state of Tasmania which has continued to grapple with solutions to THE PROBLEM that has been ingrained into the fabric of our society.

I’m deeply indebted to many organisations and people too numerous to single out. I would however particularly like to thank: those within the Tasmanian Department of Justice and TPS (Tasmanian Prison Service) who encouraged me in the pursuit of the Churchill Fellowship; the three main organisations in the UK who warmly embraced my request and facilitated significant portions of my study - PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust), NEPACS (The North East Prison After Care Society) and Families Outside; the Management and Staff of the prisons I visited who went out of their way to provide access to the prison estate; and the fraternity of passionate individuals who have embraced the cause of prisoners, their families and children - they may not be named in this report but they have left an enduring impression on me and will shape and guide my future journey and work with prisoners and their families in Tasmania.

Finally to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia I give my special thanks for affording me this wonderful opportunity for nourishing the nagging hunger that is growing in me to support the children and families of prisoners and responding to my attempts to visit those who are in prison.
Executive Summary

A study into the role of prison-based Family Support Workers

Norm Reed⁴, the Pastor of a church adjoining the Risdon Prison estate in Tasmania, Australia, impassioned by the needs of children and families of incarcerated offenders, set off on a journey through 21 prisons in Singapore, England, Wales, Scotland, France and Belgium to investigate current practices in supporting prisoners and their families.

Inspired by a 2009/10 trial of prison-based Family Support Workers in four English prisons this Fellowship Study follows the evolution of an early family support model into the creation of the current government-funded Family Engagement Worker role in the UK. The research highlights the growing recognition of the vital role that children and families play, not only in helping to reduce re-offending, but also in the re-integration of prisoners into the community. Through meetings with government officials and with the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, the report identifies the intention of the UK government to prescribe children and families as one of seven pathways to reducing re-offending.

With the help of three key family support organisations in the UK the study examines the commitment involved in supporting offenders’ families and how this support is organisationally administered. Through “shadowing” Family Engagement Workers in their day-to-day tasks within a prison the study shows what this role realistically entails and how such a position could be adopted in Tasmania. The visit to Scotland, where uniformed custodial officers undertake the family support role, afforded an opportunity to compare the alternative model being employed in prisons there.

HMP Parc with its Family Intervention Unit, stands out as a model prison. Recognised across the UK as leading the way in working with offenders and their families HMP Parc has ‘reinvented’ itself. Through the Invisible Walls Wales project HMP Parc has developed a team of 24 officers and 200 volunteers supporting offenders and their families.

A wide range of creative family programmes have been developed in the UK to support offenders and their families. The report ‘samples’ a number of innovative programmes being used within prisons giving special attention to Safe Ground’s, Family Man and Fathers Inside programmes. Outside of the prison engaging community with the plight of offenders’ families can be difficult. The Yellow Ribbon Project in Singapore and the Hidden Sentence programme in the UK, are two invaluable ‘tools’ for mobilising community engagement with this vexing problem. Hidden Sentence training in particular could be easily adapted for Tasmania and would realise some positive short and long-term objectives. Research in Singapore and Scotland highlights the future importance of technology in connecting prisoners and their families. The study validates initiatives in Tasmania currently utilising Video Visits to help families prevented from visiting prison because of distance or due to compassionate reasons.

Statistics concerning intergenerational offending are shocking, and the lengths that Children of Prisoners in Europe (COPE) have gone to in specifically targeting this vulnerable segment of society takes attention from ‘the clinical analysis of facts’ and places it where it should be - on the individual child. The lessons from COPE’s experiences and resources are invaluable if we seriously want to address the issues of intergenerational offending.

In presenting this report to the Tasmanian Prison Service and the Tasmanian Department of Justice, I would highlight one further inducement for seriously considering the model being proposed: Financial savings! A UK study has shown that for every £1 invested in keeping families together it will save the taxpayer £11.

---

⁴ Pastor Norm Reed, Christian Family Centre, 550 East Derwent Hwy, Risdon Vale, TAS, 7016
Email: norm.reed@gmail.com Phone: 0401 690 954
Programme Overview

I commenced my Fellowship on 13th October and returned to Australia 12th December, 2014. My trip traversed seven countries - Singapore, England, Wales, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Scotland; visited 21 prisons; I conducted in excess of 65 interviews and accumulated approximately 20Kg of resources.

The first week of my trip was based in Singapore. Four weeks of my time was spent in the UK with my programme primarily being organised through three organisations working with offenders’ families – PACT (England, South West, Midlands, London and Wales); NEPACS (North East England) and Families Outside (Scotland). Three days were spent meeting with government and charities in London and a further three days allocated to meeting organisations in Switzerland, France and Belgium and visiting prisons in Paris and Brussels.

Full details of my programme and interviews are contained in Annex A to this report and Annex B provides details of the 21 prisons visited. The prisons in the UK represented a broad cross section of prison estate stretching from Peterhead in the far North East of Scotland, to London in the South and Swansea in the West. I hired a car for the majority of my land travel although travel by train through France and Belgium was more appropriate.

The majority of my programme was arranged before leaving Australia and by and large went very much according to plan. All but three planned appointments were kept and only two visits to prisons didn’t eventuate – one was cancelled by the organisation just before I left Australia; the other on the day of the visit because the Family Support Worker I was to visit was sick.

My plan to spend a week to participate in The Train the Trainer session of the Safe Ground’s Family Man programme could not be arranged within my time constraints; however I was able to participate in an actual event in a prison and met with the Safe Ground team on a number of occasions to discuss their programmes and the suitability of them for Australia. I cancelled one scheduled meeting with Shannon Trust (a prison-based literacy support organisation) because of time constraints. Additional interviews with Spurgeon’s (a family support organisation providing prison Visitors’ Centres in the London region) and Prison Technology Services Limited were included in my itinerary. The latter organisation provides the email a prisoner service. Coincidentally the General Manager of this organisation was actually in Australia at the time of my enquiry setting up this services in Western Australia and Victoria. This meeting was conducted via a number of phone calls and discussions have continued since my return to Australia.

I was able to call on Jamie Balfour, Director General of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, during my time in London and enjoyed the opportunity of meeting with staff, discussing the Australian Fellowship and some of the minor differences in our schemes. This was a very profitable time and I appreciated hearing about the Trust’s plans for the 2015 Commemoration of Winston Churchill’s death. I would also like to add how valuable the Fellowship has been, not just in facilitating the study trip, but also opening the doors to connect with a number of Fellowship recipients throughout the UK. This body of alumni were always a source of great inspiration and encouragement.

On a personal note, I celebrated my 33rd wedding anniversary with my wife in Scotland and was able to be with my wife and daughter in Zurich to welcome the arrival of our first grandchild.
“It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”
Nelson Mandela

Context

My Churchill Fellowship
The purpose of my study was to “create the role of prison-based Family Support Workers in Risdon Prison and recruit/develop a team of workers” in regional Tasmania.

For my study I had identified four broad objectives.

1. Study the prison-based Family Support systems operating in the English and Scottish Prisons with a view to implementing similar prison-based family support systems in Risdon Prison (Tasmania).
2. Investigate current practices in caring for and supporting children of prisoners with a view to better understand, respond to and represent the needs of this vulnerable segment of society.
3. Undertake training with ‘Safe Ground’ (a charity conducting family support programmes in prison) with a view to introducing the Family Man and Fathers on the Inside programmes in Risdon Prison.
4. Investigate the use of Video Visit arrangements in a Scottish Prison in Aberdeen and the current practices in Changi Prison, Singapore, with a view to expanding the current programme at Risdon Prison; and propose to TPS (Tasmanian Prison Service) a framework for future developments of this form of visits.

Background

Why a Churchill Fellowship?
It is difficult to fully appreciate the purpose of my Fellowship without understanding the nature of prison estate in Tasmania and my current involvement in the prison system.

I am the Pastor of a local church that ‘immediately’ neighbours the prison – I have been caring for this church for about four years and gradually became involved in the prison three years ago. Some of our church’s initial involvement in the prison facilitated a visit of the Soweto Gospel Choirs and commencement of music classes for offenders. Three years ago we instituted ANZAC Day Commemorative services in the men’s minimum security prison and this has now become an annual event.

In 2011 we were invited to rejuvenate a defunct Father’s Days programme aimed to assist children of offenders to spend time with their incarcerated parent. Based on the Kid’s VIP information from PACT we subsequently developed this programme to become very effective in each of the four prisons four times a year. We retitled these events Kids Days5 to better reflect that the focus of these events was for the benefit of the children.

This initial work with families expanded to include the construction of Hillside Haven, a house on the church property, to accommodate families from regional areas visiting family in prison. Through the provision of very inexpensive accommodation, families have been able to double their number of

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visits and avoid travelling to the prison and home again in one day. Having been operating for about 18 months, this resource has been a fantastic provision that has also brought us closer to the families and led to many in-depth conversations with families and subsequent meetings with offenders on the inside. The occupancy rate for the house is in excess of 50%, and 80-90% during school holidays.

A little over 12 months ago we took family support a stage further with the introduction of Video Visits. After an extensive trial we set up RVCs (Regional Visit Centres) in a number of churches in the North of the state. Families book a normal visit through the prison Visitors’ Centre, then rather than drive to the prison they go to the RVC, undergo the necessary identification checks, go into a family-friendly secure room equipped with video equipment and are connected via video to the prisoner. Inside the prison of one of our support workers meets the offender in the visit hall, during the normal visit process, provides him/her with a video-enabled tablet and supervises the visit. This connection with families and offenders, both in the prison and in the regional centres, has been very beneficial and provided some wonderful opportunities to meaningfully support families in maintaining their relationships. Often visits are initiated at the request of therapeutic and counselling staff and our support staff contacts the families to make the arrangements for a Video Visits – for many, this is the first with their family member since incarceration.

Video Visits have been extremely helpful in connecting some children, who would not normally come into the prison, for a visit. This system has also enabled us to provide compassionate visits for funerals, terminally ill family members, terminally ill inmates, and even a wedding. (This has relieved pressure on the prison having to provide some custodial visits and has been welcomed by management and custodial staff).

Having established these services (and a range of other programmes) I was interested in how to better develop an infra-structure to support children and families and their incarcerated family member. I came across the concept of prison-based Family Support Workers in a NOMS report. This report evaluated the role of prison-based Family Support Workers trialled in four UK prisons. Based on this report my application was made for a Churchill Fellowship to further investigate the evolution of this family support model with a view to establishing something in Tasmania. The model I had in mind was to develop a team of prison-based Family Support (Liaison) Workers that service the prison and a network of regional support centres with FSWs (Family Support Workers) supporting families.

Subsequent to receiving the Churchill Fellowship, approval to begin trialling the concept of a Family Liaison Worker in Risdon Prison was obtained. We started initially with two workers – the Child and Family Coordinator (a non-uniformed staff member of the prison employed to co-ordinate organisations to provide family support to prisoners) and myself. We are now adding additional workers. All workers are currently volunteers.

The inclusion of Singapore in my trip was primarily to examine the use of technology in maintaining family contact. Tele-Visits are an entrenched part of the Singapore Prison Service regime and it was

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6 Offender – I have chosen to use the term ‘offender’ in most cases throughout this report to refer to anyone who has committed or is alleged to have committed an offence and is spending time in prison. This will include a ‘prisoner’ who is convicted of an offence and sentenced to a prison term, and also those people on ‘remand’ who may be in prison awaiting trial or sentencing.

7 Prison Based Family Support - An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Family Support Worker role piloted in four English prisons during 2009-10 - Professor Gwyneth Boswell – August 2010
hoped I could learn from their practices with a view to aiding Risdon Prison to better use technology for family visits and support purposes.

**Risdon Prison – an understanding**

With the exception of two small reception prisons near the courts in the major cities (Hobart and Launceston) Tasmania only has one prison estate in the South of the state at Risdon, a suburb of Hobart. This prison houses approximately 500 prisoners. Up to 46 women can be accommodated in MHWP (Mary Hutchinson Women’s Prison) which has a base capacity of 15 in maximum security, 12 in medium and 19 in minimum. About 180 men with a minimum classification can be accommodated in RBMSP (Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison) while approximately 280 men with a Medium or Maximum classification are accommodated in separated facilities within the RPC (Risdon Prison Complex).

During my travels I found it helpful to explain that Tasmania is approximately the same size as Scotland in area although our population is only about 500,000 people. While Scotland’s 16 prisons and approximately 8,000 prisoners made our problems look quite tiny in comparison many practitioners with whom I spoke readily recognised the particular challenges we faced in re-integration, visits and maintaining good family relationships. They acknowledged that with 60% of prisoners’ families living outside of the capital city and approximately 40% living in the North and Northwest of the state⁸ (three-five hours’ drive away), the supportive role that families and community could play in the re-integration of prisoners would be severely hampered.

The fact that Tasmania only has one prison in the South, has been an issue that has been hotly debated over many years. Financial constraints make it inconceivable that another prison would ever be built in the North, nevertheless it cannot be denied that prisoners and their families who live in the North are disadvantaged. The attempts we have started to make to address this divide have certainly been appreciated by offenders and families alike.

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⁸ *Breaking the Cycle – Tasmanian Correction Plan (2010-2020)* p.7
“We take ideas from other people, from people we’ve learned from, from people we run into in the coffee shop, and we stitch them together into new forms and we create something new. That’s really where innovation happens.”
Steve Johnson “Where good ideas come from” – TED talks Global 2010

Report

Aha Moments

: a moment of sudden realization, inspiration, insight, recognition, or comprehension

The most asked question on my return from my trip could be boiled down to: “What was it that stood out to you most – what were your Aha moments?”

I think there were probably four that are fleshed out later in this report:

1. **That we are on the right track:** What we have intuitively been doing to connect offenders and families is right. The UK started this journey many years back and early research in 2004⁹ has progressed to a place where NOMS recently (July 2014) commissioned¹⁰ prison-based Family Engagement Workers to be employed in Women’s and YOI (Young Offender Institutes). This means that if we could draw on the learnings from the UK’s journey we could potentially ‘skip’ the 10 year preliminary investigation and institute the good family practices they have adopted.

I was heartened by the strong emphasis being placed on families by the HM Chief Inspectors of Prison both in England/Wales and Scotland and the move by NOMS to intentionally include ‘Children and Families’ as one of their Seven Pathways to reducing re-offending.

2. **Community engagement is essential and possible:** My visit to Singapore, Bristol and indeed throughout my trip, reinforced again and again that the journey to re-integration of offenders must involve the families of offenders and the community into which they are to resettle. The Yellow Ribbon Programme¹¹ in Singapore and initiatives like the Hidden Sentence training¹² in the UK demonstrate that there is ‘hunger’ in the community to better understand the plight of offenders and their families. Given the opportunity, the community wants to know how to respond to needs of offenders’ families and engage with the offenders in their re-integration process. There are some good models and resources already available for us to learn how to do this.

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¹⁰ Commissioning in NOMS is defined as “The cycle of assessing the needs of courts, offenders, defendants, victims and communities then designing, securing and monitoring services to meet those needs, while making best use of total available resources. These commissioning intentions are then used to negotiate Service Level Agreements and contract schedules with ‘prime’ providers such as public and privately managed prisons and community providers.”

¹¹ The Yellow Ribbon Project seeks to engage the community in giving ex-offenders a second chance at life and to inspire a ripple effect of concerted community action to support ex-offenders and their families.

¹² Hidden Sentence is a training course for all professionals whose work brings them in to contact with prisoners’ families, including children’s centre workers, school staff, play workers, health visitors, and family intervention teams – developed by AFP (Action for Prisoners’ Families)
3. **Prisons can offer a unique window of opportunity to really make a difference in the lives of people who will not change without some sort of intervention**: My visit to Changi Prison, and the story of how this prison, on the verge of increasing their capacity from 13,000 to 18,000 offenders, actually reduced numbers; and their recidivism rate was inspiring. Their transformation of the role of Custodial Officers to being “Captains of Lives” tells a deeper story of a commitment by the prison system to bring about positive change in offenders’ lives. This same sort of commitment was also evidenced when visiting HMP Parc, in Southern Wales. This prison’s transformation of its visits process, from being security-driven to being family-focused, was amazing. Backed by their innovative Family Intervention Unit and family engagement programmes they have truly begun to create the “Invisible Walls” reflected in the name of their families programme.

4. **The way we engage with the children of imprisoned parents is a barometer as to how effective we really are in addressing the problems crime and imprisonment pose in our society.** “Children of imprisoned parents often bear the consequence of their parents’ actions in a way that no child should be expected to bear; they become ‘the invisible victims of crime and the penal system’.”\(^\text{13}\) It is not only possible but imperative that we respond to the needs of the children of offenders. If society continues to ignore the plight of the children of offenders we can rightly be accused of negligence, by failing to respond to the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our society; and foolishness, by potentially condemning these children to relive the mistakes of their parents. The professional approach of COPE (Children of Prisoners Europe) in championing this cause in Europe and the practical strategies of organisations like Barnardo’s, sound a clarion call that cannot be ignored.

**Understanding the lie of the land**

**Cultural/country discoveries and challenges**

I’ve seen some great ‘stuff’ during my travels but a lot of what I have seen simply wouldn’t work in Australia. Singapore, England and Australia have different world views, and while there are many things to be learned from all the countries visited, it should not be assumed that a good programme or idea that works overseas will work here in Tasmania.

The Singapore “Captain of Lives” strategy, as good as it is, most likely wouldn’t work in Australia. The sharp vision-driven values-based approach of the Singapore Prison Service that sits so well in the Asian culture, may not work in our regime in Tasmania. The Singapore Prison Service appeared to me to be a strongly structured disciplined service. Prison Officers uniforms are crisply starched and ironed. Individual needs, while important, are subservient to the ‘common good’. Respect of authority and ‘keeping face’ are imbedded deep in the value system of the country - a country that forbids the chewing of gum and still uses caning as a form of legal capital punishment.

Family is important in all cultures, however even the definition of family conjures up different meanings to the white Anglo Australian and the Singaporean. To an Australian the small nuclear family might be paramount; however in the Asian context the extended family and the roles of parents and uncles might have special rights and responsibilities. All these ‘values’ have a significant bearing on the programmes and the way they are carried out. **To simply copy a programme without an awareness of the cultural setting would be naive.**

\(^\text{13}\) Children of Imprisoned Parents – Danish Institute of Human Rights (2011)
While the cultural divide between Australia and the UK may not be as wide as that of Australia and Singapore, I quickly discovered that a number of programmes in England flow out of society norms. Meals are often incorporated into some of the prison programmes and canteens existed in most prison visit halls. Ungirding this practice is a culture where meals are readily available in school, and children of low income families actually have meals provided free of charge by the government.

**The role of Local Authorities in the UK and Australian Local Councils are different.** There are 433 Local Authorities in the UK that range in size from 200,000 to 1,000,000 people. Local Councils in the UK often perform functions carried out by a state government in Australia. A number of authorities are responsible for controlling the government’s education budget for the schools in their local area. Child protection issues and counselling services are provided by local authorities. So while the national government makes policy, it is invariably administered and managed through local authorities.

Prisons normally work closely with local authorities. It is local authorities that generally provide counselling services to the community and have a vested interest in the resettlement of offenders. Some local authorities assist in providing housing and are the first point of call for other resettlement services. In some prisons, local authorities will actually provide people to work within the prison to assist offenders in their resettlement.

The equivalent to the Local Authority in Tasmania would most resemble our Tasmanian State Government.

**The funding arrangements and implications of the way funding was allocated for various trials and services to prisons took me a little while to understand.** ‘Not for profit’ organisations around the world are heavily dependent on funding for the programmes and services they offer. In the UK there are about 4,500 trusts and foundations which give around £3.9 billion each year¹⁴ for a wide range of charitable work. In addition NOMS commissions many services offered to prisons.

A lot of work goes into securing funding to operate the family support services across the prison estate. Funding was generally competitive, focused and for a designated time frame. I was initially surprised to hear the name of programmes or positions prefaced by the name of the funding source. It was not uncommon to find people working for the same organisation in a prison, doing similar jobs, funded from different sources. In one prison an organisation employed two FSWs, one funded from NOMS had responsibility for the whole prison (315 prisoners) and the other, funded by a charitable trust, supported only 40 prisoners because of the limitation of the terms of the funding. I don’t say this as criticism but rather to highlight the extraordinary lengths family support organisations go to, in securing funding to provide services.

Government and Trust funding is very competitive and a number of family support organisations are closing or amalgamating. It was also not uncommon to hear of some wonderful programmes which had ceased to exist because funding was no longer available.

**A time of uncertainty**

I arrived in the UK at an unusual time. It appeared to me that the storm clouds were gathering and a large black cloud hung over the heads of the whole prison system and family support organisations. While all of the organisations I met with were positive about the future there was a high degree of uncertainty as to how the governments TR (Transforming Rehabilitation)¹⁵ programme will affect them.

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¹⁴ trustfunding.org.uk

The HM Inspectorate of Prisons and MH Inspectorate of Probations comment on the TR programme in their 2014 joint thematic review of resettlement:\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{“In April 2015 far reaching changes will be introduced to ‘transform’ the way that offenders are rehabilitated and to reduce the risk they reoffend. Offenders serving sentences of less than one year will be subject to statutory supervision. Support and supervision of low- and medium-risk offenders will pass from the probation service to voluntary and private sector providers commissioned through regional CRC (Community Rehabilitation Companies). Higher-risk offenders will be supervised by a new national probation service. Offenders serving short sentences and those with less than three months to serve should be held in ‘resettlement prisons’, in or linked to the area in which they will be released. Resettlement services should be organised on a ‘through the gate’ basis, making greater use of mentors than at present and with providers paid in part according to the outcomes they achieve in reducing re-offending”\textsuperscript{16}.}

Most offenders will be provided continuous support by one provider from custody into the community. This has led to the designation of 71\textsuperscript{17} prisons as “Resettlement Prisons” with the intention that most offenders be held in a prison designated to their area for at least three months before release.

The change is significant. While there was a considerable amount of information disseminated to potential Community Rehabilitation Companies, very little had been defined as to how organisations, like those involved in family support, would fit in the new ‘system’. Neither was there any clarity on how some programmes commissioned by NOMS, such as the Family Engagement Workers, would look into the future.

On 29 October 2014, the MoJ (Ministry of Justice) announced its first round of preferred bidders to run the Community Rehabilitation Companies.
Prison-Based Family Support Work

An impartial perspective - HM Chief Inspectors of Prisons

England and Wales

In a recent report reviewing the resettlement provisions for adult offenders, Nick Hardwick, the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, recommended to the CEO of NOMS that a national strategy should be developed to better help offenders maintain and repair relationships with their families; and, where appropriate, involve the family and friends of offenders in the rehabilitation process. The report, based around a sample of 80 offenders, draws some interesting conclusions in relation to family.

During my visit I had the privilege of meeting with the Chief Inspector and talked at length about the necessity of prisoners maintaining family connection while incarcerated. He spoke very supportively of the role of family support workers and the sort of initiatives that we have already developed with Video Visits to connect families who are separated through distance or compassionate circumstances. I valued his comments that the organisations I had chosen to work with, and the prisons I would visit, would give me a very good overview of good family practices. He reaffirmed the comments he made in the resettlement report which I had just acquired a few days before leaving Australia. In this report he stated:

“Overwhelmingly an offender’s family are the most effective resettlement agency.”

Nick Hardwick – HMP Inspector of Prisons (September 2014)

This call for an intentional effort to assist offenders to maintain and restore family relationship is not new. It is echoed in many Inspection reports. However the emphasis at this time stems from a deep concern that some of the good efforts of some of the 2nd and 3rd tier family service providers could be lost with the TR introduction.

“We are concerned that work on family relationships that will continue to be provided, if at all, directly by the prison will not be integrated with work done by resettlement service providers.”

18 Resettlement provisions for adult offenders – A joint thematic review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probations and Ofsted – September 2014
The Inspector is not alone in his call for a greater family connection. A former England and Wales Inspector for Prisons made similar recommendations in January 2005 when she called for officers to be specifically tasked to liaise with families.

“We recommend that there should be officers specifically tasked to liaise with families, particularly in women’s prisons, to assist with the emotional as well as the practical issues that arise. And support for prisoners as parents can have a positive impact on the whole family. We have seen good practice in some prisons, which others could emulate.”

Scotland
The HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland makes a very passionate appeal for the support of families in his Foreword to above-referenced 2005 report.

“Common sense might tell you that there is something to be said for encouraging good family contact for prisoners. For common sense would tell you that the more isolated prisoners feel the more difficult their experience of prison the worse prison will prepare them for life outside.

But common sense would not tell you what this report does tell you and what this report does prove: which is that good family contact is not simply important but is very important indeed. It reinforces some earlier statistical evidence about the astonishing correlation between maintaining good family ties and reducing re-offending. It is vital for public safety that as much as possible be done to encourage good family contact for prisoners. This is not simply common sense; this is not simply soft-hearted sentiment. This is solid, evidence-based fact, and this report is part of the evidence.”

I became aware of this report when meeting with its author, Dr Nancy Loucks. Nancy is the CEO of ‘Families Outside’ (Scotland), the organisation with which I spent a week during my ‘tour’ of Scottish prisons. Her report “Keeping in Touch: The Case for Family Support Work in Prison” was commissioned by the Prison Reform Trust and the Lankelly Foundation. It makes a compelling case for having specially designated people working to support prisoners in maintaining contact with their families.

This particular report was also very helpful to me in providing ‘background’ that pre-dated the 2009/10 NOMS Study. The report introduced to me the work of FCDO (Family Contact Development Officers). This role was introduced into all Scottish prisons in 1992 by designating one, or more, correctional officers to specifically work with families. The report looks at the effectiveness of the role and briefly discusses the advantages and disadvantages of having uniformed personnel performing this role.

Coming up to speed

To arrive in the UK shortly after the Chief Inspector of Prisons had extolled the value of families in the resettlement process was very helpful. It was evident that a lot had happened since the original pilot study conducted in 2009/10 as detailed in NOMS report on the Prison-based FSW\textsuperscript{20}. This report was a catalyst for my Churchill Fellowship and it took me a little while to get up to speed with the new model of prison-based Family Support Workers that was now being rolled out across the UK.

For those interested, it is worth tracking the evolution of Family Support Worker to the new role of FEW (Family Engagement Worker). In the intervening years there was an additional trial from which the new role was eventually developed. There was a lot learned during this trial and at the time of my arrival in the UK the old system was still in use but gradually being phased out. For information I’ve include a brief background at Annex F.

A new role - Family Engagement Worker\textsuperscript{21}

On 6\textsuperscript{th} March 2013 NOMS let tenders\textsuperscript{22} for the role of FEW. I’m indebted to Chris Holmes of NOMS. Chris is a Commissioning Advisor in the Directorate of Commissioning and Commercial. Chris provided me copies of “An introduction to NOMS Offender Service Co-commissioning\textsuperscript{23}” (2014) which was invaluable in helping me grasp the concept of ‘commission’ and ‘co-commissioning’ - terms I would come to hear regularly during my trip. The section on Children and Families also brought me up to speed with the NOMS decision to commission the role of FEW.

It was extremely useful meeting with Chris on my first day in London. It provided the opportunity to discuss my itinerary and FEW Commissioning. I also found Chris’s appraisal of the government’s TR project very helpful and I valued the opportunity to consider how this might impact on family service providers.

A working model - Family Engagement Worker

A national framework provider

Following the national tender for an organization to become the ‘framework provider’ of prison-based family support workers, PACT was selected. Forming a Prison Family Support Alliance with NEPACS, POPS (Partners of Prisoners and Family Support Group) and Jigsaw the Alliance undertook to develop and deliver family services in prisons in England and Wales, to share good practice and learning, and to encourage the government, public, private and voluntary sectors to focus on families as part of the strategy to reduce re-offending.

This now meant any prison which wished to commission a dedicated worker to provide a casework-based support service to families can do so, without the cost, bureaucracy and delay of entering into a new competitive tendering process.

The management structure

PACT and NEPACS organisation structures are outlined in Annexes C and D respectively. PACT established the role of FEM (Family Engagement Manager) to directly oversee the FEW in the prisons and three Heads of Services to provide regional support – North and Midlands; London and South East; Wales and South West.

\textsuperscript{20} Prison-based Family Support - An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Family Support Worker role piloted in four English prisons during 2009-10 - Professor Gwyneth Boswell – August 2010

\textsuperscript{21} From this point onwards in the report I use the abbreviation FEW to refer to both Family Support Workers and Family Engagement Workers.

\textsuperscript{22} http://www.tendersdirect.co.uk/Search/Tenders/Print.aspx?ID=%20000000004099589

\textsuperscript{23} An Introduction to NOMS Offender Services Co-commissioning – NOMS - 2014
As at August 2014 PACT provided FEWs to 22 prisons and supported POPS in two prisons. NEPACS provided FEWs in four prisons under an Integrated Family Support Manager while an IFSA supervised a FEW in HMP Low Newton.

**Job Description**
The roles and responsibilities of a FEW were included in the tender let by NOMS. I've appended, at Annex E, a copy of the Job Description as promulgated with the original NOMS tender. The introduction to this document notes that the FEW will draw on relevant professional qualifications and/or experience, to operate at both a strategic level - in supporting development of service - and at an operational level in the direct provision of support, advice and case work.

**What sort of person is a Family Engagement Worker?**

**Qualifications vs experience**

Most FEWs I met with were relatively new in their role as the position had only been established for a few months. One incumbent had only started in the role a week prior to my visit. Some had previously worked as a FSW or had an involvement in a family support organisation working with offenders’ families.

It was apparent that the FEWs were an eclectic bunch. While there was initially some suggestion in the trial documents about establishing some sort of professional qualification, no mention was made of this in the initial recruitment for the positions. Some applicants came from local authority Children’s Services, some from charitable agencies, one held a criminology degree, another had worked as a parole officer and a number had volunteered with either PACT or NEPACS. One FEW had previously established and run her own charity work with children.

I was impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of all the FEWs I met. Some had many years of experience and were well qualified however the hallmark of those who stood out was their passion. I was deeply inspired watching them champion the cause of an offender and hearing stories of how the FEW had left no stone unturned to help support their family.

It was obvious walking around the prison that FEWs were held in high regard by offenders and custodial staff alike. All governors and senior management I had opportunity to speak with went to great lengths to extol the virtues of the FEW and it was readily apparent that they had become very valuable resources in the prison estate. As an aside, it is interesting to note that nearly all FEWs are women. PACT has at least one male FEW in HMP Pentonville.

**Understanding the role of the Family Engagement Worker**

I gained an understanding of the role of the FEW during my visit to England and Wales by spending 1.5 weeks with PACT and one week with NEPACS. I was also able to visit one prison, HMP Style, which was serviced by POPS.

I spent time with the CEO of NEPACS, Helen Attewell, and the Director of Services for PACT, Katie Morgan. Helen was based in NEPACS Head Office in Durham and Katie was located in the London Offices of PACT. Both organisations arranged my programme recommending and organising prisons and people to visit. In all I met with 13 FEWs/FSWs or FEMs and visited 11 prisons with FEWs.
Prisons visited included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Prison Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Family Support Worker</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMP Eastwood Park</td>
<td>F - Local</td>
<td>Bristol (SW)</td>
<td>Charlotte Parsons</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Swansea</td>
<td>M Cat B &amp; YOI</td>
<td>Swansea (Wales)</td>
<td>Joanne Mulcahy</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMYOI Deerbolt</td>
<td>M YOI</td>
<td>Barnard Castle (NE)</td>
<td>Karen Johnson</td>
<td>NEPACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Holme House</td>
<td>M L Cat B</td>
<td>West Durham (NE)</td>
<td>Debbie Shaughnessy</td>
<td>NEPACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Kirklevington Grange</td>
<td>M Res Cat C &amp; D</td>
<td>Kirkleinton (NE)</td>
<td>Becki Prout</td>
<td>NEPACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Durham</td>
<td>M L Res</td>
<td>Durham (NE)</td>
<td>*Sue Willoughby</td>
<td>NEPACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Forest Bank</td>
<td>M L YOI</td>
<td>Manchester (MID)</td>
<td>Charlotte Conley</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Styal</td>
<td>F L &amp; YOI</td>
<td>Wimslow (MID)</td>
<td>Lucy Smith</td>
<td>POPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMYOI Werrington</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Stoke on Trent (MID)</td>
<td>Katie Lees</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Drake Hall</td>
<td>F S-O YOI</td>
<td>Eccleshall (MID)</td>
<td>Katie Lees</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP/YOI Holloway</td>
<td>F L</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Val Dwamen</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sue Willoughby is not based in the prison but is the Integrated Support Services Manager supervising the FSW/FEW

F – Female; M – Male; Res – Resettlement; Cat A, B, C, D – Prison Category Description; L – Local; YOI – Young Offender Institute; S-O – Semi Open; J – Juvenile

Category Definitions:
A - Those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or national security
B - Those who do not require maximum security, but for whom escape still needs to be very difficult
C - Those who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who are unlikely to try to escape
D - Those who can be reasonably trusted not to try to escape, and are given the privilege of an open prison

First encounters of a family kind – what stood out?
HMP Eastwood Park was my first encounter with a FEWs and my first visit to a UK Prison. Eastwood Park is a female and YOI resettlement prison. It houses a large percentage of Welsh women offenders as there are no women’s prison in Wales. The prison is located about 30 minutes North of Bristol and has a capacity of 362. The FEW is Charlotte Parsons.

The first thing that stood out to me on that visit, and almost every visit to a prison thereafter, was the access that the FEW had to the prison and offenders. FEWs were generally key holders and their office was located inside the walls of the prison. They were free to move around the prison and often meet with offenders at short notice. This access to offenders was, in my opinion, a significant key to the success of this role.

This stood out in contrast to my observations of Risdon Prison where it would be impractical for SMSR (Sentence Management Support and Re-integration) staff, who provide services to three separate prison complexes, to have an office within the walls of any one particular prison.

Easy access to offenders was instrumental in developing the sort of rapport that I noticed between the offender and some FEWs. A FEW would frequently make phone calls in follow up to enquiries or issues being faced by an offender and they were able to ‘get back’ to the offender quickly. It is not uncommon for offenders to become frustrated or disheartened by the way the prison system does or doesn’t work, but this ‘rapid’ response helped to project a sense of genuine care and support and inspired trust and credibility in the role of the FEW.

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24 NOMS Categorisation and Recategorisation of Adult Male Prisoners
25 A key holder, as the name implies, holds keys that gives them access throughout the prison. They normally have to undertake additional security training. Some new FEWs I met had been waiting for up to six weeks to gain this ‘entitlement’.
Office location

Charlotte’s office, as in the case for many FEWs, was located in a resettlement ‘hub’. This office included people employed directly by the prison service or government agencies. In Eastwood Park this included the Visits Coordinator who received and processed all visit requests; a Social Service person who is employed by the government and seconded to the prison to answer social services questions (this was not common in all prisons, however women generally had more questions associated with children and family support issues); an education person to arrange courses; a housing officer to process and manage housing issues specifically leading up to release.

In some prisons FEWs had an office in a wing of the prison. In HMP Parc, which is discussed separately in this report\(^26\), the Family Intervention team had their offices in the wing of the prison and had regular contact with offenders.

It was not uncommon for FEWs to also have an office in the Visitors’ Centre, or at least to spend some time in the Visitors’ Centre prior to visits. This recognised the dual role that FEWs play in supporting offenders and their families. Visitors’ Centres\(^27\) are significant in the UK strategy to support families and often commissioned by NOMS or funded and run by charities.

Referrals

FEWs receive their referrals from a variety of sources. Annex G provides a sample of a FEW’s internal monthly report for HMP/YOI Deerbolt (500 prisoners). This report indicates 21 new offenders’ referrals for the week and five for families. These figures were similar to other prisons although the prison type does have a significant bearing on both the offender’s and family’s needs and the source of referral.

Referral for offenders generally came from:
- Offenders self-referrals (wing applications/chance meetings)
- Prison Staff
- The reception/induction process
- Agencies
- The Visitors’ Centre

Referrals for families of prisoners came from the following sources:
- Visitor self-referrals
- The Visitors’ Centre
- Agencies

NEPACS categorises the reasons for referral under 14 main headings; financial issues, accommodation, parent/child play day, family day visits, children/parenting, adoption, fostering/care proceedings, sentence planning, physical health, emotional/mental health, advice and support with services and community resources, alcohol misuse, drug misuse, ROTL\(^28\)/release.

Induction of new offenders was an important source of referrals for most FEWs although the approach varied from prison to prison. In some prisons the FEW would sit in on the induction process, in others they would talk to and/or make appointments to meet with all new offenders, while in others the onus was left up to the offender to request an appointment after being made aware of the services the FEW could offer.

\(^{26}\) See page 55
\(^{27}\) See page 36 for information on Visitors’ Centres
\(^{28}\) ROTL – Released on Temporary License – equivalent to Risdon’s section 42.
In HMP Eastwood Park (360 capacity) the FEW tried to meet with all new offenders within 72 hours of their arrival.

In HMP YOI Swansea (455 capacity) the FEW sits on the induction board which is made up of the Chaplain, FEW, Drugs and Alcohol rep and a Safe Custody person. The induction board meets four times a week for an hour to see newly incarcerated offenders. About 40% of new offenders request some form of family support. The FEW also receives about 15-20 enquiries each week from families.

In HMP Kirklevington Grange (306 offenders), a category D resettlement prison, the FEW regularly met with offenders during the normal course of a day. She maintained an open door policy and regularly had offenders seeking her out in her office to discuss family issues. This prison has no external Visitors’ Centre and referrals come mainly from staff, offenders, via phone calls or through the visit process.

In HMP YOI Styal (460 offenders) a ‘Women’s Centre’ reception desk is staffed by a trusted offender as part of her work allocation. Offenders who wanted to book meetings with the FEW make a booking with the receptionist and turn up for the appointment. The FEW allocates two afternoons each week to attend ‘surgery’. She makes herself available in the Women’s Centre to see offenders in much the same was as patients do at a Doctor’s Surgery. This arrangement worked very well and I was able to sit in on three appointments on the afternoon I was there.

In HYOI Werrington (114 prisoners), a juvenile prison, the FEW was limited to working with 40 children from the West Midlands. She did however work closely with other service providers to ensure all offenders with family issue were appropriately referred. She often receives referrals from staff and responds regularly to outside enquiries from families. She also spends time engaging with children in her daily routine and works closely with the chaplain and other staff to respond to family issues.

In HMP Holme House (1220 offenders) the FEW’s work was split with another Family Support Worker (through a different service provider) employed to specifically work with offenders who have drug or alcohol addictions. Referrals for each worker were about 50/50.

In HMP YOI Holloway (550 offenders), a women’s remand prison in London, a team of FEWs are involved in daily inductions. Their work is complicated by the large number of foreign nationals – 130. The FEWs have their office on the wing but receive and meet with many of their referrals in a large ‘hub’ which is serviced by all the service providers.

**Caseload**

It was obvious that the services of the FEW were in high demand. One of the ‘concerns’ expressed in the original IFSS trial was that care needed to be taken in managing the case load of the FEW. It was noted that FEWs could easily find themselves ‘troubleshooting’ and be kept busy rectifying others’ mistakes.

I didn’t meet any FEWs who were bored. They were all self-starters and had full caseloads. One women’s prison, with two FEW had 77 active cases which represented about 25% of the prison population. This same prison had requests from 40% of all new offenders at the time of their induction. This prison also received about 15-20 requests from families each week.

**Recording, reporting and accountability**

FEWs have access to the P-NOMIS national data base of all UK prisoners. They have received training in how to use it and are expected to enter information as appropriate.
PACT, as the national framework provider for the FEW project, developed a national database system based on the E-CINS\textsuperscript{29}. E-CINS allows for the management of victims, offenders and vulnerable persons and is currently being used for IOM (Integrated Offender Management) Case Management in a number of counties.

Eastwood Park had just commenced using this database when I visited. The system will be very good when fully operational but in the early stages it will require extra effort to bring it up-to-date with current cases. Until the introduction of E-CINS most FEWs recorded their case notes on forms in individual case files. I obtained copies of some forms used for: screening assessment, application for special family visits, case notes and assessments forms.

All FEWs had line managers and it appeared the FEW interacted with their managers on a regular basis. PACT’s Heads of Service meet with their FEWs for two hours on a bi-monthly basis and all FEWs met periodically for a three hour regional meeting. These meetings included discussions concerning the FEW’s cases and caseload.

PACT workers completed monthly reports that provided statistics about their referrals and caseload and also information on visitations, distances travelled, numbers, information/advice, etc. These reports are sent to head office. Quarterly reports include statistics, projections, safeguarding referrals and courses.

**Working relationships with prison management**

I’ve previously alluded to the way that prison management held the family workers in such high regard. There was no doubt in my mind that the prisons in which the FEW had the greatest impact were those where there was a healthy and vibrant relationship between prison management and the FEW. Most of the FEWs, even those who had only been in the job for a short time, had built very good relationships with a ‘go to’ person. Having a clearly defined ‘go to’ person in senior management - who would ‘support them’ even if they didn’t support the request – is essential.

While some of these things can be easily proscribed on a Job Description, there is a ‘credibility factor’ that isn’t easily defined by tasks. Good FEWs were trusted. They had gained the respect of management and this went a long way to making their job easier, avoiding frustration and making their work enjoyable and fulfilling. And they got things done!

**What does a Family Engagement Worker do?**

A large part of the FEW’s role is practical case work. It is responding to the needs of offenders and their families and providing the ‘life-line’ linking them together. Trying to explain the role to one of my family, I had the picture of the old fashioned deep sea diver, with the big brass helmet, going over the side of the boat to walk along the bottom of the ocean. The only thing keeping him alive was the rope and air hose that connected him to the boat. The illustration is apt for people going into prison. But the truth for many is that the air hose gets kinked when the prison door is closed.

The FEW not only takes the kink out of the air hose, they get the air flowing again. They create opportunities to connect the offender and his/her family. They are creative, innovative and passionate and will ‘bend’ the prison constraints to pump air back into the offender’s small, confined world. Most workers were like a ‘well-behaved’ dog with a bone. They knew the constraints of the prison system; but were unrelenting in their pursuit to get the best possible outcomes for a child or family member and create opportunities for the offender to recognise, accept and fulfil his/her responsibility as a parent, husband or child.

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\textsuperscript{29} E-CINS – Is a powerful national database that enables multi-agency, cross-border information sharing
Family intervention strategies

All of the family support organisations are brilliant with the programmes they have created to support offenders and their families. On the eve of my departure to the UK I received a report from NOMS: ‘Parenting and relationship support programmes for offenders and their families’. The report was produced by Policis in collaboration with the Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies and Toynbee Hall.

The report is in two volumes. The first deals with current family interventions and parental learning landscape for offenders and their families. The companion volume describes the best practices in commissioning and service provisions and NOMS recommendations for the future.

The first report was invaluable for providing me a broad understanding and background to English ‘Troubled Families’ and Welsh ‘Family First’ national government strategy for identifying and working with needy families in the community. Overlaid on this framework the report looks at the specific needs of offender’s families. In a thorough analysis it highlights various parenting and relationship support programmes for offenders and their families being run in the UK prisons and community.

This publication was like a Guide Book for my journey through the UK prisons. Time and time again I found myself referring to various sections of the report to better understand the programmes I was witnessing.

Volume Two of the report brings together the insights and lessons coming out of the landscape study and provides an overview of what the best practices look like for both the government and service providers. This report sets out best practices on family interventions for offenders and their families in a pragmatic way – i.e. being conscious that there isn’t a lot of money around!

The report recognises that intervention is much more than a number of good courses. Offenders and their families have a series of family-related needs at each stage of the offender’s journey. And good family intervention addresses these needs at each stage on the journey – pre conviction, conviction, sentencing, during the sentence and particularly at the latter stages of a sentence prior to release, and post release.

There is much we can learn from this report. It has the potential to be a good ‘working document’ to guide us in Tasmania in recognising that children and families are one of the pathways to reducing re-offending AND a proactive intervention to ‘break the cycle’ of offending and inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour.

Family programmes, initiatives and activities

Rather than provide a detailed list of all the family programmes that I saw in operation I would refer the reader to the report that I have previously referenced. I would also specifically direct you to the PACT, NEPACS and POPS websites. These sites give a good summary of the family programmes conducted by these organisations within the prison and in the community. I’d also give special mention of Barnardo’s i-Hop website - this is a brilliant resource supporting all professionals working with offenders’ children and their families.

There are some programmes that particularly caught my attention.

30 www.policis.com/pdf/moj/MOJ_BIS_Parenting_support_for_offenders_and_families_Volume_1_28014_FINAL.pdf
31 www.policis.com/pdf/moj/MOJ_BIS_Parenting_support_for_offenders_and_families_Volume_2_28014_FINAL.pdf
32 https://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/home
Time to Connect:

*Time to Connect* is a parent course run by PACT. What impressed me about this course was that it consists of four workshops that can be delivered in a two-day block, or be spread over four days. Uniquely among parenting and relationship courses for offenders, *Time to Connect* can be run in a short amount of time, meaning that it is suitable for short-sentence and remand offenders. While I did not see the course operating, the enthusiastic support by PACT family workers and the testimonies of offenders was convincing. See the video available on line[^33].

The workshops cover the following topics:

- The impact of their imprisonment on their children.
- The importance of Keeping Connected.
- The role of Mum/Dad and being a good parent from prison.
- ‘What is play?’ and ‘The role of play’.
- The different stages of child development.

The fourth and final workshop is devoted to the offenders’ planning and preparing for a child-centred visit, which is held approximately two weeks after the workshops. This includes choosing activities that they would like to do with their child at the visit. Approximately four weeks after the child-centred visit, a booster session will be held for the group of offenders to share experiences since the original workshops, as well as recap and consolidate their learning.

Because the course can be conducted over a short period of time it does reduce the high dropout rate that some parenting courses suffer.

Building Stronger Families

*Building Stronger Families* (BSF) is a six day course conducted by PACT to strengthening offenders’ relationships with their partners with a view to reducing the risk of couples breaking up. The programme has had over 1,800 participants in prisons across the UK.

Partners come into the prison for the six days of the course so that they can learn the skills together. The three modules run over two days, and cover the following topics:

- **Communicating Together** - Increasing positive communication, reducing negatives, conflict resolution techniques, forgiveness and emotional needs.
- **Parenting Together** - Parenting styles, child development, behaviour management and communicating about children.
- **Handling Money Together** - Information on spending, saving and budgeting, attitudes towards money, handling debt, and strategies for handling money together.

The feedback from this course was excellent.

Home Work Clubs

Most of the charities run some sort of Home Work Club. Having commenced a home work class in Risdon with one offender, we are keen to further develop this concept. We are currently looking into the feasibility of doing homework sessions for children who live in the North of the state via video, and hope to trial our first session in February, 2015.

My visit to one NEPACS homework session in HMP Durham received an enthusiastic write up in the local newspaper[^34]. PACT operates a similar programme in HMP Forrest Bank North of Manchester. The visit would take place on the Wednesday night family visit at 4.30-6.00pm. This is normally a


[^34]: *The Northern Echo*, 1\textsuperscript{st} December 2014
special visit which is for offenders who have children. The child’s carer accompanies the child but
firm guidelines are prescribed for the visit. The FEW is actively involved in the visit and will join with
the school and prison education departments to establish a plan for the child/offender’s learning
needs. Each learner is expected to present a piece of homework on completion of the visit and
complete the homework task with the incarcerated parent. The teacher will use a learning journal
to communicate what pointers the parent should use to support the child within the session.

Even with our limited trial we have found that homework is an excellent vehicle for building
communication between a child and their incarcerated parent. Not only have we seen marked
differences in the child’s results at school we have also found that the child actually looks forward to
talking to their parent when they ring and they have something in common to talk about. It’s an
excellent bonding tool.

During my trip it was encouraging to see dads, who would not normally have had any interest or
time to engage in homework with their children on the outside, actually keen and interested in what
their children are doing at school.

Fathers and toddlers
There were a variety of father and toddlers courses. In Durham, NEPACS ran a programme where
mothers with babies or toddlers would bring the children to a special morning visit that was
reserved for dads only. The carer would accompany the child into the visit and remain for 15
minutes before leaving. They would return after 2 hours and have a further 15 minutes as a family
before the visit finished. The Family Engagement team would remain in the visit area supervising a
programme that encouraged play activities for the dads and children.

During the visit I attended, one of the children had an upset stomach and was sick. This required the
mother to be called (some of the mothers remained in the outside Visitors’ Centre in their own
informal support group). I was encouraged in talking with the dad, covered in vomit, who was
deply concerned for his daughter and anxious to get back to his accommodation so that he could
ring home to see how his daughter was coping.

Although this programme runs weekly, it is divided into two groups of about 7 men each, so that
each dad had a special children’s visit once a fortnight.

Dads and babies
My favourite programme was the Dads and Baby course run at HMYOI Deerbolt. This is a two day
course that runs from 0830-1200 and 1400-1630 for new dads or expecting dads, that is run by the
FEW, Karen Johnson. The course is a fun programme that would operate in much the same way as
pre and post natal classes for couples, except that this for is dads only.

The course is very interactive and involves each dad being given a baby (special doll) to look after
during the course. Apparently it initially took a little time to get the guys to take it seriously, but
once they engage it is apparently very effective. The course involves a budgeting game where there
are pictures of items and dads have to guess the prices. There are some practical tips on how to
reduce costs and lots of teaching on how to look after the baby.

The dads complete a confidence scale assessment at the start of the course and another at the
completion. It’s a sliding scale 1-10. The assessment at the start of the course tends to average
about 5 with 10 being a regular result at the completion.

The effectiveness of the course is perhaps best illustrated by a story that Karen told me. There are
pictures of babies at various stages of development that the guys have to place in order; there is also
a series of pictures of ‘baby poo’. Karen explains to the offenders the sort of things you can learn
from the baby’s specimens and the discussion is normally animated and interesting. Following one course however Karen was tracked down by one of the partners of the guys who had just completed the course. She said she just wanted to thank Karen for the way she had helped them. On enquiring further Karen learned she had a young baby who hadn’t been sleeping well. In fact the mother had become quite distressed and also was not sleeping well. As it turns out the offender spoke on the phone with his partner one day to discover that the baby was ill. The first question he asked was “What is her poo like?” The mother was taken back but he assured her he genuinely wanted to know – what colour it was, what was its consistency, etc? When the mother described it, the father said “that’s not good – it means this and this and you need to take her to the doctor.” And that’s what the mother did, only to discover that everything her partner said was correct.

Participants in the course have opportunity to wear the empathy vest and have to try to do up their shoe laces
(This also helped me empathise with my daughter and daughter-in-law.
My daughter had a baby in November 2014 and my daughter-in-law gave birth in early February 2015)

Apparently the word about the course has got around and it is always full to capacity. Karen said it was quite a surprise the first time, when on meeting a new offender one of the first things he asked was “Are you the one who runs the baby course? How do I get to do it? I have a mate who was in here and told me about it and said it was one course I had do when I got inside.”

Vox Liminis – In Tune - Bringing families together through music
In Scotland I was able to participate in a very different sort of family programme. In Tune is run in HMP Addiewell in a partnership between Vox Liminis and Families Outside. Over a series of workshops, In Tune helps offenders and families connect through music and enjoy the time together. Vox Liminis uses professional musicians to sing songs, create activities and break down walls separating children, their mothers and incarcerated dads.

The programme was very well run and I was reminded of children’s TV shows like Play School where music and songs provide a medium to break down inhibitions and encourage group participation. Using musical instruments and some very good teaching techniques the Vox Liminis team did an excellent job in setting the scene for some good humoured family fun activity.

About seven families participated in the event the day I attended, and it was encouraging to see families sitting in groups discussing their favourite songs or working together on some group task.
Visitors’ Centres

In Tasmania Risdon Prison has a modern efficient Visitors’ Centre. It is operated by the staff of TPS and it is the first port of call for all visitors to the prison. It functions very well servicing visits for three distinct prison facilities. However it does operate very differently to Visitors’ Centres in the UK.

The Role of Visitors’ Centres in the UK

In the UK the role and function of Visitors’ Centres vary considerably. In 2001 Dr Nancy Loucks in ‘Just Visiting?’ undertook a comprehensive ‘Review of the Role of Prisons’ Visitors’ Centres’. Nancy and Families Outside in Scotland have advocated strongly for all prisons to have a Visitors’ Centre that has the formal means of liaising with families for information and support to them.

Observations

All the Visitors’ Centres I visited were either commissioned by government or funded by charitable trusts. They operated separately from the prison and were staffed by a mixture of paid and volunteer staff and were normally open during the visit times of the prison. The centres were located outside of the prison complex, normally near the visitors’ car park. The Centres themselves varied in ‘design’. Some were modern and attractive while some were ‘older’ transportable/prefabricated buildings.

These centres could be operated by small local church groups or charities heavily reliant on volunteers, as was the case with the rural centre at HMP Erlestoke; or, as I experienced at HMP Holloway (London), by larger organisations like the church-based charity Spurgeon’s which operates Visitors’ Centres in all eight London prisons.

In some instances Visitors’ Centres acted as the ‘first port of call’ for all visitors. In these centres visitors would be received by centre staff and custodial officers. The custodial officers would process finger scans, take photographs and print off name tags. The Visitors’ Centre staff would provide family-friendly service, serve tea and coffee and provide lockers for the storage of personal belongings. Visitors would then be directed to the prison where they would present their pass and proceed through the security checks.

Some Visitors’ Centres were not supported by custodial staff but they did have a list of visitors who would be visiting that day. Visitors were required to report to the Visitors’ Centre to leave their personal possessions. The centre staff would make special

arrangements to identify and welcome first-time visitors and answer any questions that they had. The visitors would wait till the appointed time and then be ushered into the prison. Visitors would go through a secondary security identification process before going into the prison complex.

Other Visitors’ Centres would simply provide a family-friendly environment, tea and coffee, lockers, a play area for children and support for the family. Visitors would often use these facilities if they had travelled by public transport or they had time to wait for the visit, otherwise they would go directly to the prison for security vetting before entering for the visit. From a ‘straw poll’ of a couple of prisons providing this service, I concluded about 40-50% of visitors would use a Visitors’ Centre in these instances.

I asked one Visitors’ Centre manager how they identified first-time visitors. Looking out the window from her desk she pointed to a sign on the prison gate that directed all visitors to the Visitors’ Centre. She said “I can tell even before they walk through the door – they look lost, and they don’t know what to do and where to go. The whole process is daunting.”

Conclusions
The Visitors’ Centres are an invaluable tool for supporting first-time visitors and I was particularly encouraged to look to ways we could provide family support staff in the Visitors’ Centre in Tasmania. **As a first step** we should start to work with TPS staff to identify first-time visitors and better support them.
The Scottish experience

I have always wanted to go to Scotland and now having visited I know why. It is a beautiful country with wonderful people and amazing hospitality. Based in Edinburgh with Families Outside, an organisation established in 2008 to provide specialist one-to-one service to people affected at each stage of the criminal justice process, I was able to visit a number of prisons in the South of the country before heading North to Perth and then up the east coast to Peterhead.

My prison visits included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Prison Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMP Edinburgh</td>
<td>M F YOI Res</td>
<td>Edinburgh (S)</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Addiewell*</td>
<td>M Max</td>
<td>Addiewell (S)</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Perth</td>
<td>M Max</td>
<td>Barnard Castle (NE)</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Castle Huntly</td>
<td>O Res</td>
<td>Dundee (E)</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP YOI Grampian</td>
<td>M F YOI</td>
<td>Peterhead (NE)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F – Female; M – Male; Res – Resettlement; L – Local; YOI – Young Offender Institute; O – Open

*HMP Addiewell is a private prison operated by Sodexo

I’m especially indebted to Sarah Roberts, also a recipient of the Churchill Fellowship, who was invaluable in her assistance in coordinating my time in Scotland. Her passion was contagious and her example helped me to appreciate that the true value of the Churchill Fellowship is not just in the learning but in the networking and relationships that are built; and the results that flow out of a deep desire to make a difference in the lives of those affected by the criminal justice system.

Sarah’s personal story inspired me. She was a teacher who, affected by the children of offenders that she taught, resigned from work to undertake a fellowship study that looked at how teachers could recognise and support children affected by imprisonment. After volunteering in Families Outside she was eventually employed by the organisation and now heads up a team of Family Support Workers supporting the families of offenders.

Families Outside

My investigation of prison-based family support for offenders and their families didn’t just focus on the work within the prison estate. It also recognised the potential to provide a base in regional areas which could offer support to offenders’ families who suffered additional frustrations and separation because they lived a long way from the prison.

In Tasmania the Video Visits programme we operate and our own Hillside Haven visitor’s accommodation (a house on the church property for families to stay in when visiting the prison) have enabled us to establish a number of beachheads in our efforts to tackle this problem. During my visit with Families Outside in Scotland, I could see how we could possibly move forward to better support families during the period of incarceration and potentially offer support through the re-integration phase of the offender’s journey.

Families Outside is the premier organisation in Scotland that works with children and families of offenders. I’ve previously alluded to the CEO, Dr Nancy Loucks, and her excellent work in guiding the SPS (Scottish Prison Service) to recognise and respond to the needs of offender’s families. She has been championing the cause of offender’s families for many years and produced a very valuable review in 2004 of the need for prison-based family support workers.

The Scottish equivalent of a prison-based Family Support Worker

The Scottish response of creating the FCDO (Family Contact Development Officer) position for correctional staff was ground-breaking when it was first introduced. The role was actually recommended by the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families, which is now Families Outside. Today
the role has been refined as FCO (Family Contact Officer) and continues to be filled by uniformed correctional officers. I had the opportunity to sit-in on a briefing with two officers who were being appointed to the position in HMP Castle Huntley. It was insightful to witness the induction process and see how the relationship between Family Outside and the prison FCO operated.

What is the best - uniformed staff or outside service provider family support worker?
The findings of the original prison-based Family Support Worker pilot strongly supported the view the prison-based Family Support Worker should be provided by an outside service provider. Their reasoning recognised the ‘neutrality’ of the worker and the ability to ensure the worker stayed focused in the family support role and wasn’t diverted to other ‘prison requirements’.

All the organisations I visited in England and Wales (where the FEW roles were filled by outside service providers) were adamant that this model worked well and was their preferred way of supporting offenders and their families. After I completed my visit and had a better understanding of the family support model, I contacted Dr Nancy Loucks to further seek her thoughts on the English and Welsh models in comparison with the way SPS had decided to go. Here are my questions to Nancy and her responses.

**Question 1:**
Given the choice between a uniformed or an outside agency providing this service which, in your opinion, would provide the best service for offenders and their families?

**Answer:**
A lot depends on how the model works. Uniformed staff as FCOs ensure that prison staff take ownership of the issue rather than relegating ‘family stuff’ to another agency. This already happens to some degree even between FCOs and other uniformed staff: other staff tend to see any family-related issue as something for the FCOs to deal with, even when an issue might be very straightforward.

The original idea of an FCO was that of an FCDO (Family Contact Development Officer). This was supposed to be senior-ish post that had responsibility for family-related issues, but one that facilitated this work amongst the entire staff team rather than one that was expected to carry out the entirety of family-related work themselves. That is the model I would prefer.

Non-uniformed staff bring a degree of (very welcome) independence and therefore of increased trust from prisoners and indeed from their families. They may have to work to gain that same respect and trust from prison staff, however, which is perhaps not helpful. There is also a potential conflict of interest for uniformed staff where their priority is the security of the prison rather than the needs of the family (and therefore they are less able to advocate for families who arrive late for a visit or who have been placed on closed visits).

**Question 2:**
If SPS offered to divert the salaries of FCO’s to Family Outside to staff this role would you seriously consider the offer?

**Answer:**
No! We are happy to work alongside a prison-based role but the risk of a post that supports both prisoners and families is that the needs of the person in prison tend to overtake those of the families. The needs of the person in prison and their families may also conflict, such as in the event of coercive or abusive relationships. A ‘whole family’ approach is welcome, but we do not feel this works in the best interest of the family outside in many cases. We will of course meet with the person in prison as well if this supports the remaining family, but our focus is on those outside. We do however believe it is critical to work alongside prison-based staff to offer support.
**Question 3:**
However if you were starting today, and given a choice of the sort of model you would go with, what would you prefer.

**Answer:**
I would prefer the model we have today (support for the person in prison inside, working in tandem with independent support for the family outside). However, I would prefer that the FCO model return to its roots as a senior facilitating role rather than an entry level post with few powers that especially qualified people have to leave in order to progress their careers. A non-uniformed role would be welcome too, but they are unlikely to have the power necessary to overrule uniformed staff, plus it risks relegation of family-related issues to 'somebody else's responsibility'.

NOMS ultimately arrived at the decision, after their trials, to invite outside service agencies to provide the role of Family Engagement Workers and commissioned PACT, NEPACS and POPS.

**The Pros and Cons**
There is no doubt there are benefits in having custodial staff fill a role such as the FCO and Nancy Loucks presents a compelling argument for this model. The right person in this role would be a powerful agent to support offenders and their families. The incumbent would be an experienced person capable of working in the prison environment and attuned to potential security issues. They would be trained and prepared in how to respond in emergencies and there would be some guarantee to the perpetuity of the position which would be factored into the prison operations costs and not dependent on government or trust funding. HMP Parc, discussed later in this report, is a brilliant example of how correctional staff, working as a team, can significantly enhance offender/family relationships.

The most common argument against uniformed staff performing this role seemed to be the fact that custodial officers, irrespective of their role, are still part of the system. In my interactions with offenders during my trip I would often ask offenders whether they would prefer a uniformed or outside provider in the FEW roles. Without exception the offenders responded that they felt more comfortable speaking with people who were not part of the system. Their response also incorporated recognition that an outside provider worked as part of a family support structure and that they felt more confident that the family would be better supported by the agencies which employed the FEW workers.

During my visit to HMP Grampian I was able to obtain a role description for the FCO’s position (Annex H) and I talked at length with the operational manager about the services the FCO provides. My tour of Grampian prison was reminiscent of my time in HMP Parc. This new prison was fresh and bright and the Visitors’ Centre was spacious, attractive and practical. It was apparent that families were important, and a lot of planning had gone into making the visit experience as pleasant as possible. There were a number of FCO positions in the prison, and they had their offices located inside the prison with immediate access to the visitors’ waiting area. The construction of a separate Visitors’ Centre outside of the prison, again attested to SPS’s determination to recognise the importance of offender’s families.

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37 HMP YOI Grampian is perhaps the newest prison in the UK. It was opened in March 2014.
Family Outside and their Family Support Workers

The relationship between the FCO, working with the offenders inside the prison, and the Family Outside’s Family Support Worker supporting families, was a wonderful example of how a symbiotic relationship between SPS and Families Outside has developed to support offenders and their families’ needs. Seeing this relationship in action helped me visualise what a Family Support model for Tasmania might look like, as we seek to work in the prison and with the families in regional areas.

Families Outside Family Support Team is headed up by Sarah Roberts who is designated as the Child and Family Support Manager and, as such, she oversees eight FSWs located regionally throughout Scotland. During my visit it was beneficial attending a meeting of all FSWs in the Visitors’ Centre of HMP Perth. Meetings are held monthly and provide an opportunity for encouragement of the Family Support Team, and to debrief on some of the challenges they are facing.

The way that FSWs function, varies considerably. Some are based primarily within prison Visitors’ Centres while others will frequent the Visitors’ Centres and prison waiting room. Support is offered to families via telephone or through face-to-face meetings which take place in the Visitors’ Centres, in people’s homes, or in the wider community – such as schools or community centres. Most support takes place while an offender is in prison and addresses issues such as: family-related problems; housing and financial difficulties; concerns about health and wellbeing of family members and prisoners; and prison-based issues including visiting procedures, help with claiming travel expenses, Home Detention Curfew and moving to the Open Estate.

The size and nature of the work

In 2013/14 Families Outside had 458 referrals and supported 1,142 family members. This was an increase of 67% in the number of clients from the previous year.

The main issue by far that Families Outside clients had was the need for emotional support. The stigma, shame, and the fact that many families felt abandoned by their community, caused stress and anxiety. Many clients struggled financially. The top 5 issues that clients reported were:

1. Emotional support – stress caused by imprisonment of a family member.
2. Financial issues – struggling to pay rent and make ends meet.
3. Concern for the offender – most often their mental health.
4. Family-related concerns.
5. Visits – especially the cost and logistics of getting to them.

Most of the referrals came from staff in the Visitors’ Centre and from Families Outside Telephone Help Line. Where Families Outside had a presence in a Visitors’ Centre, they found the highest number of referrals coming directly from clients through informal conversations.

Families Outside work with statutory and national voluntary organisations frequently referring clients (such as those in financial need) for assistance. They also work with a large number of locally-based charities providing on the ground assistance at the community level. Families Outside often acted as the lead agency to coordinate professional networks such as police, social work, health and education. They also support other agencies in facilitating in-prison meetings and case conferences. Their aim is to keep families affected by imprisonment at the centre and ensure that their needs are met by the agency best-placed to assist.

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38 Adapted from Families Outside Family Support Team Annual Report April 2013–March 2014
39 In 2013–14 the help line supported callers with over 3,574 issues.
Other Services
The range of services offered by Families Outside is extensive. They assist children and young people by facilitating in-prison meetings between pupils, teachers and parents and they speak in school assemblies; and they also deliver awareness-raising workshops to help all children consider the impact of imprisonment on families. They have piloted a group-relaxation session specifically for women affected by imprisonment. They support professionals who are involved in working with the families of offenders, and they engage with the wider community in matters of criminal justice to raise the awareness of the issues offenders’ families face.

Conclusions
Families Outside’s approach presents as the sort of model that could be developed to underpin our work with offenders’ families in the regional area of Tasmania. I can easily envisage a team of Family Support Workers based in regional centres supporting the children and families of offenders.
Introduction

Just prior to my trip overseas we conducted a Video Visit that connected an offender with his partner in hospital a day after she had given birth to her baby. The visit was a resounding success in more ways than one. However during the process of the visit we stumbled onto an issue that had been lurking in the shadows in a lot of what we do.

Our family support worker got to talking to the midwife of the hospital after the birth and it became apparent that the mum’s concerns about being stigmatised because of her husband, were indeed very well founded. It wasn’t that the midwife or staff were being prejudicial as such, it’s just that they didn’t really know how to support the mum effectively or relate to her. In the end the midwife asked if we could talk with the nurse managers with a view to conducting some training for the midwives in how to relate to offenders’ partners and families.

With this in the back of my mind, I went to the UK to learn more about *Hidden Sentence* training that had been developed by AFP (Action for Prisoners’ Families) and was being adapted and used by family support organisations across the country.

Observing a model

My first introduction to the ‘programme’ came with a visit to Barnardo’s in Bristol. I had read about Bristol in preparing for my trip. I learned that key partners across the city had gotten together to develop a Strategy for Supporting Families and Children (0-19) of offenders. The project in itself is worthy of further investigation, however I will only focus on one of part of Barnardo’s response. And that is how they applied the *Hidden Sentence* training.

What they did was to break down the children 0-19 into two groups – pre-school and school aged. And then they developed a ‘course’ for professionals responsible for children in school and pre-school that would:

- Make them aware of the main impacts potentially affecting children who have a family member in prison.
- Provide a checklist for good practices for schools.
- Develop resources that can be of direct use in schools, including training materials and books for children.

In the process of developing material, Barnardo’s had young people and workers produce Bristol's Charter for Children of Prisoners which holds recommendations for children and families affected by parental imprisonment and the agency professionals who come into contact with them.

Two handbooks were also developed as part of the programme and distributed to schools and children’s centres. These handbooks were:

- Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member – A handbook for schools developing good practices.
- Under fives and their families affected by imprisonment – A handbook for Sure Start Children’s Centres.

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40 *The Bristol Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment (CAPI) service* (See I-Hop website)
41 *Bristol’s Charter for Children of Prisoners*
42 *Handbook for schools*
43 *Handbook for Sure Start Children’s Centres*
In conjunction with this material, large posters were produced to be displayed in schools and community centres identifying someone as a ‘go-to person’. If a child or family member wanted to speak to someone in confidence about issues they were facing with the incarceration of a family member, they had someone to go to. In simple terms it brought the issue out of the shadows and let people know it was alright to be struggling, and that there were people there to listen.

In every school community there are children affected by having a parent or close relative in prison or in the criminal justice system.

If your child is in this situation please talk in confidence to a member of staff. The school will do everything we can to support your child.

Staff member with lead responsibility:

Barnardo’s is not alone in their approach in seeking to work with children and families of offenders. As my trip continued I ‘bumped into’ organisations that championed the cause of offenders’ children and families through initiatives like those employed by Barnardo’s.
Families Outside in Scotland had also produced some excellent materials for teachers and health professionals to alert them to the ‘plights’ of offenders’ families. Their guides are simple and easy to read, Supporting Prisoners’ Families – What can Health Professionals do? & Supporting Prisoners’ Families – What can schools do? These booklets present the facts, make professionals aware of issues offenders’ families may be facing, alert them to the emotions children may feel, explain what teachers or medical professionals can do, and point to resources and other organisations or services that might be available.

What is Hidden Sentence Training?
I tried hard to book myself in for a Train the Trainer session of the Hidden Sentence training but regrettably there wasn’t any training happening during my visit. So the next best thing was to meet with Sam Hart, one of the developers and presenters of the course. Sam lives in Brighton and on my final couple of days in the UK I paid her a visit. Sam worked for APF (Action for Prisoners’ Families). APF is a membership organisation for prisoners’ and offenders’ families and those who work with them. APF provides advice, information and training to its members and facilitates the networking of shared experiences, concerns and successes.

APF was commissioned by NOMS to develop a Hidden Sentence training course that could be made freely available to all its members. It’s a course for all professionals whose work brings them in contact with offenders’ families. The course goes for one day and gives an overview of the issues facing offenders’ families and provides a wide range of strategies and resources to help support them. The course is not only informative, it has also led to the development of some very good and fruitful partnerships of people and organisation that are willing to work together to advocate for offenders’ families and provide services within the prison.

Creative applications
The adaptations of this course have been very creative. HMP Parc, which you will read about later in the report, regularly schedules these courses which are often booked out months in advance. They run the courses in the prison; and use the experience of entering the prison, going through security, being sniffed by dogs and patted down by correctional staff, as key components of understanding what children and families’ of offenders go through when visiting the prison.

While at HMP Durham I participated in the concluding phase of a Hidden Sentence training course that had been run with the local authority in Durham. NEPACS facilitated this course in the prison Visitors’ Centre but had all the delegates return for a second day to view a father and child programme being run in the prison. It was fascinating observing the ‘osmosis process’ taking place as these skilled professionals absorbed the implication of what is was like for children to visit a prison, and to be able to personally weigh up the value that these visits provided to children and their dads.

A programme to replicate
APF was kind enough to make their training material available and encouraged me to develop this course for our Tasmanian setting. The course is accompanied by a number of resources including some very thought-provoking drama presentations via DVD.

I could easily see Hidden Sentence training being developed here in Tasmania and rolled out to schools, child care centres, neighbourhood centres, child protection workers, police and to the midwives who precipitated my discovery of this brilliant resource.

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44 Supporting Prisoners’ Families – What can Health Professionals do?
45 Supporting Prisoners’ Families – What can schools do?
**Children of Prisoners Europe**

My visit to the Continent resulted from my interest in reports I had read which were produced by COPE (Children of Prisoners Europe). Formerly known as EUROCHIPS, COPE is a European-wide initiative on behalf of children with an imprisoned parent. The network of European partners active within prison-related, child’s rights and child-welfare fields, seeks to boost awareness and achieve new ways of thinking, acting and interacting on issues concerning prisoners’ children.

Nearly **one million children** in Europe have a parent in prison; and despite the great number of children impacted by a parent’s incarceration; COPE is the only network in Europe working exclusively on behalf of these children.

The child and his or her best interests are at the heart of COPE’s work. Children are entitled to the truth about their parent’s incarceration. Above all, children must be able to maintain a link with both parents if separated from one or both, a right stipulated in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. There is also an underlying belief that supporting prisoners’ children is a long-term vision crucial to society. COPE’s activities include:

- **Acting as a voice for prisoners’ children** they boost public awareness by educating judges, schools, childcare professionals, prison staff and relevant organisations and administrations on the plight of children with incarcerated parents.

- **Providing forums to foster the exchange of ideas and good practice** for children with imprisoned parents.

- **Building a resource centre** to provide more accurate statistics on the number of children affected, exploring the psychological and social impact of a parent’s incarceration, and highlighting the importance of maintaining family ties.

- **Training** of professionals and volunteers.

COPE’s head office is located in Paris, France, and in accommodating my request for a visit they also helped me arrange to connect with ‘Relais Enfants-Parents’, in Paris and Brussels and with REPR (Relais Enfants-Parents Romands) in Lausanne, Switzerland. These are sister organisations working to restore the parent-child relationship between children and their imprisoned parents. These organisations were kind enough to arrange for me to visit Réau prison in Paris and Prison Forrest in Brussels to witness their programmes.

**Prison visits**

Speaking no French, my time in France and Belgium had its challenges! However, I’m indebted to my hosts who made my visit so beneficial. In Paris I joined an in-prison workshop for imprisoned mothers making things for their children, such as knitting or dolls, etc. It was an ‘interesting’ meeting where I joined about 10 mothers in a group craft session. Only my host spoke a little English but I seemed to blunder my way through and left with some very good memories of my first excursion into a non-English speaking prison.

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46 [http://www.childrenofprisoners.eu](http://www.childrenofprisoners.eu)
47 See Annex K
48 [http://www.relaisenfantsparents.be](http://www.relaisenfantsparents.be)
49 [http://www.repr.ch](http://www.repr.ch)
In Belgium the programme I participated in was very similar to the *Kid’s Day programmes* we run in Risdon Prison. The ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ team meet the families at the prison where the children are left with the team and taken in to spend time with their dads. Forrest Prison is an old prison built in the 1850’s and the visits area was relatively cramped with no natural lighting. The prison was built for 470 but now accommodates 600. Nevertheless the children were able to spend time with their dads, being supervised by two ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ workers. It was an exceptionally valuable time deeply appreciated by the dads and their children. There were 12 children involved in the visit. The children and dads engage in board games, reading stories or colouring, depending on the age of the kids. ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ had lockers in the visit area and were able to draw on a broad range of activities.

The visit takes place every Wednesday afternoon, as schools are closed, and many people don’t work at that time. The team runs this programme in two prisons, alternating between the prisons each week. They have regular children that participate every week and the team focuses their time on building relationships with the children and helping them strengthen the bonds with their dads.

**The professional approach**

My meetings with ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ and the subsequent meeting with REPR were very stimulating. I was surprised by the high level of ‘qualified’ staff. ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ was started 20 years ago by two psychology students and last year they received validation by the government and have been guaranteed funding to employ six part-time psychologists. In Switzerland REPR was staffed by a team of 13 psychologists (part time) and 46 volunteers.

In discussions with Dr Viviane Schekter - Director of REPR, and Vice Chairman of COPE - I learned that they are currently involved in nine prisons in French-speaking Switzerland. My discussions with Viviane helped me better understand the Swiss judicial system where approval for visits is at the discretion of the prosecutor – if cases are under investigation then visits may be denied.

**A Swiss model**

REPR provides a range of services to families of offenders but primarily works with the children of offenders. They have offices in Geneva, Frybourgh and Lausanne and currently have 20 cases/families in Geneva and 15 in the other prisons. They normally support one visit by the child per month to the prison. They choose not to run a programme as such but instead focus on facilitating and observing the visit. REPR also normally have one child/parent (outside) visit per month and this might end up being a phone connection, or visit in the office.

REPR workers do not provide reports to authorities, but they will discuss cases as part of their team interaction. Each child will have a case file which is managed by a designated staff member. If requested to provide a report on child/parent relationship, they will produce a factual report but will not comment on the child/parent relationship. Their work is child focused.

REPR is growing as an organisation and consider that one of their biggest needs is a greater profile and credibility with the community, and with the prison system. They are developing their relationship with the prisons, and have just started a ‘father children team’, comprising four officers from the prison, one social worker and one REPR staff member.

REPR continues to advocate for the children of offenders by hosting conferences every two years. These conferences are attended by about 120 professionals (from the equivalent of Child Protection

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50 Refer to Annex L – Relais Enfants Parents Romands (REPR): Our values by Viviane Schekter

This article gives a good understanding of REPR’s value in working with children.
Services) and the children of parents. REPR workers are actively involved in networking with the Directors of the Swiss prisons, do a two hour presentation to prisons each year and provide training at the National Training Centre for all new intakes of prison officers. They also deliver a special one day course at the National Training Centre each year. Furthermore they provide training to the Child Protection agency and conduct monthly presentations to schools on children’s rights.

When asked what were their biggest ‘wants’, Viviane responded ‘better statistics’. There is no data on the number of prisoners with children. Foreign nationals are a significant issue for European prisons with the Geneva prison comprised of 80% foreigners, whereas the national ratio is estimated to be 50% foreigners in all prisons. Records and information on foreign nationals is ‘thin’ and many of these are in a ‘pre-trial’ status.

Resources:
I particularly appreciated the resources produced by COPE and consider them worthy of special mention in my report. I subsequently purchased a number of copies to make available to various organisations and authorities in Tasmania.

Children of Imprisoned Parents:
Compiled in May 2011, this report includes case studies conducted in Denmark, Italy, Poland and Northern Ireland. It examines the various stages of the criminal justice process – from arrest to release – through the eyes of the children affected, their parents, police officers, prison officers and social workers. It was published by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in cooperation with COPE (formerly Eurochips) and the University of Ulster and Bambinsenzasbarre.

Children of Prisoners: Interventions and mitigations to strengthen mental health
From January 2010 – 2012, a child-centred research COPING project was co-founded by the EU Commission to investigate the resilience and vulnerability to mental health problems of children of imprisoned parents. It was the first time that a study of its size focused on the resilience and vulnerability of children of imprisoned parents throughout Europe.

The study covered 4 countries: Sweden, Romania, Germany and the UK. COPING research findings are aimed towards implementing European and international public policies with a view to enhancing the welfare of children. The COPING project interviewed over 200 children with imprisoned parents in each country, using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, to ascertain coping strategies and mental health problems for these young people. The results were then compared with normative population samples. Smaller groups of children and parents were involved in in-depth qualitative interviews to explore the impact of parental imprisonment and support services available in greater detail. Interventions to support these families were comprehensively mapped throughout Europe by the research staff.

Children of Imprisoned Parents: European Perspectives on Good Practices
This publication, featuring a range of initiatives, expertise and good practice, is designed for professionals, volunteers and decision makers whose work impacts children with imprisoned parents, either directly (e.g. prison officers) or indirectly (e.g. judges and sentencers).
Seeking to promote, expand and inspire good practice and policy change for this group of children, it revolves around seven broad themes:

- The legal framework: International and European conventions, national law, maintaining family ties and the best interest of children.
- The impact on parental imprisonment on children and young people’s lives.
- Parenting from prison: support for the imprisoned parent and the child/parent relationship.
- How children can maintain contact with an imprisoned parent.
- Mothers and young children in prison.
- Training, tools and methodologies to help reduce the adverse effects of imprisonment on children.
- Advocacy for policy and practice change to support children with imprisoned parents.

Each chapter showcases different national approaches and perspectives on current work carried out across Europe, exploring issues that transcend borders and national judicial and penal policies, rather than providing an exhaustive nation by nation approach. As a whole, the publication offers a child-centred guide for ideas and initiatives to bolster the resilience of children, whose parents are in prison, and to protect their emotional, psychological and social development and reinforce family ties. This updated second edition was produced in 2014 to coincide with the launch of Children of Prisoners Europe (formerly Eurochips).

**Conclusion**

I think my visit with COPE and the ‘Relaise Enfants-Parents’ organisations in France, Belgium and Switzerland challenged me more than any other aspect of my trip. I came away from these meetings deeply challenged that we must better address the needs of this very vulnerable segment of society. My response to the ‘heavy’ content of professional people involved in the organisations I visited was initially a little sceptical but on reflection, as I could see what COPE and others were doing, turned to one of admiration. This is something we can’t afford to get wrong.

Leading up to the writing of this section of my report there were two news items coming out of the USA, where children had somehow managed to get access to a weapon. One child took a revolver from his mother’s purse and ended up killing her. In the other, a child found a pistol in the glove box of a car and shot himself. I was abhorred at how such purportedly responsible people could possibly allow this to happen.

Yet we play with the lives of children of offenders in much the same way. And while we can excuse ourselves because of the complexities of the issues, we are playing a game of Russian roulette with six of ten chambers of the gun loaded. Intergenerational offending is a serious issue! And while the statistics may often be construed to overstress a point – there is a point to be made. I applaud COPE for championing the cause of children of imprisoned parents.

Likewise I’d like to acknowledge the work of Shine for Kids and VACRO in Australia. They are great organisations that have recognised the needs of these children and built their organisations and staffed accordingly. And while we have drawn on the expertise of these organisations, and will continue to do so into the future, we in Tasmania must intentionally partner with local professional and skilled people to specifically tackle the issue of intergenerational offending as we work with the children of imprisoned parents.

**Thank you COPE!**
Safe Ground

Background
In my original application for the Churchill Fellowship I scheduled one week to attend a Train the Trainer course for the Safe Ground Family Man programme. I became aware of this course through the report on the prison-based Family Support Worker pilot project. Regrettably a training course was not being conducted at the time I was in the UK, but I was fortunate enough to be able to view a Family Man programme in HMP Erlestoke and visit Safe Ground’s office to meet with their staff.

Safe Ground was established in 1993 to design and deliver high quality, arts-education to vulnerable people for whom educational opportunities, artistic and emotional expressions may be limited. The purpose of Safe Ground’s work is to enhance the quality of life and life chances contributing to stronger, safer communities. Working within prisons with offenders and their families they are committed to reducing the stigma faced by the families of offenders. They have been exceptionally successful in using drama to deliver family courses that have educational value and recognition. The courses and training material have been developed with input from offenders and are popular and relevant to the prison population.

Professor Boswell, in a 2006 report, reviewing the educational content of the programmes concluded “the drama-based and experimental nature of this learning has been shown to raise the levels of confidence of groups of men, many of whom may previously have had only negative experiences of education and none of educational achievement.”

The Safe Ground programmes have a good evidence base. Over the past twelve years, Safe Ground have commissioned 13 independent evaluations and reviews, assessing the programmes’ impact across a broad spectrum of areas that have included: family ties, identity, self-confidence and resilience, engagement in education, training and employment, prisoner-staff relationships, adjudication rates and re-offending. I refer the reader to Safe Ground’s website for full details of the impact and evidence for the Safe Ground programmes.  

Safe Ground’s Family Man programmes feature prominently in the recently published Policis Report, co-commissioned by MoJ, in which they were highlighted as “transformational interventions designed to challenge and change entrenched criminogenic patterns of thought and create both desistance and protective factors against the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour.”

www.safeground.org.uk
www.policis.com/pdf/moj/MOJ_BIS_Parenting_support_for_offenders_and_families_Volume_1_28014_FINAL.pdf
Safe Ground is well known for its *Family Man* and *Fathers Inside* which are its flagship programmes. However there are a number of additional programmes that Safe Ground has developed for men in prison and also on probation. Four of the programmes are outlined below.

**Programmes**

**Family Man**
An intensive seven week group-work programme for men and young men in prison using *family relationships as a vehicle for developing skills essential to education, training and employment*, while challenging attitudes and thinking and contributing to desistance from crime. The programme utilises drama, fiction, group discussion, games and written portfolio work to support students to develop and maintain their family relationships, and requires them to work with an adult Supporter throughout the programme.

**Fathers Inside**
An intensive five week group-work programme for men and young men in prison *focusing on parental responsibilities and children’s education, development and wellbeing*. The programme uses drama, fiction, group discussion, games and written portfolio work to enable students to develop a better understanding of their role as a father, while challenging attitudes, developing skills essential to successful resettlement, and contributing to desistance from crime.

**Man Up**
A group-work programme over six sessions designed to support men and young men to explore the ways in which the concept of masculinity contributes to shaping individual identity. Using active learning techniques, *Man Up* aims to challenge some of the attitudes and negative outcomes experienced by men as a result of wanting or needing to fulfil stereotypes and expectations. (6 sessions totalling 15 hours, which can be delivered in three days (full time) or part time over an extended period).

**Family Man Community Programme**
An intensive group-work programme, adapted from the prison-based *Family Man* programme to work with men on probation. The programme uses family relationships as a vehicle for developing skills essential to education, training and employment, while challenging attitudes and thinking and contributing to desistance from crime. Students and their families engage in an extended package of family support, which includes 14 group sessions delivered over seven weeks.
Personal reflections
From my limited assessment of the *Family Man* programme, it was evident that it was well received by offenders and provided an invaluable opportunity for offenders to strengthen family ties and enhance their family relationships.

In the session I attended in HMP Erlestoke, offenders were able to invite an outside supporter, in most cases the offender’s partner (and their children) participated. They gathered in the gym to watch the men perform a number of skits and put on a programme of events for their families. Observing the families during the performance, it was obvious there was a sense of ‘pride’ as the respective partner stood to present some aspect of the production.

I understand the offenders spend a considerable amount of time planning for this event. They work together as a team to develop the programme for the day, choose their roles in a drama and practise for hours. They make their costumes and create the props. They organise all aspects of the production, arrange the stage and seating to create a fantastic environment for their families. It was reminiscent to me of the school production I was part of – the likes of which many of these men may not have had a participative opportunity.

For me I think there were two highlights from the day:

1. To watch the children seeing their dads on the stage in a place of responsibility. The kids were as ‘pleased as punch!’ Without knowing which child belonged to which dad, I had no problem identifying the relationship once a dad got up to speak or act. I think every kid wants to be proud of his dad and this single event was perhaps for some, the first time these children had that opportunity.

2. The other highlight was talking with some of the supporters. I had the privilege of entering the prison with them and was able to enter into some light conversation. However following the ‘production’ there was something that was different. I’m not sure I can put my finger on it; through perhaps it was that when coming into the prison there was a slight sense of shame amongst the supporters – but in the conversation afterwards, there was a hint of pride and willing identification with someone who is successful.

Conclusions
Safe Ground has a very good track record. Their programmes teach many of the same things that other criminogenic programmes address however I believe they do them in the context of family: teaching family values, using family incentives and involving family in the process. The result is not just better men – but better and enduring families.

When the opportunity for *Family Man* and *Fathers Inside* programme to be run free of charge was removed from private prisons in the UK, it was not surprising that HMP Parc made the decision to take out a three year subscription to these programmes. As you will read later in the report, the prison is committed to family intervention and sees the strategic value of these programmes.

The Safe Ground courses would work well in an Australian context and I believe that Safe Ground would seriously consider any genuine expression of interest in seeing their courses rolled out here. I would encourage TPS to examine the programmes with a view to commencing a dialogue with Safe Ground.
A Model Prison

All that I had read about HMP YOI Parc[^53] didn’t fully prepare me for my visit. Information online, NOMS and other reports and the Chief Inspector’s comments during my interview, suggested that HMP Parc would be different. Most people involved in family support efforts within the UK prison estate were well aware of HMP Parc’s exploits, and whenever I mentioned that I had visited the prison, people’s interest perked up; and they responded with either acclamations of praise for the work, or an inkling of jealousy and disappointment that I had managed to get to Parc before them.

The work that Parc has done has been cited in the UK Parliament by Baroness Scotland, along with a recommendation by NOMS that all prisons need to create a similar model.

HMP YOI Parc is a G4S prison in Bridgend, South Wales, and was one of the first prisons to be built in the UK under the Government’s Private Finance Initiative (PFI). It is one of the largest prisons in the UK with a capacity of approximately 1500. It is a male local class B prison and accommodates young adults and juveniles.

Invisible Walls Wales

**Missions:** Reduce re-offending, Reduce intergenerational offending, Increase community inclusion

The IWW (Invisible Walls Wales) project and PSF (Parc Supporting Families) was conceived by Corin Morgan-Armstrong and another prison officer. Corin heads up the programme and I was privileged to spend a full day with him. The programme started with two officers in 2005 and today involves 24 officers and nearly 200 volunteers. Their role is to pull down the walls of the prison – or at least make them invisible to offenders and their families and to the community into which the offender will be released.

Resettlement for Parc starts when the offender comes into prison. The IWW recognises the importance families can play as a catalyst for change in an offender during incarceration, and the critical role they do play on release. The Invisible Walls project team work closely with offenders, and their families, through a package of interventions which include specialist parenting and relationship programmes for the whole family, advice about family debt, training and education, housing advice and support, physical health/fitness, and support in moving towards employment.

The Invisible Walls Wales project is funded £3.1 million by the Big Lottery Fund for four years until 2016. G4S as the lead agency works in partnership with Barnardo’s, Bridgend County Council, Gwalia and Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice.

The project aims to reduce re-offending by strengthening family ties, and reduce intergenerational offending. IWW works to achieve these outcomes by working in the prison and the surrounding community. This model enables the service to work with both the imprisoned fathers and their partners and children living in the community.

By developing a specific intervention approach, the project provides interventions and support services to offenders and their families via Family Intervention workers based inside the prison, as well as practitioners based within the community. Some of the services include parenting programmes, advocacy services, family group conferencing and volunteering programmes. Support is delivered to the offender and their family 12 months prior to release from prison and for a period of up to 6 months in the community. A short video produced by Barnardo’s, explaining the IWW project is well worth watching[^54].

[^53]: [www.hmpparc.co.uk/about_dw.asp](http://www.hmpparc.co.uk/about_dw.asp)
[^54]: [Invisible Walls Wales video](http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/233/~/invisible-walls-wales)
A family friendly prison

A MoJ survey concluded that offenders who had received at least one visit during their time in custody were 39% less likely to re-offend than those who had received no visits. This statistic alone justifies doing all that can be done to encourage and facilitate the visit process.

HMP Parc have redefined the way they do visits. Like most prisons, Parc used to operate their visits from a ‘security’ mind-set. That is, security was the primary, and normally the only, concern. This approach to visits is daunting for the average adult and potentially traumatic for children. So with 2,000 children a month visiting Parc, the PFS (Parc Supporting Families) team took on the responsibility for making visits family-focused. From the moment visitors enter the establishment they are greeted by a team member at the reception. All staff are trained in customer care and are fully aware of the impact of imprisonment on children and families. And visitors are treated with care and sensitivity from the moment they enter the establishment until they leave.

The visits hall, where offenders and visitors meet, has been made more family friendly. In the UK offenders are required to remain seated throughout the visit, however even within the constraints of this security precaution seating has been modified to make it possible for families to interact on a personal level. A special internal garden area has been set up in the visits hall which offenders can request to use to celebrate a special event such as a child’s birthday. The room itself is light and bright. There is a very good play area for children, a canteen to buy food and the walls are adorned by colourful pictures and positive quotations.

At one end of the visits room a specially built Family Intervention Lounge has been built. This lounge is used for family days and child-focused activities and programmes. The lounge allows offenders to spend ‘quality time’ together with their family in a more relaxed environment. Up to four families each session can use this lounge which is furnished with leather sofas, chairs, coffee tables and rugs. Offenders who are residents of the Family Intervention Unit (discussed later) ‘earn’ the privilege of using the lounge by completing family orientation and offence focus targets. This lounge is also available for first ‘new baby’ visits. Outside service providers delivering family courses for offenders and their families also make use of this lounge.

The family-centred visit is more than ‘just another visit’. It aims to provide a positive visit experience with three clear goals.

- To change the perceptions of offenders in terms of how he can maintain and develop relationship with his family whilst in prison.
- To provide families with information on what is available to them and the family member in prison with regard to their links and support.
- To facilitate interaction between staff/officer and offender in a more ‘normal’ setting, engaging and interacting with children, family and each other.

With a relaxed environment one could be excused for thinking that offenders might play up on visits, or that incidences of violence would increase. However in response to that question, Corin advised “on average we had one violent indiscipline in the visits hall per month, then when we established the new model ... one in the last 5.5 years!”
Family Intervention Unit ... I want one of those!
A passionate family support advocate or someone engaged in working with fathers in prison would have a Family Intervention Unit pretty close to the top of their Christmas list. The FIU (Family Intervention Unit) is a 62 bed living unit where the entire focus of the environment is upon repairing, enhancing and taking responsibility for relationships, parenting and family. It has a range of group and individual interventions. The cells in the FIU have been designed to accommodate some comforts of home such as an in-cell shower and an outside telephone line (with restrictions) where the offender is encouraged to have regular telephone contact with their family, especially their children. Through family-orientated programmes delivered in the unit, the students are encouraged to maintain all other family ties which include visits, letter writing, etc. Offenders also have the ability to access the Family Interventions Lounge, which is a privilege they can earn.

There is a high standard for the unit and offenders must voluntarily accept a number of conditions in order to be considered eligible to apply for the unit. Staying on the programme remains a privilege and things like taking drugs or involvement in certain behaviours could immediately disqualify a person and have them removed. Deeply imbedded in the programme are the six principles of Family Intervention Unit which adorn the walls of the unit and act as a constant reminder of what it means to be a Family Man. These are:

1. The Family Man works, he saves and provides: Debt destroys families.
2. The Family Man is not a substance misuser: Drug and alcohol abuse have no place within the family.
3. The Family Man does not: Put crime before his children, his family or his freedom.
4. The Family Man appreciates, loves, protects and teaches: The gift that is a child.
5. The Family Man has an Indomitable Spirit: When the odds are against him and his family, he never gives up and never walks away.
6. The Family Man is willing to sacrifice his own wants and needs: For the good of his family.

Prison, by its very nature, deprives offenders of the opportunity of taking responsibility for themselves and particularly their families. In the FIU offenders are challenged to recognise their responsibilities through intervention programmes and given back the opportunity to start assuming the family responsibilities even while they are incarcerated.

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IWW model – some outcomes 5 years in...

- 99% reduction in physical indiscipline in the visits hall.
- 85% reduction in live visit terminations
- 82% reduction in drug dog indications on domestic visitors.
- Uptake of regular family visits – UK average 48%, HMP Parc 69%
- Visits café facility – social enterprise approach = self funding family interventions and facilities.
- External partnership working – 20+ organisations supporting family interventions, most of which are cost neutral.
- 60+ South Wales primary and secondary schools actively engaged through the Invisible Walls Accord.
- 200+ Volunteer Team – all vetted/security cleared/trained – from local universities and community groups.
- 1000+ calls to the family support line per month.
- Family Interventions Unit – 300+ Graduates released since Nov 2010 – anecdotal evidence – less than a third have returned to custody. (Data Lab submission pending)
Bookings for visits are made by the prisoner via an electronic kiosk on the floor of the unit. Some prisoners have been given opportunity to engage in a school Parent-Teacher interview process in the Family Intervention Lounge with the teacher, mother and child.

I was amazed at the creative ways and the lengths that IWW has gone to outwork the words of a poster on the wall of the unit “Don’t let the walls stop you being a father.”

**Partnership and Networks**
IWW is much more than a living space, good practices and a friendly environment – it is also a partnership. Connecting an offender to his family on the outside requires collaboration with key community partners. PSF was established about eight years ago as a steering group comprised of relevant and interested people from external agencies and community groups. These partners regularly attend the PSF Prison and Family Forums which are held quarterly in the prison within Family Intervention Unit. PSF is linked with 47 external agencies.

**Volunteers**
Volunteers in the PSF provide valuable support in areas across the prison and specialist engagement such as Family-Centred Visits, Learning Together Club and Family Intervention Programme support. Volunteers also man a 24/7 telephone support line, visit halls, visit waiting areas and the play areas, as well as assisting visitors on their arrival at the prison. There is a pool of 200 volunteers from all areas of the community. Staff from the PSF team facilitate a comprehensive recruitment and training programme for all volunteers. In the last three years the volunteers at PSF have been awarded the Wales Volunteer of the Year Award.

**IWW Concluding observations**
It is difficult to fully appreciate from a report the innovative way in which HMP Parc has set out to reduce re-offending, reduce intergenerational offending and increase community inclusion. I was very impressed and can understand why Parc could be called a model prison. It has given me a glimpse way beyond what I could have envisaged, and planted the seed thought of even greater change than I could have dreamed possible.

It’s interesting that this particular model does NOT employ a Family Engagement Worker, the very model I’m proposing in this paper. However I believe HMP Parc has gone way beyond the role of an FEW. They have turned every member of their PSF staff into a Family Engagement Worker and built within the prison a culture of commitment to families; and they see incarceration as an opportunity for intervention, to transform a man who has forfeited his rights to be a father restored, empowered and envisioned to rise to his responsibilities as a Family Man.
“Bus driver, please look for me `cause I couldn't bear to see what I might see,
I’m really still in prison, and my love, she holds the key,
Simple yellow ribbons what I need to set me free”

Lyrics ‘Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree’

The Singapore Story

Norm Reed and Jason Wong at Changi Visits Link Centre
Jason Wong - Former Deputy Director Singapore Prison Service.
Initiator of Yellow Ribbon programme.

Singapore
Introduction
My visit to Singapore was scheduled primarily to investigate the Tele-Visits programme. I was fortunate to have had a personal referral, through a mutual friend, to Mr Jason Wong. Mr Wong had previously been the Deputy Director of the Singapore Prison Service and I am very much indebted to him for his support and assistance in arranging my itinerary. I could easily have completed a comprehensive report on this aspect of the trip alone.

My programme included:
- Visit to Changi Prison and a tour and briefing of the Tele-Visit facilities.
- Visit to a community-based Tele-Visit facility.
- Discussions with Mr Jason Wong on the Singapore Prison Story and the Yellow Ribbon Programme.
- Salvation Army briefing on its prisoners’ children family programmes.
- Prison Fellowship briefing and tour of their facilities.
- The New Charis Mission Halfway house.
- Visit to Breakthrough Café operated by ex-offenders.

My time with Mr Wong was inspirational. He assisted in coordinating my visit in Singapore and accompanied me to most of my appointments. Jason was with the Singapore Prison Service for 10 years and rose to the role of Deputy Director prior to leaving the service to work for six years as Senior Director of the Ministry of Family and Social Development (a government department responsible for community infrastructure, programmes and services). He is now the Executive

55 To avoid confusion with the Scottish Prison Service I have not abbreviated the Singapore Prison Service to the normally accepted abbreviation (SPS)
Director for *Honour Singapore*, an organisation seeking the well-being of Singapore by promoting a culture of honour and honouring.

**Islands in contrast**

Contextualising the Singapore story for the Australian setting (and specifically Tasmania) is difficult. Whilst there are similarities between Tasmania and Singapore in that both are islands and there is only one prison estate, the differences are immense.

- The population of Singapore is 5.399 million and is contained in just 716 km$^2$ while Tasmania’s half a million people are spread over an area of 90,750 km$^2$.
- While the physical size of the prison estate is similar for Singapore and Tasmania, the 500 incarcerated in Risdon is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the 13,000 prisoners in Changi.
- Caning, and Capital Punishment, which would be inconceivable in an Australian prison, is an approved punishment for certain offences in the Singapore society and prison.
- And while Australia would pride itself on being a multi-racial and multi religious society, Singapore has three significant ethnic groups, (Chinese 74%, Malay 13%, Indians 9%), four official languages (English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil) and five significant religions (Buddhism (33%), Christianity (18%), No Religion (17%), Islam (15%) Taoism (11%), Hinduism (5%))\(^{57}\).

**Changi Prison**

The front gates of the old Changi Prison and a replica of the original chapel built by POWs contained in a museum, are all that remain as a reminder of the horrific conditions which imprisoned some 50,000 allied servicemen during World War 2. Building of the new Changi Prison Complex commenced in 2000. Today the Singapore Prison Service administers 13,000 prisoners in 14 institutions. They are grouped under clusters – Clusters A and B which are within the Changi Prison Complex, Cluster C which includes the Prisons School, and Operations and Security Command.

The ‘Institutions’ listed in the table above each represent a ‘prison’ which accommodates about 1,000 inmates. Clusters are self-contained in so far as they have their own operations, support services and staffing.

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56 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caning_in_Singapore
Making Captains of Lives

A prison of 13,000 dwarfs every other prison I visited. The problems in working with this number of prisoners are immense and the story of the Singapore Prison Service is fascinating and well worth the research.

In 1998 when Mr Chua Chin Kiat took over the leadership of Singapore Prison Service, the prison population was around 16,000 and rising rapidly. It would reach an all-time high of more than 18,000 prisoners in 2002. The story of how this trend was reversed, and the prison population fell to 13,000, is truly inspirational.

Under Mr Chua Chin Kiat’s leadership, the Singapore Prison Service transformed itself from an agency focusing on protecting society through the safe custody of criminals to a leading rehabilitation agency in Singapore. Between 1998 and 2009, the recidivism rate dropped significantly from 44.4 percent to 26.5 percent. It is also one of the most cost-effective prison institutions in the world with an average cost of incarceration at S$75 per day and an inmate-to-staff ratio of 7.6:1. Yet, security and discipline have not been compromised — there has been no escape or major riot, and assault rate has been kept low. Staff morale has also been high, with about 81 percent of officers indicating their satisfaction with work in the organization.

I had opportunity to discuss this interesting period with Mr Jason Wong who was intimately involved in many aspects of the prison’s transformation. He directed me to the story written by Chua Chin Kiat which had been published, “The Making of Captains of Lives: Prison Reform in Singapore, 1999 to 2007 / Chua Chin Kiat”.

I was subsequently able to source copies of this book through World Scientific and recommend it to quite a number of people involved in prison work. The book is also available in an electronic format.

One fascinating aspect of the story, and one in which Jason played a major role, was the Yellow Ribbon Project.

Yellow Ribbon Project

Jason was the person tasked by the Director to come up with a project that would transform the public’s negative perception of ex-offenders and create awareness of the need to give offenders a second chance. It was fascinating to hear a firsthand account from Mr Wong of the origins of the YRP (Yellow Ribbon Project), which was started in 2004 and was inspired by the popular song ‘Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree’. The simple yellow ribbon was chosen as the symbol of this campaign, with the hope that it would eventually become a self-sustaining grassroots movement. The act of wearing a yellow ribbon pin as a show of acceptance and an offer of forgiveness and second chance to ex-offenders has since become one of the signature activities of the Yellow Ribbon Project.

The initial aims of the project, to create an awareness of giving second chances to ex-offenders, generate acceptance of ex-offenders and their families into the community, and inspire community action to support rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-offenders, have certainly been realised. The message of the Yellow Ribbon project is very simple but also extremely profound.

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58 Case Study – Civil Service College, Singapore – www.cscollege.gov.sg -The Story of Singapore Prison Service: From Custodians of Prisoners to Captains of Life
59 http://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/8374?#t=toc
60 http://www.yellowribbon.org.sg/index.html
• Every offender encounters two prisons — Physical Prison and Psychological & Social Prison.
• Who holds the key? Offenders’ families, friends, neighbours, employers, colleagues, the community.
• Help unlock the second prison.

Last year the YRP celebrated its 10th anniversary. Since its inception more than 380,000 members of the community have participated in YRP’s activities such as the Yellow Ribbon Prison Run, Yellow Ribbon Concert, etc. The YRP also partnered 1,500 community partners through fundraising activities, sponsorship opportunities or employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

There is an excellent 10 Year Anniversary Report on the Yellow Ribbon Project “The Courage to Believe – Unlocking Life’s Second Chances.” This is available in PDF format on the Yellow Ribbon Website.

**Tele-Visits**

*Prison Link Centre (Changi)*

Facilitating visit arrangement in any prison is a challenge. To facilitate visits for 13,000 prisoners could be a nightmare. However I walked away from Changi impressed with the effectiveness, professionalism and genuine concern for families that was displayed throughout the visit process.

All visits are managed centrally through a computerised system. Visitors can visit through face to face visits, Tele-Visits or open (contact) visits. Open (contact) visits are uncommon and normally limited to ‘programme’ based visits.

Visits in cluster C take place in the individual prisons. All face to face visits for Cluster A and B are facilitated through Changi Prison Link Centre. Tele-Visits can take place from one of three Visitors’ Centres operated by Singapore Prison Service. One Visitors’ Centre at the Changi Prison site has 20 visit rooms purpose built for Tele-Visits. In addition to the other two Prison Centres at Jurong and Geylang Bahru there are six centres managed by NGOs set up in partnership with the Prison Service.

Offenders participate in a Tele-Visit in one of two Tele-Visit rooms provided in the offenders accommodation areas. This avoids offenders having to leave their accommodation areas for Tele-Visits.

Face to face visits take place in a visits area inside the prison complex which visitors access via an underground tunnel. The visits are non-contact and offenders are separated from visitors by a glass screen.
All visits can be booked by phone, online, with a mobile phone app or the electronic kiosk at Visit Link Centre. Bookings can be made up to 2 months ahead of time. The software allows the person to choose the date of the visit and select from times available. A confirmation slip is printed out confirming the appointment. The software automatically excludes times when the prisoner is not available and also locks out periods which might clash with another ‘inappropriate’ offender who could be involved in a visit at the same time. Changes to the visit (because of changes in the inmate’s circumstances) are flagged by the computer and staff then notify the family.

Offenders are entitled to two visits per month. Those on remand are entitled to daily visits. There are no visits on Sundays or public holidays.

Each visitor is issued with a visits card with photo ID when they first register to visit the prison. A fingerprint is also taken. When attending for a face to face visit a person passes through a ‘railway-type turnstile’ after they have scanned their visits card and been identified by their fingerprint. Access in and out is recorded. Children also have a visit card and their visit is recorded as well.

The identity of visitors is also confirmed prior to accessing the video room for Tele-Visits.

The visitor’s video room are able to accommodate three visitors. The screen displays a countdown timer which flashes 5 minutes before the end of the visit.

**Family Resource Centre**

The prison’s community services are funded through the *Yellow Ribbon Project* and provides onsite support for families of prisoners. The FRC (Family Resource Centre) is located on the first floor of the Link Visit Centre where a number of counselling/meeting booths are provided for counsellors to meet with families. The FRC provides financial assistance, childcare assistance, support with housing/utilities, employment support and counselling services. The FRC also facilitates support through other service providers for families of inmates.
Tele-Visits are conducted from six non-prison sites. I visited one site in a community centre located in a suburb of Singapore called Kaki Bukit.

The community centre services 54 high rise accommodation blocks. These house about 8,900 people. The community centre acts in much the same way as a neighbourhood house in Tasmania. A range of services are offered to the community – skills classes, dancing, social activities, etc.

This centre has a multipurpose room with a TV and camera. Tele-Visits are offered each Saturday morning. Visits are of 30 minutes duration and the maximum number of visits is five. There are normally two or three visits each Saturday. Visits are booked by the family members through their normal booking arrangements. The community centre has a restricted access to the Prison Booking System and community centre staff can see who is booked for a visit. Visitors must come with their visit card and photo ID. Each person in Singapore has a government photo ID.

The room can accommodate a large family and there is apparently no limit on the number of visitors providing they are all approved.

As offenders could be located in approximately one of 60 different terminals within the prison, the centre is given a number to ring when the family is in place (the number would coincide with the video terminal of the prisoner). When the visit finishes the prison terminates the visit.

Apparently there have been no major issues or problems during the visits. However, sometimes families arrive who are not approved to visit, and they are turned away.

A typical community centre video room
Kids in Play – Salvation Army

The Salvation Army Prison Support Services provides professional support for children of imprisoned parent(s). Through various programmes and services to the caregivers and children while the parent is in prison, KIP (Kids In Play) helps to maintain family ties and relationship between parent and child during the period of imprisonment.

KIP is an outreach programme targeted at children of parent(s) in prison and their next-of-kin, with the aim of reconnecting families even though they are staying apart. This service aligns closely with our objectives and there is a lot of similarity to our Kids Days in Risdon prison. However I was interested in the additional services offered to children of offenders and the focus and intentionality of ‘ongoing’ directed work with children.

Services offered

- **Playroom** - KIP runs a supervised playroom service at the Prison Link Centre for children who are waiting to visit a prisoner. The room acts as a drop in centre and is equipped with games, activities. The room is open during normal visit times and is supervised by volunteers or paid staff. The room was not in a prominent position but advertised by displays in the Visitors’ reception area. It is not a child minding centre and children only use the room while waiting for a visit – visits are only 20 minutes and children are expected to visit with their family member.

- **Casework and Counselling** - Casework and counselling is provided to the children and their caregivers through referrals from the prisons, self-referrals and the playroom service. Case Workers are paid as part of the programme through the Salvation Army.

- **Befriending and Mentoring** - A relatively new initiative that provides emotional and practical support to the children through a befriending and mentoring programme. (Volunteers are recruited, at least up until this time, through personal contacts and friends of the staff).

- **Children and Youth Programmes & Support Groups** - Caregivers receive encouragement and pick up skills to cope with their situation from the caregivers support groups which are run concurrently with children’s sessions.

- **CHOC (Children Helping Other Children)** – This programme aims to encourage offenders’ teenage children who have successfully coped with the incarceration of a parent to support other children. CHOC facilitates opportunities for children to connect through camps, outings and other activities.
• **Family Bonding Programme**
  A structured programme within the prison, the *Family Bonding Programme* permits children to interact with their incarcerated parent(s). Similar to our *Kids Day* this programme is run three times a year. What impressed me about this programme is that it is not a stand-alone programme. This programme is ‘intentional’ and structured to provide ongoing support for offenders’ children. (It was actually good having Jason with me for this visit as he mentioned that this was one of the first ‘open’ visits conducted in the prison and paved the way for other programmed-based visits to take place). Children and the incarcerated parent participate in ‘teaching’ before the family bonding sessions.

• **Take Home Learning:**
  Kids in Play have developed a six module learning ‘track’ for children. The aim is take children through all modules during the period of their parent’s incarceration. Children attend teaching/activity sessions with *Kids in Play* over six Saturdays for two hours a session. The children are divided into groups by age and sessions are facilitated by trained staff and volunteers. The training takes place at the Salvation Army church site and normally involves about 150 children. Only children who are involved in the learning modules are able to participate in the family bonding programme. 174 children are currently enrolled in the programme.

Serene Tan (Assistant Manager Prison Support Service) & Isabel Tan (Case Worker)
Prison Fellowship

Prison Fellowship is housed in the OMF compound. The facilities host both the local Singapore Chapter and the International Secretariat. I met with Christine Tan who is the Executive Director for Singapore.

Prison Fellowship is the primary ‘coordinator’ of Christian organisations involved in the prison. PF employs 14 staff and draws on 400 volunteers from about 30-50 churches across Singapore.

Their programmes can be divided into three main classes:
- In – Care Ministry – for ministry in the prison with inmates
- Family Care – in support of prisoners’ children and families
- After – Care Ministry – supports prisoners after their release.

In-Care Ministry involves:
- There are about 1,100 offenders being ministered to by PF weekly.
- Chapel Services – every weekend there are about 40 different prison venues supported with Chapel services. These services are taken by various churches but coordinated by PF.
- PF runs 30 weekly bible study sessions and 34 chapel services in Changi Prison. These sessions serve approximately 1,200 offenders. Volunteers representing numerous churches conduct chapel services and teach.
- Bible Studies/Counselling – to help with life skills, experience recovery, healing and attitudinal changes.
- Community Re-integration Programme (CRP) – Developed by Singapore Prison Service to prepare offenders for their return into community through employment and social re-integration – delivered two months before an offender’s release. Also conducted in the women’s prison.
- Pre-Release programme – to prepare offenders emotionally and spiritually for their release. Involves weekly support group meetings. During these times PF helps with housing or employment arrangements.
- Christian Intensive Religious Counselling Programme. Commencing in 2014, this is a nine month programme operating six mornings per week and includes chapel. It is comprised of 10 modules, together with one-on-one counselling sessions. It involves six sessions per week with 50 volunteers and staff from 21 different churches taking part. Includes such programmes as Alpha, Purpose Driven Life and other courses facilitated by local churches. 40 offenders are selected to participate in this programme.
- A new initiative based on the Sycamore Tree programme – Victim Empathy programme is a secular course that will be run under the auspice of ‘70x70’ – an arm of PF that will provide secular programmes acceptable to offenders of all religions.
- PF provides a Tattoo Removal Service.

Family Care Ministry involves:
- Angel Tree – a programme to provide hampers to families of offenders. PF delivers about 1,000 hampers a year to 850 families. Families needing support are often identified during this process. 90 families are currently supported with dedicated Case Managers. The support period is normally 3 months.
- Home Visitations – volunteers and staff visit homes offering support and often meeting maintenance needs.
- Employment, vocational, training and financial assistance – support is provided to families
- Referrals to Family Service Centres, Counselling Centres and Faith Communities – PF partners with different agencies to provide professional counselling and social work services.
- Spouse and Parent’s Ministry – a befriending programme to support partners of offenders.
- Child Care Club – currently supports 30 children aged 7-18. It is held weekly and hosted in a church. A new initiative is K can club which specifically addresses the need of 15-18 year olds. Currently there are 8 youth involved in this programme.

**After-Care Ministry involves:**
- Prison Gate Ministry – A befriending ministry that meets offenders on release at the gate. Contact is developed through In-Care programmes where ongoing support is offered to offenders. Each year PF ministers to more than 200 releases.
- The After-Care Centre offers – Weekly bilingual men and ladies support groups, counselling, monthly chapel services, social events and annual retreats, Easter and Christmas thanksgiving celebrations.
- Vocational Training and Academic Tuition – Provided by volunteers in computer skills, language proficiency and academic coaching.
- Employment Assistance – Help with employment opportunities.
- Financial Assistance – Helps with immediate needs such as clothing, transport and food. Short term financial assistance is provided on a case by case basis.
- Support through Groups – Groups for men, two nights per week, currently involve about 30 men; and 25 women are involved in a group one night a week. These groups are hosted in local churches.

**Two stories of transformation**

**The New Charis Mission**

**Halfway House**

Charis Mission is led by Pastor Don Wong. Don is an ex-drug addict who has been incarcerated nine times - five in Changi prison and four times during military service. In eight years since it started Charis Mission has grown from a handful of people to a place today where it is housing 40 ex-offenders providing accommodation, training and employment, and running a nine month training course in the prison with 40 hard core inmates. The new premises that today house Charis Mission are a far cry from their first meeting in the open on a beach eight years ago. The place was amazing and Pastor Don had me in tears as he shared stories of the lives that have been transformed, families reunited and communities changed.

The New Charis Mission operates a halfway house, providing a holistic rehabilitation programme for ex-drug offenders to help them to reintegrate into society. The Mission aims to lead its residents to rebuild their lives, reconcile with family and return to society as responsible, useful citizens. This is done through various programmes – recuperation, restoration and re-integration.

Most halfway houses are grounded in a spiritual faith. Charis Mission is a Christian-based organisation and expects faith engagement by participants of the programme. Like all halfway houses, it achieves its objectives mainly through its residential programme. The programme consists of residents living day to day, following a schedule and going through various forms of therapy. For instance, work therapy, spiritual therapy, etc. In other words, a lifestyle based on a schedule, a timetable, having fixed times for waking up, going to bed, meals, recreation and work.

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61 [The New Charis Mission website](http://www.charismission.com)
Charis provides practical opportunities for employment and has developed some wonderful social enterprises with the aim of providing jobs for the ex-offenders and ex-drug addicts who have been ostracised by society. One such enterprise started with a small team providing house moving services and expanded to inland delivery services, painting and maintenance services. Today they have a team of 50 men, 4 trucks and 2 vans with services ranging from house, office and warehouse local relocation, painting and maintenance of property, as well as the setting up of exhibition booths for various conventions and events.

![Charis team](image)

**Discipleship (Halfway House)**

The New Charis Mission also aims to equip the residents with skills and knowledge apart from the basic residential programme that they go through. The results of the mission have been amazing with participants achieving a broad range of achievements. To date:

- 16 have attained a Certificate in Counselling
- 4 have completed a Diploma In Counselling Psychology
- 6 are Certified Behavioural Consultants
- 1 has completed a Diploma In Counselling Psychology & Gambling Addiction Counselling
- 7 are pursuing an Advanced Diploma In Counselling
- 4 are taking a Certificate In English for Business
- 15 have graduated from the School of Theology (SOT)
- 7 have graduated from Disciple Training School with YWAM
- More than 60 have undergone the Alpha Course
- 5 have completed training in House Removal Skills
- 2 are accredited Registered Social Service Practitioners
- 3 will be starting a BA (Hons) in Theology
Soonn Huat Bak Kut Tek - Breakthrough Café

Breakthrough Café is a small eating house/café in one of the suburbs of Singapore. I visited there, not for a meal, but to meet with Jabez Tan, his wife Joy and their staff of workers. Jabez is an ex-drug addict and spent a number of years in prison. Having been transformed during his time in prison he came out to start a business and employ other ex-offenders to give them a second chance. Jabez and his wife have two cafés and have just franchised their first business in Malaysia.

The walls of their café are plastered with his story and his Vision and Mission Statements.

At his shop I met with 12 employees. Over the years he has employed many more. All of them are ex-drug addicts. I heard their stories. Some had been out for years and a couple only released in the last few weeks. Most had struggled with resettling in the community but Jabez had given them a chance and together they had become a family – committed to helping each other and making sure that even the most unlikely person had the opportunity for a second chance. My meeting coincided with the regular ‘staff meeting’. At this time they closed the shop and all the staff gathered to talk about their challenges, encourage one another and share their stories.

One story sticks in my mind. It was a story told me by an ex-offender who started work at the café, stole some money, and ran away. But Jabez didn’t give up – he eventually found the guy, invited him to come back to work, and gave him ‘another’ second chance. And today the guy has been clean for many years and is a valued employee in the café. Listening to his story, and the difference that Jabez had made on his life, was very moving.

The real lesson from Singapore

What stood out to me from my visit to the halfway house and the café is that change in an offender’s life is possible. There is no doubt that the model is important BUT essentially it comes down to leadership and patience. Both Don and Jabez provided that - leadership that accepts the person, commits to help them change, asks the hard questions, seizes the opportunities and provides the encouragement. Patience is essential – because story after story showed that the difference between success and failure is having the willingness and commitment to help someone stand up and start over again ONE MORE TIME – many times over.

Don and Jabez are both products of the Singapore Prison Service and proof that the sign on the prison gate – ‘Captains of Lives’ – really does work. Prisoners transforming prisoners.

“...Now the whole damn bus is cheering and I can’t believe I see
A hundred yellow ribbons ‘round the ole oak tree.”
**Video Visits and things technical**

Because of my involvement in providing the Video Visit service to offenders and their families in Risdon Prison I was very interested in learning how other organisations were using technology to connect offenders and their families. There was considerable interest in the UK in our model and all the FEW recognised the value of being able to provide the service which we offer to support families who are prevented from visiting the prison because of distance for compassionate reasons.

**Singapore**

A full explanation of Singapore’s Tele-Visit arrangements is covered in the section on Singapore. With a prison population of 13,000, it is readily apparent that the physical constraints, such as the movement of offenders around the prison and the passage of visitors through the prison, would impose serious problems. Tele-Visits provide an ideal solution to these issues with the added security to reduce the potential for trafficking.

The online visits booking and the establishment of ‘Link Visit Centres’ streamline the visit process and make it possible for visits to be conducted in a secure and efficient way. There are things we can learn from this model.

**Lessons and suggestions:**

I think the value of having video facilities close to offenders’ accommodation units is worthy of consideration. Fixed purpose-built video facilities built into, or near, accommodation units would provide a brilliant infra-structure on which to make the best use of technology.

Even the concept of developing Tele-Visit type arrangements for visitors who physically turn up to Risdon Prison could have benefits. I could well imagine replacing boxed (or closed) visits with the Tele-Visit arrangements. I discussed this concept with a number of people during my prison visits and they all conceded there could be considerable benefits: families wouldn’t have to actually enter the prison (which may even be a factor as to why box visits are imposed); and this could reduce the potential for trafficking; children wouldn’t have to come into the prison; the Tele-Visit facilities for families could be child friendly (rather than the sterile noisy arrangements of the box visit area).

A purpose-built visit facility could be constructed near the Visitors’ Centre to house three or four Tele-Visit rooms. This could be managed by the Visitors’ Centre staff and visitors directed to the video room rather than proceeding into the prison. This facility could also be used by visitors who are handicapped, frail or simply find it difficult to enter the prison. In addition, it could offer the potential to develop suitable infrastructure for the visits for minors in cases where, visits would be in the best interest of the child, but they were unable to be accompanied by family members.

Such a facility could potentially be used by professionals and obviate the need to actually enter the prison – saving time for both professionals and custodial staff.

In the prison, you could replace boxed visits with sound proof Tele-Visit cubicles for use by offenders. Cubicles could be monitored by camera and visits could easily be recorded or monitored if necessary.

**Aberdeen – APEX Virtual Visits**

APEX, an organisation in Aberdeen, Scotland that works with offenders and their families, was commissioned by SPS to act as a Virtual Visitors’ Centre. The service provided by APEX was originally only intended to be temporary to support families when Aberdeen and Peterhead prisons closed and offenders were moved to HMP Barlinnie (3.5 hours) and HMP Perth (1.5 hours). Ultimately the offenders were returned to Peterhead to the new prison HMP YOI Grampian.
The APEX Office is in the main street of Aberdeen and houses two Video Terminals. Families book their visits through the prison and arrive at the APEX Office for their visit. APEX staff manage the visit at the visitors’ end, while offenders are ushered into a purpose-built room in the prison. Although the service was due to finish when the new prison opened in March 2014, SPS have now allowed visits to HMP Grampian (1.5 hours) and included HMP Polmont (3 hours) for Virtual Visits. I was able to view the facilities used by offenders in the prison when I visited HMP Grampian.

In the first six months of the Virtual Visits service, APEX processed more than 800 visitors. The service supported about 1600 visitors in the first 12 months.

The visits have been extremely successful and well received by families as an alternative to traveling long distances. In the UK the NOMS and SPS subsidise the travel of families to visit the prison and costs savings in travel subsidy would have gone a long way to offset some of the cost of the service.

Colin McConnell, SPS Chief Executive, stated “Maintaining family contact is a key area in the rehabilitation of those in our care and the facility at APEX in Aberdeen has enhanced the support we provide. This initiative is an excellent example of agencies working together for the benefit of the community.”

**Lessons/Suggestion:**

These visits are not dissimilar to the Video Visits we currently support in Risdon Prison. The value to families and offenders is attested to by the ongoing demand for the service. These visits do not replace normal contact visits, but they do enable families to have regular weekly visits which can be supplemented with face to face visits in the prison from time to time. Families I have spoken with will often visit the prison once a month, but then schedule regular weekly Video Visits to maintain family contact.

Our current Video Visits arrangements are working well, and I think we can continue to develop the number of regional centres from which to provide the service, and continue to improve the technology and quality of the visit process.

**Email a prisoner**

As part of my trip I made contact with an organisation that hosts Email a Prisoner, a service which enables families to email prisoners. The service, which is now in operation in 98% of prisons in the UK, is a great facility for families that are separated by distance. It could be very beneficial for families who live in the North or Northwest of Tasmania or reside interstate. As it turned out at the very time I was making my enquiry, the CEO of the organisation was actually in Australia presenting the service to Australian prisons.

In Australia the system is being developed by UNILINK.

There is NO cost to the prison for this service but families pay about 70c per email (the cost of a stamp).

> Since we began operations in 2006 Email a Prisoner has become a vital tool for family and friends to maintain strong family ties. We complement the current methods of prisoner communication whilst respecting the security arrangements necessary in the transferring of prisoner communication / data. In November 2009 we received a positive evaluation from NOMS (National Offender Management Service) and currently we operate in 98% of secure establishments, covering all categories of prisons.

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After the 'user' has registered on our website, created their account and completed their profile they can now set-up the recipients details to begin sending emailed messages. Once the messages are sent our software encrypts and re-formats before re-directing to the prison of choice usually, within minutes. Once received in the prison (via a secure encrypted file) they can be printed in one-go, processed in the usual manner for the establishments and given to the prisoners with the rest of the daily correspondence.\(^{64}\)

In some prisons in the UK, offenders are able to respond via email through a Kiosk system which is also provided by the organisation. HOWEVER THE OFFENDER DOES NOT NEED EMAIL ACCESS TO USE THIS SYSTEM – THEY CAN REPLY IN NORMAL HANDWRITTEN FORMAT. If the sender has requested a reply then a blank sheet of A4, with a unique barcode for that offender’s ID, will be arrive with the email and be printed out by the prison staff.

The offender writes his reply by hand and these are collected with the normal outgoing mail. All offender’s written 'emails' are collected, stacked onto a scanner and send back to UNILINK in one pdf file. UNILINK software reads the bar codes and sends emails to the original sender notifying them there is a reply and they need to log into their UNILINK- Email-a-Prisoner account.

I was unaware of this service until the latter part of my trip. However the limited discussions I did have with UK prison staff or Family Support organisations revealed that the service worked well and was appreciated by offenders and their families.

**Lessons/Suggestion:**
Since my return I’ve had some discussions with UNILINK with a view to having further discussions with TPS.

The service has been adopted by one prison in WA and I believe it is being trialled in another.

\(^{64}\) Taken from the email a prisoner website
Not included in this report

As I draw close to the end of this report I’m conscious that there are so many things that I’m not going be able to include. However, I would like to briefly make mention of some of the things that impacted me.

Volunteers:
The work of all of the Family Support organisations I visited relied heavily on the role that volunteers played in their organisation. PACT had a couple of initiatives that I found inspirational.

**Just People:** is a brilliant facet of PACT’s work to mobilise volunteers to work with Probations and support offenders after their release.

Faith Based:
**Basic Caring Community (BaCC):** Volunteers motivated by their Christian faith supporting people coming out of prison (A PACT programme). I obtained some excellent material on this programme.

**Chaplains:** During my visit of prisons I often met with Chaplains who worked closely with a FEW. Many Chaplains are actively involved in supporting offenders and their families and have developed some good initiatives to encourage offenders in their faith.

**William Wilberforce Trust**[^65]: Through the Caring for Ex-Offenders network, the trust mobilises local churches to support ex-offenders on their release and re-integrating into society. They support local churches by offering training, resources and advice. A worker will meet offenders at the gate when they are released, link them with a mentor and support them as they re-integrate into the community with practical and emotional support as appropriate.

They also provide a 16 week course for those struggling with an addiction. The **Recovery Course** is a free 16-session Christian program based on the Twelve Steps used by Alcoholics Anonymous.

Based out of Holy Trinity, Brompton, they have also developed a purpose-designed **Alpha Course** for use in the prison that explains the Christian faith and fosters the development of a prison ministry in local churches.

**Clinks:**
Clinks[^66] is a great organisation that supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary sector working with offenders. It aims to ensure that those working with offenders are well informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders. Most of Clinks’ work is national, although it draws on evidence gathered at regional and local levels. It includes campaigning, influencing policy and practice, and promoting opportunities for the voluntary sector to develop or expand their work with offenders.

Clinks has some excellent resources available on its website which is well worth a visit.

Resources:
I returned with 20Kg of resources - books, courses, pamphlets, DVDs and manuals. There is a plethora of material available but time and space has prevented me from detailing everything that I found of interest. I would be more than happy to discuss, and make available these resources.

[^65]: www.williamwilberforcetrust.org
[^66]: www.clinks.org
The cost! The savings!

Prisons are never popular and the cost of building a secure environment to hide the failures of society is always more than society considers reasonable to pay. If prison systems worked and actually resulted in offenders coming out of prison better than they went in, then there might be good grounds to consider money spent on prisons as a worthwhile investment. But with the high recidivism rates currently experienced in most developed countries it’s apparent that the ‘prison industry’ is doing TOO WELL!

Nationally in Australia, corrective services agencies operate 111 custodial facilities in 85 government-operated prisons, nine privately-operated prisons, four transitional centres, one periodic detention centre (ACT), and twelve 24 hour court-cell complexes (under the responsibility of corrective services in NSW. The cost to the Australian taxpayer in 2013-14 was a net operating expenditure was $3.4 billion. Tasmanian has the highest ‘Real net operating expenditure, per prisoner per day’ of all Australian states and territories, at $332. Consequently the Tasmanian government faces the daily reminder of the economic cost of incarceration.

There is no silver bullet to dispose of this elephant-sized problem that prisons represent. However, there is some hope that the family support model discussed in this report will prescribe a remedy to provide relief for the family disruption caused through incarceration; and more importantly serve as an immunisation against the transmission of intergenerational offending.

All early evidence suggests the Family Engagement Model works, and provides an excellent social return on investment.

Social return on investment of the Integrated Family Support (IFS)

The impact of the Integrated Family Support programme was evaluated by several different agencies. The New Economics Foundation (nef) based their study on a Social Return on Investment analysis. Their study showed that every £1 invested in keeping a family together when someone goes to prison can save the tax payer £11.

Based on our review of the support that IFS offers and accounting for multiple scenarios, we estimate that IFS delivers potential benefits to the State of between £515,465 and £3,479,294 over a one year period. Based on an annual cost per programme site of £40,368 in London and £35,972 elsewhere, and using our middle estimate, this represents a value of £1,281,240 or return of £11.41 for every £1 invested.

At a time when government finances are stretched to the limit, these financial savings alone justify serious consideration be given to investing in keeping Tasmanian families together when someone goes into prison..

Perhaps an ounce of prevention really might be worth a pound of cure!

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67 Report on Government Services 2015 – Chapter 8 – Corrective Services
68 Report on Government Services 2015 – Table 8A.9
69 Economic study of Integrated Family Support Programme (IFS) 2012
“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’, and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Matthew 17:20
The Church and our response

“Faith groups have, over the centuries, had a strong involvement in the criminal justice system and many of the great prison reformers, such as Elizabeth Fry and John Howard, were driven by their faith.”

PACT, an organisation that I spent considerable time with during my trip, had its origins in, and is still associated with, the Catholic Church.

Coming from a local church, which looks down onto the prison estate of Risdon, I am constantly reminded of the responsibility that the Christian community has to visit those in prison. My journey over recent years has shown me that this is not a road that I walk alone. My colleagues within a number of our churches in Tasmania have equally embraced this responsibility. I think, without exception, every time I have called on my fellow pastors to lend a hand, or presented an opportunity for them to engage in some way to be involved in the prison, they have readily responded.

Churches have partnered with us to provide bases for our Video Visits and responded to the challenge of supporting the families in the community. Presented with an opportunity to renovate a prison visit centre, one church committed thousands of dollars and mobilised over 100 volunteers to work hand in hand with offenders to transform a dowdy visit area into a bright, lively family-friendly haven.

Our own meagre efforts in engaging with needs within the prison came via an invitation. The chance to rejuvenate a tired and defunct Dad’s Day programme into the very successful and vibrant Kids Day programme which it is today. That programme, many others and even this report, have come about because I was invited to be involved in the prison.

While there might be an elephant in the room when it comes to prisons and society I also believe there is a sleeping giant and this is the Church.

At a time when governments and welfare organisation are struggling to manage dwindling resources I believe the church has something to offer. It might not be much, but even a small mustard seed - planted in the right soil - can produce some amazing things.

In a UK report that I came across during my travels, the Church of England examines the role of the church in affecting real change in the community. In a staggering statistic it claims that 10 million people are reached each year through local church-led community activities, even excluding ‘familiar’ church activities such as Sunday Services, Easter, baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The report looks at a number of ‘case studies’ and shows how, at a time when programmes are being centralised in large organisations and corporate led institutions, the church remains one of the few organisations, which is not dependent on outside funding, that works directly with people at the local level in the heart of communities. In short, the programmes they run are owned locally. Projects are shaped in response to particular local needs and usually funded without statutory support. Churches are able to marshal human, financial and physical resources to a significant degree, without becoming bureaucratic or disengaged from the local community.

71 Good Neighbours: How churches help communities flourish - June 2014
The report also sheds light on an unstated fear that crouches behind any thought of involving ‘the church’ in prison or government programmes. What about proselytising?

“Case study churches were clear that activity which might be perceived as aggressively proselytising might alienate those they were trying to help. Interviewees thought that authentic Christian engagement in the context of deprivation included a response to physical and material as well as spiritual needs. The case study churches tended to be growing in size, and also increasingly reflecting the demographic makeup of their local areas, but the process was an organic one, and churches were clear that relationship with residents - often vulnerable - should be characterised by hospitality and care rather than a desire to convert. They cared far more about being faithful and engaged churches, than they did about being big churches.”

This is the same ethos that was exuded by the likes of Elizabeth Fry and John Howard and it is the same sentiment that I’ve seen expressed in the churches that I have had the privilege of working with. What we achieved in working with offenders and their families has been done with very little or no financial assistance from the prison service. My colleagues have offered their services without cost, even self-funding the programmes in which they engage.

To our government and prison authorities ...
I would encourage them to see the church as the sleeping giant it is. It’s time to tap it on the shoulder and wake it up to the opportunities that are available to engage with offenders and their families, and bring about positive change in prison and local communities.

To my colleagues in ministry...
It is my prayer that this report would serve as a window to the opportunity before us to meet the needs of offenders and their children and families; and a reminder to refrain us from offering any excuse which might sound like “... when did we see you in prison?”
So what now!

The next step

I commenced this study with a premise: namely, that I could be involved in helping to create the role of a prison-based Family Support Worker in Risdon Prison, and develop a team of family workers supporting offenders’ families in regional areas of Tasmania.

Everything I have learnt has confirmed that this is a good model and it is possible.

My intentions are to:

1. To liaise with the TPS to create the role of a prison-based Family Engagement Worker based on the results of our trial programme and my learnings from this study trip.
2. Continue to develop and extend the network of churches that are engaged in the support of offenders’ children and families.
3. Look to establish in each of these churches a Family Engagement Worker who is trained and equipped to support offenders’ children and families.
4. Continue to develop the Video Visits concept by increasing the network of Regional Visit Centres to cover a greater area of Tasmania and better respond to the compassionate Video Visits needs and opportunities.
5. Seek funding to develop the ‘Hidden Sentence’ training concept in regional areas and support professionals working in schools, child care centres, hospitals, neighbourhood centres, police, social workers and the criminal justice system to better understand issues facing children and families of offenders.
6. Seek to include a children and family awareness component in the TPS Correctional Officers Training and Induction Programme for new officers.
7. Seek to identify family programmes that will meet the needs of offenders and their families at the various stages of an offender’s incarceration.
8. Commence homework classes using Video Visits to connect families in regional locations.
9. Partner with other service providers to support the offender in developing and maintaining relationships with their children and family.
10. Purposefully seek partners to provide professional support services to children of offenders.
11. Continue to share our experiences with others who are interested in developing prison-based family support work.
12. Maintain relationships with the organisations I visited during my Fellowship study trip and continue to broaden my knowledge and experience in working with offenders, their children and families.

Closing thoughts concerning the distribution of this report

This report will be distributed to: the Tasmanian Prisons Service, Department of Justice (TAS), Department of Human Services (TAS), Australian organisations working with children and families of offenders (eg. Shine for Kids, VACRO), individuals and organisations working in the criminal justice system who have expressed an interest in my report, organisations and individuals visited during my Fellowship study trip, University of Tasmania, University of South Australia, Flinders University, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (with whom we are discussing music based programmes in Risdon Prison), partner churches in Tasmania and other Australian churches working with offenders and their families, and churches and ministers within my denomination (CRC Churches International).

Most people with whom I’ve discussed my Churchill Fellowship Study have expressed a keen interest in reading this report. Nearly everyone with whom I met during my travels is actively involved in working with families of offenders and wants to share in my findings. To you, I want to say thank for your support and also offer my apologies if I have not justly represented you or your
organisation. I am in your debt and hope that my reflections on your work appropriately pay tribute to the amazing things you are doing.

To those working in the Criminal Justice system, the staff of the Tasmanian Prison Service and Department of Justice I’d remind you of the comments I made in my introduction that I’m a novice when it comes to working in the prison system. I readily acknowledge that I have much to learn and come away from this study with more questions than answers. Your work is a difficult and thankless task. So if nothing else, I hope this report at least serves to acknowledge the complexity of the issues you face, and acts as an offer to work with you in the hope that we can be of support in your endeavours to break the cycle of re-offending in Tasmania.

To family support organisations such as Shine for Kids and VACRO, I’d like thank you for the assistance and encouragement over the years. Much of what’s contained in this report won’t be new for you however I do hope that some my reflections might be useful and, in some small way, add value to your incredible work.

To the church community in Tasmania and to those in my denominational family I hope that this report will open your eyes to the needs of the prisoners, their children and families. The very nature of the church and our ‘mission statement’ is to work with ‘offenders’. The State has a responsibility to protect society, judge the guilty and incarcerate offenders but, the church has been ‘commissioned’ to accept, forgive and restore. This report is an invitation to engage with offenders and their families and be the sort of community we were created to be.

And to you the reader, no matter how this report came across your desk I hope that it will be interesting enough to have motivated you to read this far, informative enough to have challenged any preconceived ideas you had about offenders’ children and families and inspirational enough to dare you to think that you can make a difference.
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## Annex A - Details of Appointments

### Churchill Fellowship Report – Norm Reed

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### Annex A - Details of Appointments

**Churchill Fellowship Report – Norm Reed**

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/12/2014</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Charlotte Conley</td>
<td>Family Engagement Worker - PACT</td>
<td>Just People - Salford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/12/2014</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Chloe Duxbury</td>
<td>Volunteer Manager - PACT</td>
<td>HMP Forest Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12/2014</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Lucy Smith</td>
<td>Family Engagement Worker - POPS</td>
<td>HMP Styal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12/2014</td>
<td>Stoke on Trent</td>
<td>Katie Lees</td>
<td>Family Engagement Manager - PACT</td>
<td>HMYOI Werrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12/2014</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Katie Lees</td>
<td>Family Engagement Manager - PACT</td>
<td>HMP Drake Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12/2014</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Val Dwamen</td>
<td>Family Engagement Manager - PACT</td>
<td>HMP Holloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/2014</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Hannah Havers</td>
<td>Just People - London</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/2014</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Luke Carey</td>
<td>Service Manager, Basic Caring Communities (BaCC)</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/2014</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Zac Adil</td>
<td>PFFS (now amalgamated with PACT)</td>
<td>PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/2014</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Sam Hart</td>
<td>Hidden Sentence</td>
<td>AFPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/2014</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Kerryn Davies</td>
<td>Family Man Coordinator</td>
<td>Safe Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/2014</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Adam Moll</td>
<td>Business Development Director</td>
<td>Safe Ground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pact FEW's and Case Management Teams Structure
August 2014
Family Engagement Worker (formerly Family Support Worker) Specification and Job Description

Background

The importance of partnership work to support offenders’ families in need is increasingly acknowledged and criminal justice agencies have a key role to play. Intervening positively in the lives of those families in most need has the potential to reduce the impact on demand for criminal justice services.

It is important also to continue to recognise that supporting and maintaining links between offenders and their families can help reduce re-offending. Doing so can contribute to tackling intergenerational offending by addressing the poor outcomes faced by children of offenders. Prisons and Probation should make contact with local authorities, share data where appropriate and use the opportunity to share good practice and develop effective interventions.

A Family Support Worker is a commissionable option in Prison Service Instruction 16/2011 Services to Visitors, and can facilitate delivery requirements in line with Co-commissioning intention 14 Work with local authorities to promote inclusion of, and maximise benefits to, offenders’ families and PSI 12/2012, Rehabilitation Services.

Between 2009 and 2012 NOMS piloted a model for custody based family support workers at 9 prisons. The evaluation points to promising intermediate outcomes: increased parent-child or prisoner-family contact; improved prisoner behaviour; and reduced self-harm. NOMS also worked closely with the Department for Education (DfE) to pilot and develop community based approaches involving Probation Trusts and Local Authorities.

During the pilot phase the provision was delivered at the following establishments;

- Belmarsh,
- Wandsworth,
- Bristol,
- Eastwood Park,
- Maidstone,
- Frankland,
- Deerbolt
- Swansea
- Pentonville.

Some of the named establishments, have expressed an interest in the service going forward but have also made it clear that they may be unable to commit to the whole length of the contract period and the resources required will be governed by the available budget at any given time.

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To allow the transition from pilot phase to “business as usual” a competition is being facilitated by MOJ Procurement and custodial commissioners with support from Commissioning Strategies.

MOJ Procurement will enter into a Framework Agreement with a qualified supplier. Within the scope of the framework Prisons may determine their specific requirements needed in order to meet both operational and best value requirements within their available budget whilst at the same being assured that the procurement is compliant with UK and EU legislation. A Framework Agreement is a contractual vehicle that allows purchasers to order goods or services (in this case services) under the terms and conditions specified in that Framework Agreement (i.e. it provides a mechanism for enabling further sites to be added when a prison, or group of prisons, have identified a need for the requirement as detailed within the framework).

The length of this framework agreement will be for two years with the option to extend by two twelve month extensions

We have taken this opportunity also to revise terminology and now refer to the role of Family Engagement Worker/s. We think this better reflects NOMS strategic aim of reducing re-offending, and reinforces the importance of family engagement within this, whilst at the same time also seeking to support offenders children to improve their outcomes and reduce the likelihood of intergenerational crime.

The Authority is looking to appoint an organisation or organisations (for example single Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations; VCSE consortia, and Local Authorities, or any combination of these) to deliver the Family Engagement Worker service to the following prisons listed (referred to as sites). This will be in the form of Family Engagement Worker(s) working to the job description contained within this specification.

Drawing on relevant professional qualifications and / or experience, the Family Engagement Worker will operate at both a strategic level - in supporting development of service - and at an operational level in the direct provision of support, advice and case work.

To promote flexibility and innovation it is anticipated that discussions between providers and commissioners will confirm the scope of services for each site. It may be possible to consider degrees of clustering where defined services are provided to a number of sites and based around the single worker(s).

Each establishment will be responsible for paying their contribution of the service whether a worker is dedicated to work at one site or a cluster where defined services are provided to a number of sites and based around the single worker(s).

Services at other sites are not be part of this competition insofar as they support outputs detailed in NOMS Rehabilitation and Services for Visitors specifications which are already subject to standard competitive commissioning processes.

The job description below is developed from the pilot role using learning from the evaluation and reflects the developing commissioning landscape, and has also been broadened away from a solely custodial delivery model, in order to reflect the benefits of working across community and custody and to encourage innovation and a range of delivery models.
Key tasks, duties and responsibilities

- Ensure that offenders, their children, carers, and other relatives have access to appropriate information, advice, guidance, learning opportunities, care and support to better enable them to maintain or enhance positive relationships.
- Develop referral pathways for families, offenders and other professionals to access the service as well as information sharing and routes of referral into community based services
- Provide warm human support and to ensure that children, families and offenders are treated with respect, dignity, courtesy and care.
- Provide families with information, advice, guidance and signposting to sources of help and information via personal contact through visits, and via the telephone, email and letter.
- Working with and through prison, and Probation staff, Offender Managers, provide support to offenders with regard to family issues, in accordance with prison’s rules and procedures regarding security, safeguarding and public protection, and to support the prison in developing applications, referral process and casework-based approaches.
- Attend case work meetings (case discussion, support and guidance) as required.
- Support the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) with regard to children and young people who may be at risk, and to support closer working between prisons, Probation Trusts, the CAF co-ordinator and team, Local Authority Childrens Social Care, Local Safeguarding Children’s Board, and Childrens Services such as Childrens Centres.
- Promote and facilitate the targeted, active and informed participation of family members and other ‘supporters’ in both prison-based and community interventions, activities, relationship and parenting skills programmes, thus giving family members an opportunity to contribute to the prisoners resettlement journey
- Ensure that local agency and LSCB Safeguarding Children policies are adhered to at all times and that children feel welcomed, valued and safe.
- Actively promote and support the development of extended prison visit arrangements and where possible, child-centred visits and all-day family visits.
- Promote and support the development of good practice and quality standards with relation to children & families, consistent with NOMS Prison and Probation Instructions, Commissioning Intentions and good practice guidance, whilst also securing core delivery requirements to support all offenders’ families
- Support the prison/s and Probation Trusts in developing partnerships with local authorities, in developing and delivering core services for families and also in particular the Troubled Families Programme in England and the Families First and Integrated Family Support Service in Wales, through sharing data where appropriate, good practice and developing effective interventions.
- Promote opportunities for families of offenders, (where they claim out of work benefits and present complexity of needs), to benefit from the DWP Families with Complex Needs provision.
- Support the recruitment, vetting, training, and supervision of placements of volunteers drawn from local communities and/or student placements, to support the delivery of services.
- Develop and maintain positive, professional and effective working relationships with local authority officers, prison staff and other partners and providers.
- Take responsibility for identifying training needs in support of continuous professional development
- Maintain accurate records as required and records of own annual leave, TOIL and (where appropriate) use of flexi-time.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the post as required.
- Ensure prison security policies and rules are adhered to by self, staff and volunteers at all times. Personnel must comply at all times with prison security regulations. In a highly restricted environment pressure will be encountered to breach security, often on the grounds of compassion. It is essential that workers are able to recognise and resist this pressure, work within the defined boundaries and report attempts to breach security to their line manager without delay.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Specification</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge, skills and abilities</strong></td>
<td>Relevant degree level / professional qualification in social care or equivalent, and or experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good negotiation and advocacy skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent organisational skills and the ability to manage a demanding work load.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to use initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work in partnership with a range of agencies, at both strategic and operational service delivery level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to work in a challenging environment and remain calm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrable ability to work with diverse group of staff and service users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviours</strong></td>
<td>Committed to continuous personal development and learning, and responsiveness to constructive feedback.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Results orientated, flexible, adaptable, with a ‘can do’ attitude.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Availability to work flexible hours including weekend working.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to travel to attend meetings and events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experience**

Work with families and disadvantaged groups in a multi agency environment and demonstrable understanding of it.

Interagency work, building partnerships, promoting positive relationships between different agencies, and developing new approaches to service delivery

Casework with clients/service users, and of maintaining clear, up to date records.

Demonstrable Experience of working in a team and delivering front line services.

Work with volunteers is desirable.
The case for a prison-based Family Support Worker

Background - what I knew before I left Australia

The concept of the FSW developed in the paper stemmed out of a role created to support Safe Ground’s *Family Man* Programme. The FSW initially focused on encouraging and facilitating the active involvement of offenders’ partners and relatives in the *Family Man* programme and was developed in consultation with PACT (and other organisations) who were then commissioned to advise how families and friends could be involved in this family relationship programme.

Following the successful employment of FSWs a recommendation was made to NOMS that a practitioner’s role be developed for FSWs by the voluntary sector to work with prisoners’ children and families. It was proposed that the role should be case work based, taking referrals from offenders, partners and relatives and supporters and could act as the link into and from interventions and relationship programmes such as *Family Man*.

PACT subsequently developed a job description and person specifications and this formed the basis of the role that was trialled in four English prisons between 2009 and 2010.

The trial was a resounding success with the report concluding:

“The role of the Family Support Worker has been developed extremely successfully in four pilot settings, and shown to meet a high level of need on the part of prisoners, their children, families, friends and supporters. There is now a strong, evidence-based argument for extending it to all prisons in England and Wales. In the absence of sufficient resources for this in the current stringent economic climate, it would be judicious to extend the existing pilot further to incorporate specific types of prison, such as those for women, young adult offenders, sex offenders, open and training establishments. This would enable the further testing of the extent to which the FSW role can be standardised across all prisons and the extent to which it needs to be customised according to individual establishment need and practice.

Much of the success of the role may be attributed to its development through effective voluntary sector partnerships... and to its clear independence from the prison system. The present findings leave little room for doubt that these successful models should continue and the voluntary sector be resourced to drive their development”.

What I learned about a second trial during my visit - Integrated Family Support Services

The recommendations of the 2009-10 report were accepted by NOMS and a further round of trials were conducted in May 2011 with two year funding from the Department of Education and NOMS. The project created an IFSS (Integrated Family Support Service) structure that created two roles:

- A prison based family support FSW to work in the prison, and
- An IFSA (Integrated Family Support Advocate to work with local government and organisations in the community to support families.

The IFSS programme trialled with two organisations PACT, in the South of England and Wales and NEPACS, in the North East. Both of these organisations feature highly in my investigative studies.
An evaluation of the IFSS trial was conducted by Dr Christopher Hartworth of Barefoot Research and Evaluation. I met with Dr Hartworth, in Newcastle, during my trip to discuss his report. The results of the trial concluded:

- In relation to the FSW:
  - There was an increase in the frequency and/or quality of special visits
  - There was a positive impact on children
  - The project led to offenders reporting they will not offend again
  - They played a role in resettlement process
  - The approach was effective and highly valued:

- The offenders feedback in relation to the FSW role was very positive:
  - Improved offenders behaviour
  - The service provided is unique and is not provided by any other agency
  - Improved mental health and reduced stress (prisoners reported they were less like to self-harm)
  - The project had positive impact on visitors
  - Brought family closer together
  - The relationship with the FSW is unique (one that no other professional in the prison has).
  - Improved safeguarding of children
  - Offenders are telling other offenders about the service

- Professionals working in the prison saw value in FSW role as follows:
  - There were improvements in the prison regime
  - A greater awareness and identification of prisoners family problems
  - Better relationships built with prisoners
  - Saved the time of other professionals working in the prison
  - Added value to the work of other services within the prison
  - Brought together prison departments
  - The role was considered to be highly important in the prison
  - Represented an important resettlement resource

The trial of IFSS was very successful and resulted in:

- A prison population that is calmer and easier to manage
- A valued addition to the prison regime which also impacted on changing a hard edged prison culture in certain establishments
- A prison which is more family friendly, including more training for staff and more family provision for prisoners.
- Energised, added value to and in some cases started the Children and Families Pathways.

The benefits to the local authority (State Government in our case) of the IFSS were:

- Provided a valuable source of advice and expertise, where none previously existed
- Stimulated new work areas which have improved performances in targeted areas of support, for example in Trouble Families
- Improved and increased cooperation and coordination of services particularly between children and families in the criminal justice agencies.

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1 Evaluation of the Integrated Family Support Programme in the North East – Barefoot Research and Evaluation – Dr Christopher Hartworth (June 2013)

2 The Troubled Families programme is a UK Government scheme under the Department for Communities and Local Government with the stated aim of helping troubled families turn their lives around.
While these findings related specifically to an assessment of the trial with NEPACS, key lesson from PACT were compiled separately in a report completed by Dr Finola Farrant.³

NOMS did accept the evidence of the accumulated trials, recognising the value of the FSW by subsequently developing the new commissionable role of FEW (Family Engagement Worker). The actual funding for the new FEW role was arranged under a Co-commissioned⁴ arrangement.

The future of the Integrated Family Support Advocate

The role of the IFSA was a new innovation operating in the local community and ‘advocating’ for the needs of families. While the benefits of the IFSA role were numerous, including conduction of Hidden Sentence⁵ Training, opening communication channels between the prison and community-based organisation and creating a shift in attitudes towards imprisonment held by community family services, the role was not provisioned for in the next phase of development of the family support model.

I suspect the role of IFSA is encompassed within the general mandate of the various family support organisations. Organisations like PACT, NEPACS, POP and Families Outside (like VACRO and Shine for Kid’s in Australia) are actively involved in the community and regularly work with local authorities to champion the cause of children and families of prisoners. Each of these organisations conducts some form of Hidden Sentence training. And while it would be nice for funding to be specifically designated for this task, I’d suggest the responsibilities will ultimately be absorbed within the family support organisations or taken up by the local authorities.

When asked about the future of the IFSA one CEO commented “I think a lot of the work put into ensuring that work with children and families of prisoners is on the agenda, and recognized as an issue deserving of statutory attention has paid off, and some of the work is being mainstreamed now through Troubled Families etc”. (ie. It has now been taken up by the local authorities).

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³ Improving outcomes for prisoners and their families – Key lessons from the Integrated Family Support Services – University of Rockhampton – Dr Finola Farrant

⁴ Co-commissioning is where two or more service commissioners (NOMS and Department of Education for example) align their priorities while retaining responsibility for their own resources.

⁵ Hidden Sentence is a training course for all professionals whose work brings them in to contact with prisoners’ families, including children’s centre workers, school staff, play workers, health visitors, and family intervention teams – developed by AFP (Action for Prisoners’ Families).
# FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER MONTHLY REPORT

**HMP/YOI:** Deerbolt  
**Month:** September 2014

## New Prisoner Referral Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of prisoner self-referrals (wing application)</td>
<td>3 STOCKTON, MIDDLESBROUGH, CHESHIRE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of prisoner referrals from prison staff</td>
<td>17 LEEDS MACHESTER X4, LEICTER, HARRIGATE, NEWCASTLE X2, GATESHEAD, DEWSBURY, STOCKTON, DURHAM, SALFORD, SOUTHPORT, BLACKBURN, MIDDLESBROUGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of prisoner referrals during reception process</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of prisoner referrals from agencies</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of prisoner referrals from visitor’s centre</td>
<td>1 STOCKTON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of new prisoner referrals</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## New Visitor referral Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of visitor self-referrals</td>
<td>2 HULL, NEWCASTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of visitor referrals from visitor centre</td>
<td>3 SCOTLAND, LIVERPOOL, LEEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of visitor agency referrals</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no of visitor referrals</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Ages of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 3 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 10 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 14 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 18 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of children</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reason for New Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>How many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/child play day, family day visits</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children/parenting</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoner/family contact</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering/care proceedings</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence planning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/mental health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and support with services and community resources</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol misuse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug misuse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROTL/release</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPACS Grant</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO VISITS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSFER</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROTHER IN COMA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outputs

*Outputs (as a result of your intervention) – please record numbers of new individuals you have helped this month - not repeat visits / course attendees etc.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>Local Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of prisoners enabled to access special visits</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of children enabled to access special visits</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of children enabled to access special visits [NEPACS not solely FSW target]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of prisoners accessing parenting courses or relationship courses 9 (incl.1:1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of prisoners reporting improvement in their relationships/parenting as a result of NEPACS intervention [including Heading Home/resettlement work]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of prisoners receiving visits who had been previously identified as not having visits contact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of prisoners visited by children chaperoned by NEPACS / carers / other agencies as a result of NEPACS intervention.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of Dads able to make supportive phone call to partner in labour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of ‘first visits’ from new babies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of families enabled to influence sentence planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of family members providing peer support via visitors voice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of family members engaged with FSW who report increased confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pre-school children seen to be reassured by contact [by parent or carer] NB: This does not say observed by NEPACS.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of school age children who report improved well-being, confidence and / or behaviour as a result of contact with parent in prison.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies gathered to illustrate impact of training in supporting individuals/ improving practice</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Sentence evaluation forms indicate increased awareness better understanding of issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals report/ demonstrate better understanding of the issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of professionals attending Hidden Sentence training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Previous Referral Update

| No. of previous referrals open at start of month | 10 |
| No. of previous referrals closed during this month | 5 |
| No. of previous referrals open at the end of this month (on-going to next month) | 5 |

### Summary of Monthly Referral Information

| No. of previous open referrals (on-going from last month) | 5 |
| No. of new referrals this month | 26 |
| No. of new referrals closed this month | 16 |
| Total no. of open referrals | 15 |

### Evaluation questionnaires

| No. of questionnaires distributed | 2 |
| No. of questionnaires returned | 2 |
### FSW Volunteer Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of FSW volunteers</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of volunteer hours completed</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Name of Agency Contacted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Agency Contacted</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAVING CARE</td>
<td>NORTH SHIELDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DURHAM X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOUTHPORT X3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBATION</td>
<td>DURHAM X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NEWCASTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MIDDLESBROUGH X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GATESHEAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHESHIRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SERVICES</td>
<td>NEWCASTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GATESHEAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APVS</td>
<td>BIRMINGHAM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CAF Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Pre CAF completed</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of CAF initiated</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of CAF completed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of CAF meetings attended</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of discussions re: CAF not recorded above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### General Project Update

Text – Case Reports….
## Job Description – Family Contact Officer / Family Centre and Help Hub Officer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Contact officer / Family Centre &amp; Help Hub Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Band</th>
<th>Reporting to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Access / Egress FLM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reporting Structure

- Deputy Governor
- Head of Operations
- Access / Egress FLM
- FCO / FCHH Officer

### Job Purpose

The post holder will deliver a high quality and effective family service to the population of HMP & YOI Grampian, and their families. This service will cover all aspects of “family”; providing support, advice, information and referrals to Prisoners & Young Offenders, their families, staff, external agencies and partners.

### Major Tasks

1. Co-ordinate and facilitate the delivery of the HMP & YOI Grampian Visits Policy and ensure their detailed actions within the Children and Family Strategy Group Management Action Plan are actioned.

2. Effectively process family enquiries and make the FCO services available during the agreed visits times and to promote this service to prisoner’s families.

3. Deal with routine prisoner cases involving family contact and liaising with Residential staff.

4. Co-ordinate and act as a trained facilitator in the delivery of family group conferencing. (Supported visits & Children’s Visits)

5. Contribute to all family children related case conferences, local Risk Management Group, ACT Case Conferencing, Family Strategy Meetings and any other meeting deemed appropriate.

6. Cover other operational post when required to deliver operational needs.

### Main Activities

1. Assist in the organisation of family events and open days held within the establishment, participating when required and appropriate.

2. Assist families and ensure they are made aware of the information and support available, providing induction days / sessions as required.

3. Ensuring that all items provided for the purpose of visits are maintained and cleaned appropriately, this includes items in the children’s play area, toys, seating, etc.

4. Contribute to the ICM process by completing all associated documentation clearly and concisely within the relevant time scales.

5. Ensure the understanding of the Child Protection Policy and the procedure that should be adhered to in the event of any issue or concern relating to a child.

6. Represent HMP & YOI Grampian at any relevant external meetings or conferences as agreed by the FLM/Head of Op’s.

7. Positively interact with visitors, prisoners and colleagues and in doing so demonstrate the SPS values, missions and goals.

8. Promote and optimise contact and visit opportunities for prisoners and their families.
9 Co-ordinate and facilitate the involvement of families during the induction period. This includes FCO procedural familiarisation for prisoners and visitors.

10 Responsible for preparing and maintaining information pack for prisoner’s families and the prisoner. Ensure its updated when policy changes are implemented.

11 To continually seek opportunities to improve family contact and the facilities within the establishment.

12 To co-ordinate the activities within the Children’s Visits, encouraging prisoner and child interaction.

13 To Liaise with voluntary groups and charities that assist in the wellbeing of prisoners and their families.

Environment

1 The post holder will be based in the operational environment having contact with prisoners, families and other visitors.

2 The post holder will work in a standalone group of five rotating through the agreed shift time’s reporting to the Access / Egress FLM.
A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

Article 1
Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2
The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3
All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4
Governments should make these rights available to children.

Article 5
Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6
Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.

Article 7
Governments should respect a child’s right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 8
Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm the child.

Article 9
Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

Article 10
Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 11
Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 12
Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

Article 13
Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.

Article 14
Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 15
Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.

Article 16
Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.

Article 17
Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article 18
Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 19
Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Article 20
When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to live in another country.

Article 21
Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.

Article 22
Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.

Article 23
Governments should ensure that children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Richer countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 24
Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Article 25
The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 26
Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 27
Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children’s human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 28
Governments should protect children from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 29
Governments should protect children from poverty in war zones. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 30
Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 31
Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 32
Governments should protect children from serious offences.

Article 33
Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

Article 34
Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 35
Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 36
Governments should protect children from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 37
Governments should protect children from poverty in war zones. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 38
Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 39
Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 40
Governments should protect children from poverty in war zones. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 41
Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 42
Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure that all children get all their rights.

Go to www.unicef.org/crc to read all the articles.
Relais Enfants-Parents Romands (REPR): Our values

The role of the Swiss French charity Relais Enfants-Parents Romands (REPR) is to welcome families and relatives on their prison visits and to support children in their relationship with their imprisoned parents.

Our team is expanding and our activities are spread across the whole of French-speaking Switzerland: it was therefore crucial that we identify and elaborate the common values which form the basis of our work, in particular in relation to the children with whom we work.

Here is a preliminary outline of our work, which has been developed by our partners. The aim of our discussions was not to elaborate a kind of objective truth but to establish what orients our work, to lay down a philosophy of support. Indeed, **simply supporting a child with respect to his or her relationship to an imprisoned parent is not enough**. It is about knowing how to do so effectively and how we envisage this.

After exploring the main themes in our discussions, we felt it important to emphasise one aspect in particular: that, for the entire REPR team, our work is about supporting each child in their personal experience of the context in which they live.

It is about guiding them in their own way through this context; not without support, but above all in their own way.

A balance needs to be achieved between the way in which the child will create something himself out of what he is experiencing and the support we offer him.

Values:

1) **We do not believe in one unique parenting model.**

When we accompany children on prison visits, it is important that we know how to deal with what takes place: what is said between the child and their parent. We are physically present during all visits (whether it is an individual accompaniment or a Creative Workshop as a group). This requires that we leave behind our own personal notions that we all have of how to be a parent, whether it is as parents or with reference to our own personal backstory and experience as a child. Furthermore, within the prison context there is already a certain pressure on the prisoner and their changed role as a parent: to reflect on how to act and what to say. Leaving aside our own notions of how things should be done relieves some of the pressure from the time the parent and child have together.

Moreover, due to our physical presence as “professionals whose role is to accompany the child”, some prisoners may project onto us a parental “savoir être” and ask us for our advice in this way.

It is important that we forget any notion of the “perfect parent”, while always remaining supportive.

2) **We help the child through what they experience during prison visits and we do not systematise the responses of the child to these visits.**

What we have gathered from our exchanges with the children is that we should not aim to find out what a “good” visit consists of, but that we should allow the child to express themself with their parent in whichever way they feel is right, be that through joy or through tears or by sulking or not wanting to speak.
It is therefore important that we remain open to the unexpected to be able to offer this precious freedom and flexibility to the child and their parent. It is up to the child to rebuild this link in their own way, based on their own concerns and questions.

The important thing is that they are granted the necessary space to do so. In this way, it is important to regularly meet the parents on their own, in order to review the situation. We must be there to support the parent during the visit as well, to help them deal with whatever the child may bring to the table.

It is also important to be able to make some compromises in terms of the reality of the prison setting so that it embodies the phrase: “Dad can’t come home with you, he isn’t allowed to: it is not that he chooses not to.”

3) We aim to provide a kind and caring presence appropriate for what plays out between the child and parent, and to be available for them during this process.

We do not approach a situation with any preconceived truths or formulas; instead, we learn from each situation. Indeed, each situation and each moment is unique. We also learn from what we could have done or said differently. Working as a team allows us to constantly rework this perspective and this enriches our experience.

As a starting point we use the fact that we do not know how a parent used to act towards their child before his/her imprisonment.

During the Creative Workshops, there is no “correct object to make”: the important thing is the way in which each person involved approaches the proposed activity.

We have to be able to abandon the idea that an encounter must take place as quickly as possible.

Thus, the challenge lies in allowing each child to take charge of his own life experience in his own way, based on the interplay of his own imaginary world and the reality of the encounter with the parent.

By Ludovic Bornand Psychologist REPR and Viviane Schekter Director of REPR

This article is taken from Justice for Children of Prisoners Newsletter
Prison Visits & Families Impacts, Successes & Struggles
Special Edition Newsletter 2 of 4, 2013

1 Justice for Children of Prisoners Newsletter, 2 of 4, COPE - 2013