

BRIDGING THE GAP:

A Review of the Pact Family
Engagement Service

September 2016



© Andy Aitchison / Pact

Dr Jane Dominey, Charlotte Dodds MPhil and Dr Serena Wright

Centre for Community, Gender and Social Justice
Institute of Criminology
University of Cambridge



FOREWORD

In 2005, having been appointed as a rather green first time Chief Executive to my current role, I did my first whistle stop tour of prisons. I met prison governors, prison staff and prisoners, and family members, including grandparents, parents, partners, siblings and children of men and women in prison. I told them I was the new boss at Pact, and asked them all the same three questions. How are we doing? What would you do if you had my job? What more can we do to reduce re-offending? There were many answers – too many to recount or even remember. But I do recall the strongest messages that came through. Several people recited the old adage, that prisoners need ‘Somewhere to live, something to do, and someone to love.’ Many spoke about the need for hope. Many talked about prisoners being ‘people’, and how damaging it is to the human soul to be labelled by the worst thing you had ever done, rather than by your potential. Almost everyone I listened to spoke about relationships, visits, and who they hoped to live with after prison. Of course, people also spoke about education, addiction, homelessness, mental illness, poverty, and employment, and about the burden of having to declare a criminal record. But by the end of that tour, I realised that Pact’s century-long focus, on family, community, hope and human relationships, was still the right path for this charity. The question was, what practical solutions were we offering, and were they good enough?

In 2007, I found myself one of a group of people consulted by Cabinet Office for the ‘Children of Offenders Review’¹. Between 2008 - 2010, I had the privilege of working with NOMS officials and voluntary sector colleagues to develop the specifications and guidance for how prisons should enable and facilitate visits for families and friends². This was a period in which Government officials from a range of departments focused on the inter-connectedness between family relationships and offending behaviour, and so called ‘inter-generational offending’. The shocking statistic that 6 out of 10 boys with a father in prison end up in prison themselves was regularly quoted. The obvious fact that so called ‘offenders’ are human beings, who usually have families who might be serving a ‘hidden sentence’, was widely discussed, and together with other voluntary sector agencies, we even invented the ‘Hidden Sentence’ course. The links between separation from family and suicide and self-harm were also becoming increasingly evident, as was reported by Prison Reform Trust.³

In my prison visits, I met key workers whose job it was to support prisoners with addiction issues, with housing, and with jobs. I saw classrooms and training

¹http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/think_families/offenders_review_080110.pdf

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278904/2014-01-15_Services_For_Visitors_-_Specification_P2.1.pdf

³<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/there%20when%20you%20need%20them%20most%20a%20review%20of%20pact's%20first%20night%20in%20custody%20services.pdf>

workshops. And of course, I saw prison visitors centres, which we and others had developed, family days and other activities. I also saw the relationship education programmes of Safe Ground, with whom we worked, and of Time for Families (who became part of Pact a few years later). But what struck me was that whilst everyone was talking about how we needed to strengthen family, and support people in having healthy relationships, there were next to no casework practitioners in prisons working on these agendas, and there was no body of practice.

Working with NOMS, Safe Ground, and later, with POPS in the NW, NEPACS in the NE, and Jigsaw at HMP Leeds, I made it my priority to do what I could to see such a practitioner role be developed. And so we invented 'Prison-based Family Support Workers', and piloted them. Later, we evolved and re-badged these posts as 'Integrated Family Support Workers', and had the service evaluated. And now, the third iteration of the service is called 'Family Engagement Workers.' We raised funds from charitable foundations, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, in order to commission independent evaluations. And thankfully, NOMS provided us with the opportunity through commissioning to put theory into practice. Other funders, including DfE, LHF, and Big Lottery, also supported us, with vital grants for development work.

'Bridging the Gap' is the very latest evaluation of this work. I want to thank NOMS Public Sector Prisons team, and Dr Stephanie Eaton, Head of Research at Amey, for co-commissioning this study, and Dr Jane Dominey, Dr Serena Wright and Ms Charlotte Dodds for their work and fascinating insights. I want to thank the Governors and officers at the two prisons where this study took place for their kind support during what is a very challenging time for prison staff. Most of all, I want to thank the service users who shared their stories, and the Pact staff whose outstanding resilience, skill and kindness never ceases to be a source of inspiration.

It is important with a report of this kind that readers are absolutely clear that Pact neither sought, nor obtained, any editorial influence whatsoever, as will be apparent in that it is a candid review and includes some challenges for us as a charity as well as for NOMS. The authors worked 'at arms length' and the findings and recommendations are those of the researchers from the University of Cambridge. I am pleased to see that several of the recommendations for Pact are about how we can improve as an organisation in how we support frontline Family Engagement Workers in their extremely challenging role. I am happy to report that thanks to an anonymous charitable foundation, we will soon be able to follow up on the recommendations to increase the level of clinical supervision and pastoral care for our Family Engagement Workers. I was also interested to read that the women in prison interviewed have been requesting more support in the form of relationship & parenting education. We have heard the same message, and thanks to NOMS, we have embarked on a new initiative to co-produce a new programme, drawing partly on our programmes for men, but based largely on the needs and experiences of the women in custody we are working with.

Thinking back to that first whistle-stop tour of prisons, I am delighted to reflect on how far we have come. It seemed to me then, as it does now, that if we really hope to reduce re-offending, and the risk of the next generation following in their parents' footsteps, we need policies and practice which strengthen family relationships, value good parenting, and encourage people to live in healthy, 'pro-social' relationships, as active, valued citizens. As both Winston Churchill and Nelson Mandela observed, you can see the state of a Society by looking in its prisons. We need to invest in families, in parenting, and in healthy relationships, to enable people to live better, crime free lives, not just in prison, but everywhere. As one prisoner said to me, 'It's got to change for me now. I can't really be a good dad and keep coming back in here.'

Andy Keen-Downs

Chief Executive, Pact Group





This report was commissioned and reproduced by Pact and sponsored by Amey and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). We would like to thank these organisations for their willingness to fund the study.

The research has been conducted independently and the views of the authors remain their own. Approval to undertake the work was obtained from the NOMS National Research Committee and the Institute of Criminology's Research Ethics Committee.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution to this evaluation made by Dr Ruth Armstrong at the Institute of Criminology and of the staff at Pact who were involved in planning the work and ensuring the success of the fieldwork (particularly Dr Summer Alston-Smith, Luke Carey and the managers and family engagement workers at the two fieldwork prisons). We are particularly grateful to the service users, in prison and in the community, for talking to us about family engagement work.

CONTENTS

1. Summary

2. The Context for the Review

2.1 Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)

2.2 The Family Engagement Service

2.3 Prisoners and their families

2.31 Family contact, resettlement and desistance

2.32 Family contact and well-being in prison

3. The Review Process

3.1 Aims of the review

3.2 The review methodology

3.3 Reflections on the review process

4. Review Findings

4.1 What are the key processes of the FES practice model?

4.11 What does the FES do?

4.12 How does the service fit with the wider work of the prison and how is it accessed by prisoners and their family members?

4.2 How are these linked to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance and well-being in prison?

4.21 Family engagement work and family contact

4.22 Parenting from prison

4.23 Child protection and safeguarding

4.24 Progress in prison, life after prison and desistance

4.25 Well-being in prison

4.26 Compliance with the regime/ behaviour in prison

4.3 Is there any evidence to suggest that different approaches are needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

4.4 Additional findings

4.41 Being a FES worker

4.42 Workload and resources

4.43 Prison without family engagement work

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 The key processes of the FES practice model

5.2 The link to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance and well-being in prison

5.3 Are different approaches needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

5.4 Bridging the Gap

6. References

7. List of Figures

8. Appendices

1. SUMMARY

- The Family Engagement Service (FES) is a specialised casework service based in prison which aims to build and maintain contact between prisoners and their family members. It does this through the work of Family Engagement Workers (FEWs) who support service users and liaise with a wide range of professionals, both within the prison and in the community. The FES is run by the charity Pact in partnership with the organisations POPS and NEPACS. FEWs are based in prisons across England and Wales.
- The purpose of the FES is to achieve positive outcomes for prisoners such as reduced re-offending, and improvements to well-being in prison and resettlement on release. The FES also aims to improve the life chances of prisoners' children.
- Since its inception in 2009, the development of the FES has been shaped by independent reviews and an economic study of its costs and social benefits.
- This review, commissioned by Pact and funded by NOMS and Amey, was asked to consider three primary research questions:
 - What are the key processes of the FES practice model?
 - How are these linked to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance and well-being in prison?
 - Is there any evidence to suggest that different approaches are needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?
- The review draws on 50 semi-structured interviews and analysis of existing quantitative data. Fieldwork for the review was conducted in two prisons: one women's prison and one men's prison. Interviews were conducted with prisoners, family members of prisoners, Pact family engagement workers, prison staff, and individuals working for voluntary sector agencies in the prison. These data were supplemented by information gathered from observation and informal interaction in the prisons.
- The findings from the review include:
 - The FES is dealing with complex family contact issues, often involving child protection concerns.
 - The FES encourages and enables prisoners with children to maintain their parenting role from prison.
 - The work of the FES is aligned with theoretically and empirically derived principles for desistance-focused practice. Improved family

relationships provide hope – both about progress through a long sentence and about life after release.

- The work of the FES improves the emotional well-being of service users and motivates compliance with the prison regime.
 - The process of family engagement work in the male and female estate is similar, but work with women has a more significant focus on children and liaison with children's services.
 - FEWs are skilled practitioners. Their knowledge, reliability and humanity secures the trust of service users and the respect of other professionals.
 - Without the FES some tasks would fall to other prison staff. Other work (and particularly work with family members) would not be done at all.
- The review makes these recommendations:
 - Pact makes an important and effective contribution to the training and education of other professionals (both inside and outside the prison). FEWs do this work well, but there is scope for a more consistent and systematic approach. In prison this could include: ensuring that all wings have up-to-date information about the service; Prison Listeners know about the service; staff from other voluntary agencies are familiar with the FES; and that Pact works closely with the visitor's centre. In the community, Pact is well-placed to provide training input to health and social care professionals. This work brings efficiency benefits (more appropriate referrals, less time spent giving information to individual prison staff or social workers) as well as the potential for improved outcomes for prisoners and family members.
 - The support and supervision of FEWs should reflect the emotional and practical demands of the role. Independent clinical supervision should be available. The reward and recognition systems for FEWs should take account of practice elsewhere in the sector.
 - The review identified that the efficiency of the FES depends on the integration of the service into the structure of the prison. This may be achieved in different ways in different prisons. However, the findings of the review suggest that these features in particular are important: FEWs are visible in and around the prison, by staff and prisoners; FEWs are easily able to share information and discuss casework with staff from Safer Custody and the Offender Management Unit; and family engagement work is championed at a senior level in the prison.
 - Pact should use campaigning and publicity opportunities to continue to make the case for child-friendly visits and for a less risk-averse use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for family contact purposes. Children's contact with their parents should be viewed as an entitlement for the child, not a good behaviour incentive for the parent.
 - Prisons should provide sufficient resources to ensure that family engagement work continues to operate in line with the principles for

desistance focussed practice (i.e. delivering a responsive and enabling service that builds social connections).

- Prisons should involve FEWs in strategies intended to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm. Pact should ensure that new FEWs receive sufficient training to equip them to work with prisoners who are suicidal or at risk of self-harm.
- The processes of family engagement work are similar for women and men, but the work often has different priorities. For example, joint work with outside professionals on child protection issues is a more significant task in women's prisons. A consistent, reliable, expert service delivered by staff who convey authentic care for and interest in service users is recommended in both the male and female estate.
- Parenting courses are relevant for both men and women in prison. Prisoners have limited contact with their children, but courses teach skills that improve parent/child interaction on visits and foster the prisoner's sense of themselves as a parent. Pact should pursue sources of funding for courses, so that these can be run more widely.



© Andy Aitchison / Pact

2. THE CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

2.1 Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) is a national charity which provides practical and emotional support for prisoners and their families, delivering services inside and outside prisons. These services include: a national helpline, prison visitors' centres, mentoring and befriending services, relationship and parenting courses, and campaigning and advocacy work (Pact 2016).

Historically, the charity can be traced back to the late 1800s and the development of the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society (CPAS). Initially, the work focussed on providing free medical care to prisoners and providing links with churches, schools, and employers. In the mid-twentieth century, the organisation's primary focus was supporting prisoners and their families; the Hope Housing Association was created in 1966 with the aim of ameliorating the appalling living conditions of some prisoners' families. In 1975 a dedicated self-help group (the Prisoners' Wives and Family Society - PWFS) was created by a group of prisoners' family members; the society set up a telephone helpline. During the 1990s, PWFS set up a visitors' centre at Pentonville prison and the Bourne Trust (the new name for CPAS) also opened visitors' centres (the first of which were at Wormwood Scrubs and Belmarsh prisons). Finally, in 2001, the two organisations (the Bourne Trust and PWFS) merged to form Pact as we know it today (Pact 2016). Since then, Pact has merged with other charities in the sector, such as the Prisoners' Families and Friends Service, Kids VIP and Time for Families, to continue and expand their services (Pact 2014/15).

Pact currently provides support to some 50,000 people annually with the aim of supporting 'prisoners and their families to make a fresh start and to minimise the harm that can be caused by imprisonment to offenders, families and communities' (Pact 2016). More specifically, the goals of the charity centre on ensuring that the children and families of prisoners have access to services which are appropriate and responsive to their needs. The charity facilitates positive family contact between prisoners and their families, supports prisoners' well-being particularly those vulnerable to suicide and self-harm, and aids the resettlement process of ex-prisoners. It is also involved in the development of restorative justice, and the promotion of community involvement in supporting individuals affected by imprisonment (Pact 2016). In this way, Pact works towards 'building stronger families and safer communities, reducing the risk of harm to prisoners and their children, removing barriers and increasing awareness, and influencing commissioning, policy and legislation' (Pact 2014/15:4).

2.2 The Family Engagement Service

The Pact Family Engagement Service (FES) is a specialised casework service based in prisons which aims to 'achiev[e] the very best outcomes for offenders and their families, to reduce re-offending and to safeguard and improve the life chances of

offenders' children' (Pact 2016). Since its inception in 2009 (in partnership with the charities NEPACS and Jigsaw) the FES has represented a core aspect of Pact's work as an organisation and is currently in operation in 30 prisons across England and Wales (Keen-Downs in Farrant 2013:2). The service has been positively evaluated by researchers from Roehampton University (Farrant 2013), University of East Anglia (Boswell et al 2010), and the New Economics Foundation (2012). These findings have encouraged the development of family engagement work as a commissionable service within prison (Keen-Downs in Farrant 2013:2).

The role of Family Engagement Workers (formerly Family Support Workers) was piloted in HMPs Belmarsh, Brixton, and Wandsworth by Pact and the charity Safe Ground. The pilot (funded by NOMS) ran for a 12-month period from 1 July 2009 till 30 June 2010. The role was also trialled by the charity Jigsaw, at HMP Leeds for an 8-month period from 1 August to 31 March 2010, funded by a grant from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education). Pact and Safe Ground then approached NOMS to explore the possible expansion of the Family Engagement Worker (FEW) role. The vision for the role was for a casework service for prisoners and family members that could also provide a useful link into existing parenting and relationship programmes such as 'Family Man' and 'Fathers Inside' (Boswell, Poland and Price 2010). FEWs can now be found across prisons in England and Wales working to achieve the best outcomes for prisoners and their families.

2.3 Prisoners and their families

On 17 June 2016, the prison population in England and Wales was 84,405, a 92% rise since 1993 (Prison Reform Trust (PRT) 2016). High reoffending rates amongst prisoners, and the negative effects of prison on their well-being are concerning. Evidence shows that prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending, as 46% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release, which rises to 60% for those serving sentences under 12 months (PRT 2016). Figures also show that rates of self-harm are at the highest level ever recorded, last year there were 32,313 self-harm incidents, an almost 40% rise in 2 years; women accounted for 23% of all incidents, despite representing just 5% of the prison population (PRT 2016).

However, research also shows that the family can act as a buffer to offset the negative effects of prison, and post-prison life, improving outcomes in the areas of desistance and well-being (Ministry of Justice 2013; Hairston 1991; Lösel, Pugh, Markson, Souza and Lanskey 2012; Taylor 2016). The role of families in increasing the likelihood of desistance (Section 2.2) and improving prisoners' well-being and compliance (Section 2.3) is discussed below.

Outcomes for children are important too. Around 200,000 children in England and Wales had a parent in prison at some point in 2009 (Ministry of Justice 2012) and the children of prisoners face problems of social isolation and financial disadvantage alongside increased risks of anti-social behaviour (Murray and Farrington 2008). Contact between prisoners and their children, including the chance for visits in a

family-friendly environment has the potential to improve the well-being of these children (Nesmith and Ruhland 2008).

Findings such as these point to the importance of services like the FES which set out to bridge the gap between prisoners and their family members.

2.31 Family contact, resettlement, and desistance

Desisting from crime or 'going straight' (Maruna 2001:48) is a complex, non-linear, and on-going process whereby individuals do not cease offending overnight, but rather begin to develop pathways away from crime, gradually building a new lifestyle (Bottoms 2014; see also: McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler and Maruna 2012, 2013). Bottoms and Shapland (2011) recognise that individuals encounter obstacles on the path to desistance which may cause them to relapse and partially set-back their efforts to desist, just as Wright (2015) has identified ways in which desistance plans may be 'frustrated'.

Whatever form the journey towards desistance may take, numerous studies recognise the important role played by the family unit; research suggests that strong family ties can reduce the likelihood of reoffending (HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation 2001; Home Office 2004, 2006; Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) 2002; Visher and Travis 2003). For example, the Home Office (2006) 'Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-Offending' recognises that supporting offenders' familial ties is key to their successful resettlement asserting that 'social and family links are at the heart of offender management' (p.29). May, Sharma and Stewart (2008) found that prisoners who receive visits and have strong family support upon release from prison are around 40% less likely to reoffend than those who have no familial support⁴ (see also: Ditchfield 1994; Holt and Miller 1972).

Using data from a longitudinal study, Brunton-Smith and McCarthy (2016) found a clear link between prisoners' relationships with family members and good outcomes in the areas of desistance and post-release employment. Their research supports the delivery of services such as the FES: 'Placing a greater emphasis on prison-based strategies to enhance family relations presents a real opportunity for measurable success in reducing reoffending' (p.16).

Theoretically, the role of the family in resettlement and desistance from crime can be explained using the idea of social capital; a concept concerned with the social connections between people (Bourdieu 1986). Although the conceptualisations of social capital vary, Halpern (2005) argues that most forms exist of three components: a social network, shared norms and values, and sanctions to maintain such norms. While social capital can be created in social networks such as community organisations (Putnam 2000), it can also be accrued from micro-level networks such

⁴ Not all families have a positive influence in the lives of prisoners, and aid their resettlement. For example, family members may also be engaged in offending behaviour, or, in some cases, be the root cause of the prisoner's offending (see: Leverentz 2006).

as the family (Mills and Codd 2008). Indeed, strong family relationships have the potential to be a significant source of social capital, which can provide practical and emotional support for individuals to cope with stressful life events, such as imprisonment (Jardine 2014). As Mills and Codd assert, 'the social capital inherent in some family relationships can be a potentially rich and sometimes untapped resource which may facilitate the process of resettlement through a combination of practical provisions and moral support' (2008:10).

Family members may assist practically in the immediate period after release from prison, for example: helping find employment and accommodation, aiding resettlement, providing financial support and improving the likelihood of desistance (Holt and Miller 1972; Visher and Travis 2003). Stable employment is understood to reduce the risk of reoffending by over a third (SEU 2002), through providing financial stability, creating pro-social relationships, and improving self-esteem (Mills and Codd 2008). In scenarios where former prisoners find their employment opportunities blocked or frustrated, the family can be instrumental in helping them find a job as they participate in different social circles, and may have wider access to opportunities (Farrall 2004).

The family is also a source of emotional support and resources helping individuals cope with the challenges of re-entry (Glaser 1964; Agnew 2005). Interaction with, and supervision by, family members may also encourage a sense of responsibility, reduce the influence of anti-social peers, and encourage the acceptance of formal support from professionals and agencies, aiding the desistance process (Mills 2005; Mills and Codd 2008).

Some scholars, drawing on research conducted with men, argue that family relationships act as 'informal social controls' that discourage offending (Shover 1983). Laub and Sampson (2003) and Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control posits that men released from prison with familial support are less likely to re-offend due to their obligations to their family, and their perception that the costs of crime are greater (Taylor 2016). As Sampson and Laub (1993:141) suggest, 'adult social ties... create interdependent systems of obligation and restraint that impose significant costs for translating criminal propensities into action'. Sampson and Laub (2003) also argue that forming positive relationships with family members or significant others can act as a 'turning point' in individuals' 'criminal careers', restricting their involvement in illicit activities and curtailing association with anti-social peers and therefore positively contributing to desistance from crime (Laub et al 1998; Warr 1998).

2.32 Family contact and well-being in prison

Research shows that imprisonment is a negative experience for the majority of prisoners; the loss of liberty, autonomy, security, material goods and services, and heterosexual relationships, are inherent aspects of the prison experience, described as the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes 1958). Consequently, this can exacerbate, or

produce negative thinking and behaviour such as depression, suicide ideation, self-harm and violence (Toch and Adams 1989; Corcoran 1994; Mills 2003).

However, social support from family may alleviate some of the hardships of prison life, and improve prisoners' well-being (Mills 2005). For example, prisoners' families may offset prisoners' 'deprivation of liberty' (Sykes 1958), which includes feelings of isolation and loneliness, through visiting their family member in prison (Mills 2005). Visitation provides an opportunity for prisoners to maintain familial relationships and keep in touch with the outside world (Bales and Mears 2008). Indeed, regular family contact and visitation has been positively associated with a prisoners' ability to cope with imprisonment, improving their well-being (Adams 1992; Casey-Acevedo and Bakken 2002).

In studying the impact of visitation on young offenders' mental health, Monahan, Goldweber, and Cauffman (2011) found that youths who received visits from parents showed a rapid decline in depressive symptoms compared with youth did not receive parental visits (see also: De Claire and Dixon 2015). Moreover, the effects were cumulative, so the greater number of visits received, the greater the decrease of depressive symptoms. Liebling (1992,1999) found that prisoners who had attempted, or were vulnerable to suicide were less likely to have contact with their families, receiving fewer visits and letters than other prisoners, leading them to feel isolated, worsening their well-being (see also: Liebling and Krarup 1993).

Research has also explored the association between prisoners' contact with family members and their compliance with prison rules and regulations (Gordon and McConnell 1999; Casey-Acevedo and Bakken 2002). Cochran (2012) found that that non-visited prisoners were more likely to misbehave in prison, and had a 66% lower probability of no misconduct than visited prisoners. Siennick, Mears and Bales (2013) found a pattern of decreasing rule-breaking behaviour ahead of a visit, but with a post-visit increase in misconduct.

It is argued that the reduction in prisoners' rule breaking behaviour is in part influenced by receiving family contact as it provides them with emotional support, a relief from isolation, and other deprivations of prison life, and access to valued others (Adams 1992). It is further argued that family contact reinforces prisoners' involvement with conventional social institutions, gradually developing 'stakes in conformity' (Laub and Sampson 2003), which could reduce subsequent misconduct (Harer 1995).

3. THE REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 Aims of the review

This work was commissioned by Pact to review the operation of the Family Engagement Service (FES) and identify ways in which the FES contributes to outcomes associated with reduced re-offending, order and well-being in prisons, and to outcomes likely to support the desistance process. Drawing on existing knowledge about family engagement work in prisons, the review set out to use interview, interaction and observation to document FES processes and examine the factors that are associated with positive outcomes for prisoners and their families.

The overall aim of the review was to provide a detailed analysis of the processes involved in the work of FES, identifying the ways that they contribute to the outcomes outlined above and suggesting options for developing and evaluating family engagement work in the future. This increased understanding of the mechanisms of family engagement work was intended to be of benefit to commissioners and service providers along with prisoners and their family members.

Pact, together with NOMS and Amey (the funders of the review), agreed three primary research questions at the outset of the review:

- What are the key processes of the FES practice model?
- How are these linked to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance and well-being in prison?
- Is there any evidence to suggest that different approaches are needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

3.2 The review methodology

The review draws on semi-structured interviews and analysis of existing quantitative data. These data were supplemented by information gathered from observation and informal interaction in the prisons. Interviews were conducted with prisoners, family members of prisoners, Pact family engagement workers, prison staff, and individuals working for voluntary sector agencies in the prison. The quantitative data takes the form of case records (kept on the Pact E-CINS system) and existing measurement tools (e.g. the Relationship Radar)⁵.

These methods were chosen on the basis that they were likely to generate relevant findings and were practical, manageable and ethical in the context of the review schedule. The timescale for the review was tight. The proposal for the work was agreed and funding secured at the end of 2015, with the submission date for the final report set at the end of August 2016. Final approval from NOMS National

⁵ Section 4.11 describes E-CINS and the Relationship Radar and discusses their contribution to the review in more detail.

Research Committee to allow research access into the two fieldwork prisons was obtained in February 2016.

The review began with a brief and focussed scoping study of the existing quantitative data. This initial analysis revealed that the Relationship Radar tool was not a useful source of data for the review, with very few of these having been completed in the two fieldwork prisons. Data from the E-CINS case management system did prove valuable, offering a comparative means for describing and exploring the differences between the FES as delivered at the two fieldwork prisons and more widely across Pact.

Fieldwork for this review was conducted in two prisons: one men's and one women's. One aim of the review was to consider the impact of gender on family engagement work and so collecting data in both the male and female estate was necessary. The two fieldwork prisons were selected by Pact on a number of practical grounds: length of contract for the FES at the prison; capacity of the Pact staff to accommodate the demands of the review; and travel time and cost for the researchers. An adult male prison (rather than a young offenders' institution) was selected to maintain a focus on the needs of adult prisoners.

The fieldwork was conducted by a team of three researchers (all female). The researchers spent time in the two prisons meeting the Pact staff and explaining the review, undertaking interviews and observing the work of the FES. One researcher also attended a meeting of the Pact family support group at Pact HQ in South London. Research interviews with family members were conducted by telephone.

The review began with a target of 48 interviews (across all participant groups and both prisons). This target was set taking account of the time available both for fieldwork and subsequent data analysis. The final total of completed interviews was 50. Figure 1 shows the interviewees distributed by group and by prison. Figure 2 provides more detailed information about the prisoners who participated in the review.

Figure 1: Interviewees broken down by group and by prison

	Men's Prison	Women's Prison
Prisoner	11	17
Family Member	4	2
Prison Staff	4	8
Pact staff	3	1
Total	22	28

Figure 2: Detail of Prisoner Interviewees

Women's Prison	Sentence length	Age	Ethnicity	Key Concern	Report Pseudonym ⁶
1	4 years or more	38	Black Caribbean	Children	Jenny
2	4 years or more	45	White British	Son	Jackie
3	Less than 4 years	29	White British Romany Traveller	Children	
4	Indeterminate/life	40	White British	Sisters and father	Sam
5	Indeterminate/life	36	White British	Children	Dawn
6	4 years or more	36	Black British	Son	
7	Less than 4 years	48	White British	Children	Lorna
8	4 years or more	25	White British	Children	Ella
9	Indeterminate/life	38	White British	Daughter	Sally
10	4 years or more	28	Mixed: White/Black African	Children	Leona
11	Less than 4 years	31	White British	Children	Becca
12	Indeterminate/life	37	White British	Children	
13	Less than 4 years	24	White British	Children	
14	4 years or more	51	White British	Adult children	Maureen
15	4 years or more	45	Asian/Asian British	Children	Aasmah
16	4 years or more	43	White Other (Greek)	Mother and siblings	Alex
17	Indeterminate/life	28	White British	Daughter	Hannah

Men's Prison	Sentence length	Age	Ethnicity	Key Concern	Report Pseudonym
1	Less than 4 years	29	Black British	Children	
2	Less than 4 years	28	Black Caribbean	Children	Dwain
3	Less than 4 years	54	White British	Partner	Dave
4	4 years or more	29	Black British	Child	
5	Less than 4 years	63	White British	Partner, children and grandchildren	Charlie
6	Less than 4 years	25	Black Caribbean	Child	Eugene

⁶ Research participants were given pseudonyms only if their comments are quoted directly in the report – this is why some participants do not have a pseudonym. The decision to use pseudonyms rather than numbers was made on the basis that this is a more humanising and less distancing way to write about people.

7	Less than 4 years	32	White British	Children	Frank
8	Less than 4 years	25	Black British	Nephews	
9	4 years or more	24	White British	Child	
10	4 years or more	24	White Other (Albanian)	Child	
11	4 years or more	38	White British	Family worried about him	Daniel

Given the short timescale sampling was purposive, setting out to capture the experience and perspectives of individuals in as diverse a range of circumstances as possible. Pact staff in each prison identified potential prisoner and prison staff interviewees using criteria provided by the researchers (see Appendix 1). The use of the criteria was intended to reduce the chance of bias in sample selection. Pact staff also identified family members who were willing to participate in the review.

The interview schedules developed for use in this review drew on concepts from existing research and themes identified in the preparatory phase of the study. They can be found at Appendix 2.

Interview data and fieldwork notes were coded and analysed through a form of adaptive theory (Layder 2013), combining inductive and deductive forms of reasoning. NVivo, a computer software package, was used to aid the analysis process. The research team sought to ensure the quality of the data analysis by working together to share their thoughts and test the reliability of emerging findings.

3.3 Reflections on the review process

This section highlights a number of practical points that arose during the review, explains how they were resolved and discusses potential implications for the review's conclusions.

Anonymity: In line with ethical research practice, all research participants were assured of anonymity. For example, the consent form for prisoners included the paragraph:

Any information you give in the interview will be used anonymously. Your real name will not be used at any time during this research and you (and your family members) will not be identifiable in the research report. Any personally identifying information will be stored securely at the university.

Similar undertakings were made to research participants from other groups. In writing the report, we have taken care to deliver on this guarantee. There are two challenges. First, it is hard to avoid identifying the FEWs as there were so few of them in the sample. We discussed this with them at the time of interview and, wherever possible in the report, have avoided linking their views to an identifying characteristic (e.g. gender, prison, seniority). Second, as in all studies that interview service users and staff, some of the views and opinions of prisoners may identify

them to the FEW who knows them well. On occasions this means that we have not included a specific contribution from an interviewee on the grounds that this would breach their confidentiality on a particularly sensitive point.

Prisoner interviews: For practical reasons arising from the size, budget and timescale for the review, the sample of prisoners was selected by the FEWs using the criteria provided by the researchers (see Appendix 1). Figure 2 shows that the sample contained variety in terms of age, ethnicity and sentence length, as well as gender. It included prisoners whose interactions with the FEW were concerned with relatively straightforward and practical matters, and others whose issues were of a more complex nature. It was beyond the scope of the review to interview prisoners who were not aware of the FES and, of course, the sample only contains people who were willing to meet a researcher and talk about the service. The FEWs booked interview slots and rooms. In the men's prison we interviewed people either on the wings or in legal visits. In the women's prison the offender management unit was the location of the interviews. Prisoners were motivated to come and talk about the FES, all but one prisoner attended for their booked interview.

Family member interviews: The views and experiences of family members are an important element of the review. However, as anticipated in the short timescale, we found it a challenge to recruit participants. One initial plan, to ask participating prisoners to identify key family contacts, proved impractical and inappropriate; prisoners would be reluctant to share family contact details and it would not have been right for us (or within the scope of the ethical agreement for the review) to approach children or vulnerable adults. In the end, the small group of family member interviewees was recruited in two ways: through contact with a FEW and by attendance at a Pact support group. These two approaches proved a productive way of contacting participants. We did not have time to advertise the review more broadly to family members, for example by providing information in the visitors' centre or introducing ourselves to people in the visits hall. These approaches could be used in future studies of this sort.

Family members were given information about the review (either by a FEW or at the support group meeting) and those who were interested in participation passed their contact details on to the researchers. A researcher then followed up this initial contact, gave more detailed information about the review and, after securing consent, arranged a telephone research interview. As is usual for research of this type, a number of people who expressed initial interest dropped out of the process and did not respond to messages from the researchers.

Prison staff interviews: Both prisons gave permission for prison staff to participate in the review and, indeed, senior members of staff in both prisons volunteered to participate explaining that work with families was an important issue. However, the number of prison staff we could actually speak with was inevitably constrained by operational demands, particularly in the men's prison. One day of fieldwork at the men's prison was affected by an unannounced establishment search and lock-

down; this led to some loss of research time with prisoners and prison staff, although it allowed plenty of time to interview civilian staff, including the FEWs, as they too had limited access to prisoners. The larger number of staff interviewees at the women's prison is, to a large extent, a consequence of the differences in regime between the two establishments.



4. REVIEW FINDINGS

This section begins by considering the three primary research questions before moving on to discuss the review's additional findings.

4.1 What are the key processes of the FES practice model?

4.1.1 What does the FES do?

One way of examining the work of the FES is to look at the records kept by family engagement workers. Pact makes use of two tools to record and measure this work. These are E-CINS, a case management system, and the Relationship Radar, a tool for measuring change in key areas of parenting and relationships.

Using E-CINS brings a number of benefits to Pact as an organisation. The database enables multi-agency working and data sharing with external agencies in a way that is not possible with prison systems or a paper recording system. It allows managers to monitor caseloads and support staff, and ensures a smooth transition for FES service users moving between prisons.

This review has drawn on data produced by E-CINS to describe the tasks undertaken by the FES in the two fieldwork prisons and compare this with other prisons where the FES is also operating. Each time a FEW undertakes a piece of work, this is recorded on E-CINS. The FEW selects from a list of prescribed measures to identify the nature of the work and then is able to enter free text detail about the intervention.

The first two graphs present the ten most common measures at the women's prison. Figure 3 covers the time period January to March 2016. Figure 4 shows a longer time period, beginning from the time that Pact began to use E-CINS in October 2014.

Figure 3

Women's Prison: Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Jan-March 2016

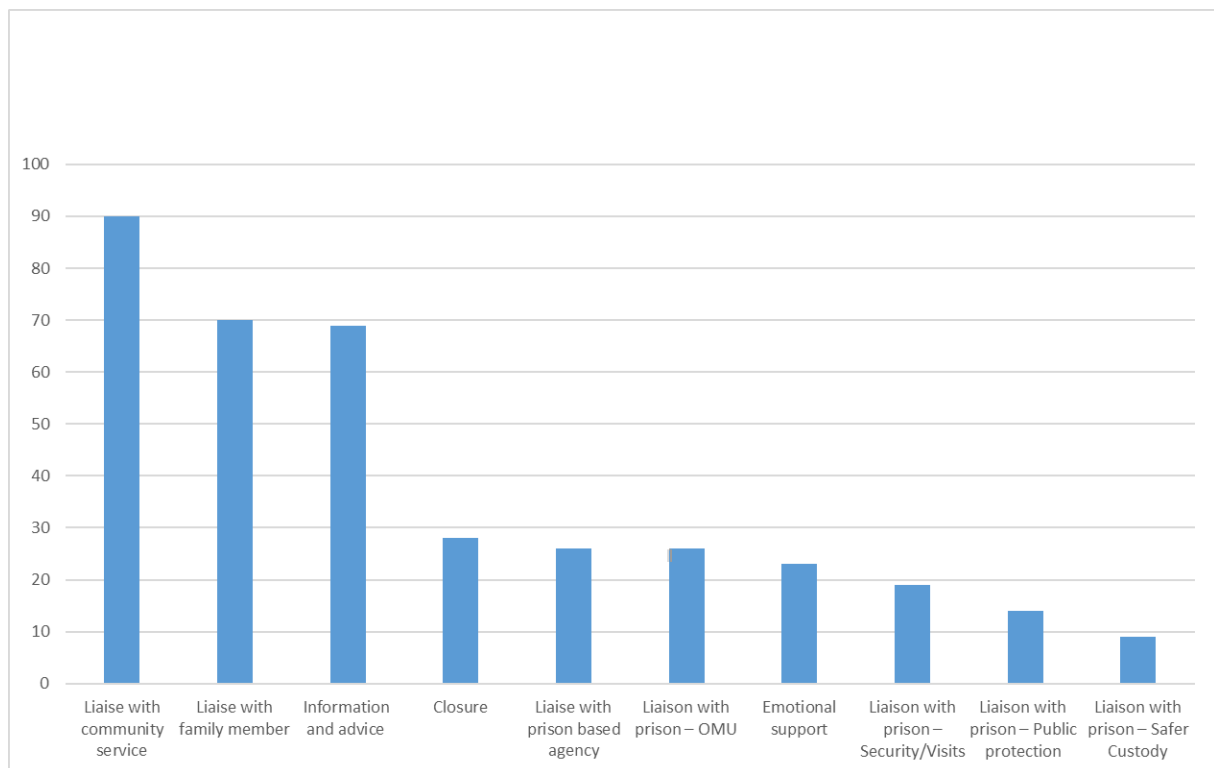
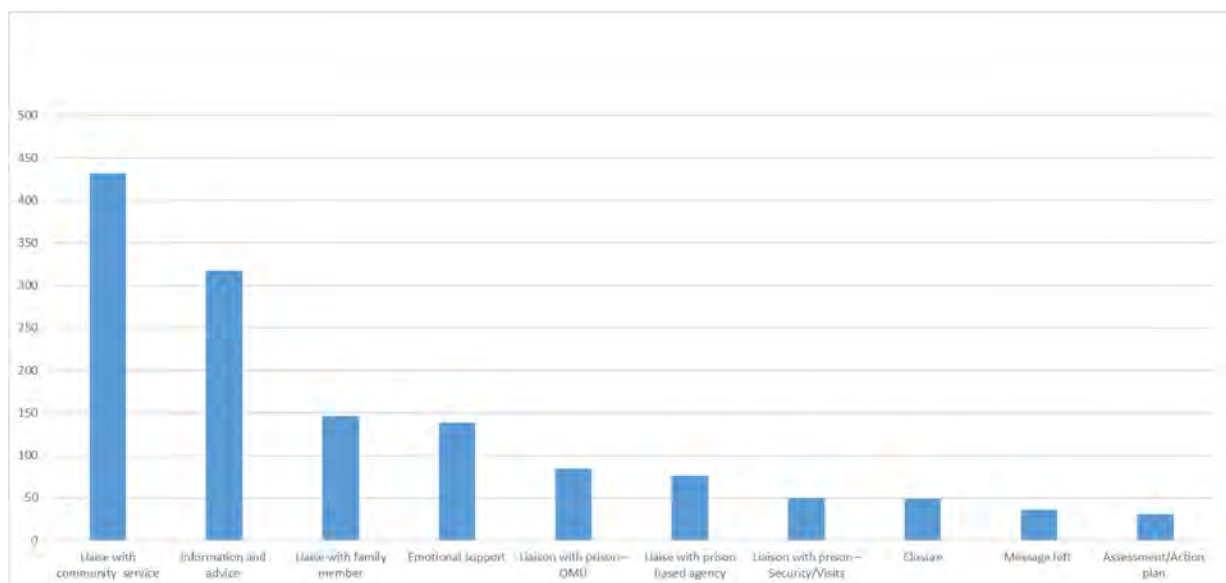


Figure 4

Women's Prison: Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Over Time



These graphs make clear that much family engagement work involves agencies working together. Many of the tasks undertaken by FEWs require communication, liaison and information sharing. At the women's prison the most commonly occurring

measure is liaising with a community service, usually about children, care arrangements and safeguarding. The graphs also highlight the significance of liaising with family members, showing the FEW acting as a bridge between the prison and the family. Joint work with other departments and agencies in the prison is important. In the women's prison, there are important and well-used links with the offender management unit (OMU) and with other prison based agencies (such as the visitors' centre and drug treatment services). The one-to-one work with prisoners involves the provision of information, advice and emotional support.

Figures 5 and 6 present similar data from the men's prison.

Figure 5

Men's Prison: Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Jan-March 2016

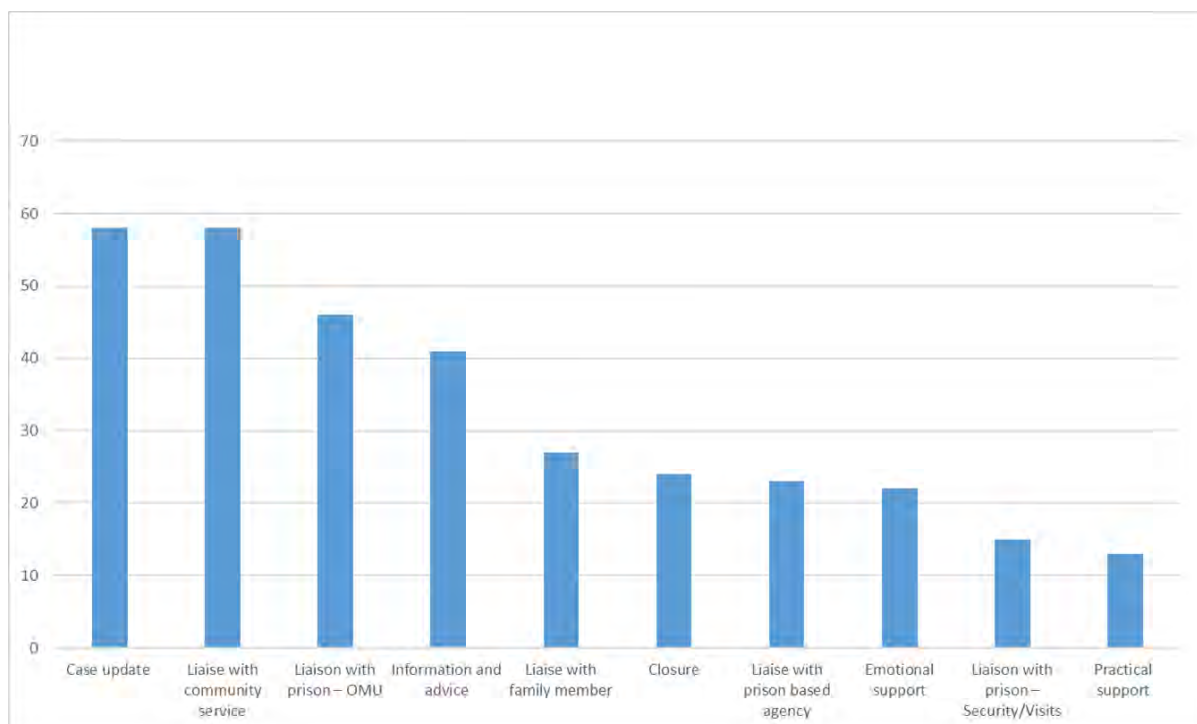
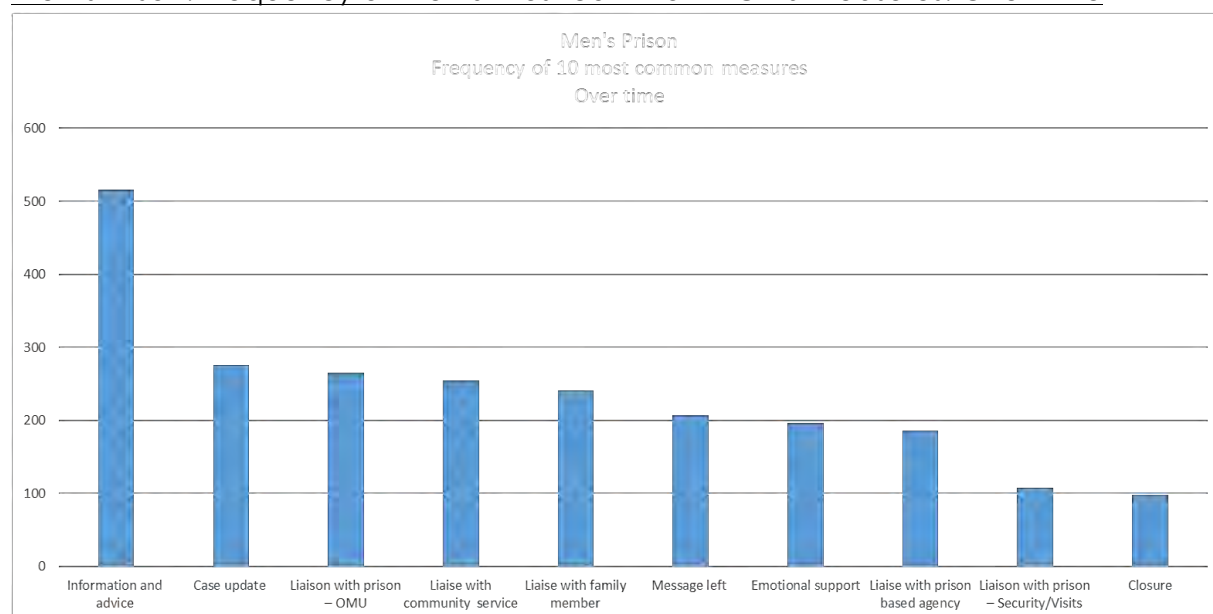


Figure 6

Men's Prison: Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Over Time



The position at the men's prison has much in common with that at the women's prison. The tasks of providing support and advice to prisoners, communicating with family members, and working jointly with other professionals inside and outside the prison are important in both prisons. In the men's prison, the balance of the work is somewhat in favour of providing information and advice over liaising with family members and providing emotional support to prisoners, although this pattern is less strong in the most recent data.

E-CINS offers practitioners a choice of 27 measures. A number of these measures are used infrequently by practitioners.

Figure 7

E-CINS measures used fewer than 10 times since the introduction of the system in October 2014

Measure	Frequency	
	Women's Prison	Men's Prison
Advocacy	*	2
Befriending	0	3
Case oversight	1	1
Family conference	9	5
Families Unlocked referral	0	5
Group intervention	0	*
Liaison with prison – public protection	*	4
Liaison with prison – safer custody	*	3
Non-attendance	*	1
Peer support	0	0
Practical support	5	*

Referral community service	2	3
Referral prison based agency	3	*
Review	6	0
Safeguarding alert	0	2
Safeguarding referral	0	6
*- measure used 10 times or more		

As with the graphs showing the most frequently used measures, these 'least used' measures show a number of common themes between the prisons. For example, interventions such as befriending, family conferencing and peer mentoring are not regularly used in either establishment.

Figure 7 also usefully highlights some differences in the ways that the FES is delivered. An important example of this is group intervention. This measure includes both the delivery of Pact's groupwork courses and also, for existing service users, the Storybook Dads initiative. Pact has developed a number of groupwork courses and delivers these at many prisons. The Family Literacy in Prisons (FLiP) course has run most recently at the men's prison. By contrast, such courses have not been part of the FES at the women's prison.

Storybook Dads (and Storybook Mums) is not a Pact project. It operates in many prisons and at the men's prison was facilitated by the FEWs. The purpose of the project⁷ is to maintain the bond between the parent in prison and children at home by enabling the prisoner to record a bedtime story on a CD and have it sent to the children. The recording of a Storybook Dads CD is entered on E-CINS as a group intervention if the prisoner is an existing FES service user. It is not recorded on E-CINS in other cases. The Storybook Mums project is available at the women's prison, but is run from the library and is not part of the FES.

Other differences, in both the graphs and the table, are attributable to the way that the FES fits with the other prison departments and agencies. For example, the close link between the FES and the OMU in the women's prison (see section 4.12) may lead to a pattern of less formal (but more informal) liaison.

The data from E-CINS also enables the men's and women's prisons to be compared with the other prisons where Pact provides the FES. Figure 8 shows this for the female estate and Figure 9 for the male estate. These graphs show the 'percentage share'⁸ for a number of measures at each fieldwork prison and compare this with the 'percentage share' for the same measure across all the FES prisons. The data for the men's fieldwork prison is compared with the data from all the male prisons, similarly for the women's prisons.

⁷ For more information about Storybook Dads and Storybook Mums, see <http://www.storybookdads.org.uk/>

⁸ For example: The men's fieldwork prison recorded 73 group interventions out of a total of 2,548 measures over time. This is a percentage share of 2.9%. Across all the male prisons with a FES a total of 17,589 measures were recorded, of which 1,575 were group interventions. This is a percentage share of 9.0%.

Figure 8

Women's Prisons: Comparison of use of measures between fieldwork prison and all prisons over time

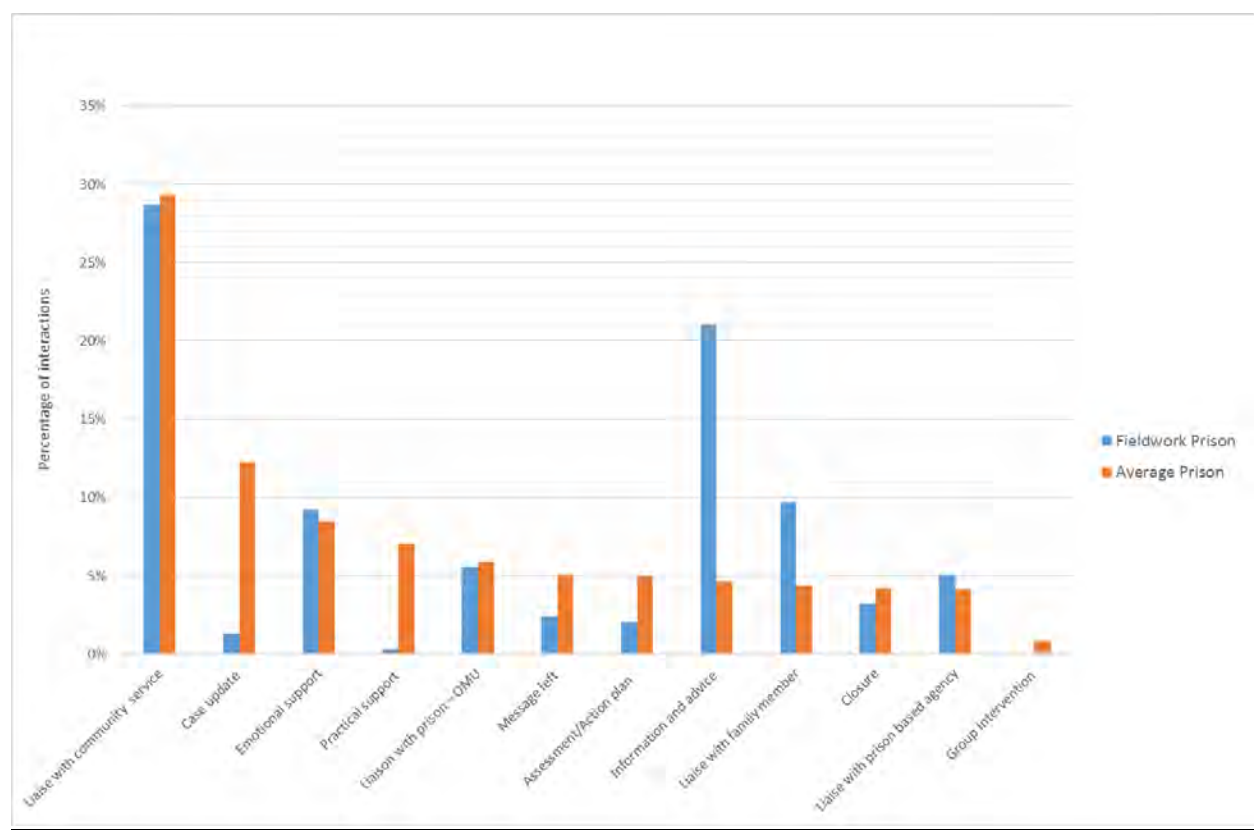
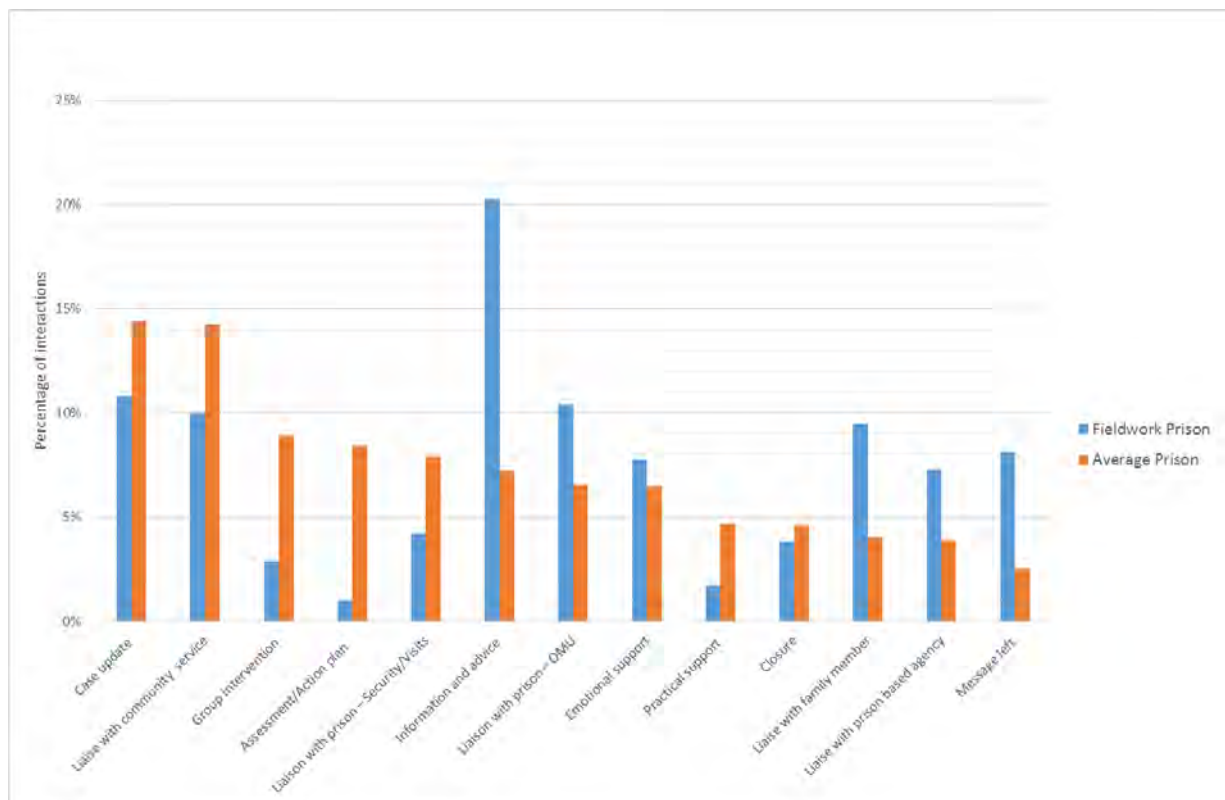


Figure 9

Men's Prisons: Comparison of use of measures between fieldwork prison and all prisons over time



These two figures suggest that practice models in the two fieldwork prisons are slightly different from those operated elsewhere. At the men's prison there is an emphasis on casework processes including: giving information and advice, providing emotional support, and liaising with family members. At the women's prison, again, giving information and advice is a prominent measure. Joint work with community services (usually Children's Services) is a key task at all of the women's prisons, but at the women's fieldwork prison this is complemented by more liaison with family members. The women's fieldwork prison also reports above average rates of liaison with prison based agencies and departments.

The E-CINS data provides a partial way of understanding the work of the FES. The first point to make is that practitioners make decisions about how to allocate a particular piece of work to a measure and this is likely to lead to differences in recording between individuals and staff members. An interaction with a prisoner may well contain elements of emotional support alongside practical support, or the provision of information and advice. FEWs report that a piece of work with a number of strands may be entered on E-CINS against a number of measures but, alternatively, could appear as a single entry linked to the 'case update' measure. Some of the observed differences between the prisons are attributable to such variations in recording practice rather than in an underlying difference in the delivery of the service.

A second point is that there are aspects of the FES that are not well captured by E-CINS. The review methodology - supplementing formal research interviews with data from informal interaction in the prison - identified a number of aspects of the FES practice model that merit specific mention. These are: breaking bad news, acting as a pro-social role model, educating other professionals, allowing for the expression of emotion and distress, and achieving outcomes for other agencies. These tasks form part of the process of family engagement work, occurring alongside the routine work of liaising, referring and providing information. Each of these are discussed further later in the report.

Alongside E-CINS (the case management system), Pact employ the Relationship Radar to measure change in key areas of parenting and relationships. No analysis of Relationship Radar data has been undertaken as part of this review because of the low number of radars completed at the two fieldwork prisons. In 2015, one completed radar was received by Pact HQ from the women's prison and five from the men's prison; these are among the lowest figures for prisons operating the FES. A total of 450 radars were completed across 16 establishments in 2015, with 10 prisons contributing fewer than 20.

The Relationship Radar has a number of strengths. It is built around factors shown empirically to have an impact in the area of relationships and parenting. It provides a consistent and rigorous basis for casework, with a focus on change. Used systematically it can provide data of value to commissioners and evaluators. A governor interviewed for the review cited Pact's commitment to evidence-based practice, structured work, and innovation as strengths of the organisation. He was impressed by the way that the outcomes measured by the Relationship Radar were aligned with the priorities of NOMS.

In practice, it is challenging to embed impact measurement tools in a way that practitioners find helpful and feasible while still generating systematic data for managers (Hedderman, Palmer and Hollin 2008). This was clearly an issue for the Relationship Radar at the two fieldwork prisons. FEWs did not dispute the importance of assessing service user need and measuring change, and they understood the importance of providing evidence of positive outcomes. They were, however, concerned about the time it took to complete the Relationship Radar, the importance of responding to the service user's agenda (rather than the agenda set by the tool) and the risk of highlighting needs that could not be met.

A particular issue about the Relationship Radar in practice was that, even at its first use, it required the gathering of sensitive information. As one FEW said, 'it asks a lot of personal questions that can bring up some really difficult topics very early on in the relationship when you barely know someone. You're asking really quite personal stuff, and it could bring out a lot of stuff that I don't feel that we as Pact workers are equipped or trained to be dealing with.' Another FEW, speaking of FES staff in general, argued 'they felt they hadn't been trained enough to facilitate [the radar], and so they had all these questions to ask the [service users] but felt like it would

leave them – like you open up a can of worms and then just leave them – just say ‘thank you for that information!’ and go...’

4.12 How does the service fit with the wider work of the prison and how is it accessed by prisoners and their family members?

The way that the FES fitted into the structure of the establishment was not the same in the men’s and the women’s prisons, and the review captured a number of differences between the two. These included: the physical location of the FES, the extent to which the work of the FES was known and understood by prison staff, the extent to which FEWs felt that their work was valued by the prison, and referral and access processes for prisoners.

In the men’s prison, the FES was located in an office on a wing. As a consequence, it was relatively easy for prisoners located on that wing to speak to a FEW and prison staff working on that wing were more likely (than their colleagues based elsewhere) to know about the work of the service. These benefits did not necessarily translate to other wings in the prison. The FEWs appreciated their ready access to prisoners and also explained that walking around the prison to meet people on other wings ensured that they became familiar figures, which in turn made them more approachable if someone needed support.

By contrast, the FES at the women’s prison was located within the offender management unit (OMU). This meant that the FEW here was integrated into the process of sentence planning, sometimes in a significant way. At the men’s prison, links between OMU and the FES were not close and sometimes tense. For example, one FEW recounted the bad feeling that arose in a difference of opinion between OMU and Pact about who should tell a prisoner that his children were to be adopted. At the women’s prison the position was very different, with both the FEW and OMU staff speaking positively about each other’s input.



© Andy Aitchison / Pact

Case Example: Governor at Women's Prison

This interviewee had been involved in the establishment of the FES at the women's prison. She had been the FEW's initial point of contact with the prison, but was now in a different role. She was very clear about the way that the specialist knowledge and expertise provided by the FES eased the workload of offender supervisors and improved the service provided to prisoners.

'I think it works very well because the offender supervisors are on board with it, and understand [the FEW's] role is filling a gap which has been there for a long time. So it was a huge sort of flood of relief when she was able to take up that role. And she is a massive support for their workload, you know, and their cases. And [she's] actually within the OMU department so she is able to feedback and talk to everybody about cases.... It's that sort of joint working that is really important in here, and it's working well.'

The close and effective working relationship between the FES and OMU at the women's prison was clear. The sample of staff interviewed here was weighted in favour of those with links with the OMU (four (of seven) staff interviewees were currently or formerly part of the OMU). The three staff from outside the OMU agreed that the FEW was well-known in the prison as the person who dealt with family liaison matters. They spoke positively about her personal style and the impact of her work on the well-being of prisoners. All three of them suggested that there was scope for the work of the FES to be better known in the prison.

The findings from this review highlight the difficulty, for a small project like the FES, of developing and sustaining a profile with prison staff across all grades and specialisms. A number of the strategies to achieve this - for example speaking at staff meetings, using posters and flyers, and getting involved in officer training - were already used by FEWs. In turn, the FEWs recognised the need to maintain a flow of up-to-date information to prison staff, to ensure that the work of Pact remained visible, and to communicate with newcomers to the establishment. One FEW did suggest that the variety of voluntary sector providers in the prison could lead to confusion about what services were available to prisoners and who was responsible for delivering them.

However, as one prison officer noted, inevitably prison staff were more likely to find out about the FES, and understand the significance of family engagement for prisoners, when it was directly relevant to their work: 'I think you probably don't really understand it until you need, or are working with someone who seeks, [the FEW]. Because I know before I - I mean, I only really got involved in knowing [the FEW's] job when the people I was working with needed her and sought her out'.

The senior prison staff interviewed for this review spoke positively both about the approach of Pact as an organisation and the professionalism of the FEWs working in their establishments. For example, one interviewee explained that, as an organisation, Pact brought practice grounded in evidence, were able to work in a way that complemented the priorities of NOMS and were willing to evaluate their input. He suggested that this was the mark of a good quality voluntary sector provider. The contribution of FES to achieving other prison objectives was illustrated by another interviewee who explained that, as a result of attending Pact courses or recording a Storybook Dads CD, a number of prisoners became involved with prison basic education programmes.

Looking to the future, one governor felt that there was scope for more strategic planning between the prison, Pact, and other voluntary sector organisations working in the prison, in order to develop family contact and liaison work.

The FEWs varied in the extent to which they felt that their work was valued by the prison. The FEW at the women's prison (who had worked in other roles at other prisons) was positive about her current experience. She felt the environment was conducive to her role, with good support and communication. The FEW felt that the work was supported at a senior level in the prison; senior managers expressed genuine interest in the service and provided practical help, for example ensuring that an additional telephone line was installed. The work of the FES also appeared well known and supported at a senior level in the men's prison, with a more mixed picture among wing staff and workers from other voluntary sector agencies. One FEW stated that support and respect needed to be earned in the prison, and that FEWs gained that by being consistent, reliable and visible. The work of Pact was generally well-supported by prison staff, and the positive reputation of the FES was a consequence of the work done by current and former FEWs.

The review also suggests some differences in the way that prisoners accessed the FES at the two prisons. For the men, one consequence of the location of FEWs on the wing was that initial interactions with the FEW were more likely to be informal. FEWs also used their presence on the wing to encourage prisoners to consider attending a Pact course or record a Storybook Dads CD. Some of these informal conversations or referrals to courses led onto individual casework and a greater degree of emotional support. Two (of eleven) male prisoners explained that they sought out the FES having heard about it at their prison induction.

Women prisoners' involvement with the FES usually began with an enquiry about a specific problem. Four (of seventeen) female prisoners knew of the work of Pact as a result of their time in another prison and sought out the service on arrival at their current establishment. Another four explained that they were referred to the FES by a staff member: two mentioned other voluntary organisations in the prison and two cited their offender supervisor. Three women (and one man) specifically mentioned the importance of personal recommendation from another inmate. This

recommendation was important in confirming, for prisoners, the quality of the service and the competence of the staff.

The review found broad agreement between prisoners and staff that the FES was sufficiently easy to access. At both prisons, information about the FES was provided at induction and systems existed for prisoners to make an application to see a FEW. FEWs were identified as approachable and visible, and they had a good reputation with other prison staff for following up on referrals and enquiries. One prison officer said, access is 'reasonably easy – [the prisoners] come to me and I'll try and phone [the FEW]. If she's not at her desk, I'll leave a message or email. And she always gets back to me, or she'll pop over to the wing, depending on what the issue is'.

The FEWs offered a mixed assessment of the ease of access to the service. A couple were positive, explaining that it was helpful that prisoners could contact them in a variety of ways: by application, at induction, by urgent referral from an officer, and by informal approach. Two FEWs offered a more nuanced opinion, pointing to the limitations caused by the size of the prison and volume of work. At the men's prison, prisoners based on the same wing as the FEWs could knock on the office door while those on other wings had to wait for a response to a formal application. The work of the FES was well-advertised but it could still be hard for prisoners to access support: 'That's more because I think there's a lot of prisoners and not a lot of us'.

Despite interviewees feeling that the FES was well known in the prison, many suggestions for improvement to the service were about increasing publicity and raising its profile, particularly with prison officers. Prison staff thought that their colleagues needed regular reminders about the work of Pact, perhaps provided at staff meetings or through providing short information sessions. As one governor explained, officers need to know 'why they are unlocking the door for Pact'. Both prison staff and Pact staff were aware of the risk of generating a demand for services which could not be met with the existing resources. This point was summed up by a prison officer at the women's prison: 'I suppose you could advertise what the role is a bit more. But the trouble is then whatever Pact worker there is would be swamped! [...] I mean, everybody's got issues in their life, but this lot of women -she would get a queue at her door'.

Family members learned about the FES in a number of ways. In the majority of cases, the FEW initiated contact with the family member following on from a meeting with the prisoner. This contact would be principally by telephone, although FEWs also used email for communication and social visits as an opportunity for face-to-face meeting with family members. Sometimes the link was made in the opposite direction; a family member with a concern would contact the prison and be passed through to the Pact service. The FES was advertised directly to family members by information available in the visitors' centres at both prisons.

4.2 How are these linked to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance, and well-being in prison?

4.21 Family engagement work and family contact

Facilitating family contact and increasing the involvement of family members with prisoners, while not the sole purpose of the FES, is the key aspect of the work. Some of this work is practical and short-term, overlapping with the service provided to family members by visitors' centres. It involves giving advice and practical information about when to visit, how to visit and what to expect.

However, much of the family contact work is sensitive and poses a greater challenge to the skills of family engagement workers. It involves rebuilding relationships, negotiating longstanding difficulties, and balancing the competing needs of the prisoner and the family members.

Case Example: Sally and her daughter Kiera

Sally is serving a life sentence. Her children had been removed and adopted many years ago, before her offence and imprisonment. Two years ago, Sally's (now adult) older daughter Kiera traced Sally and wrote her a letter. The FEW supported Sally through the process of replying to Kiera and then meeting her (for the first time in 16 years) on a visit.

Sally and Kiera now keep in touch by telephone. For Sally, the contact with her daughter is welcome but far from straightforward. Kiera has a young son and lives in hostel accommodation. Sally appreciates the support that both she and her daughter receive from the FEW. 'I feel like I'm a proper Mum to my daughter and my grandson. I'm supporting her and listening to what she has to say.'

Kiera approached the re-union with her mother feeling very unsure. She was full of praise for the way that the FEW advised her, provided 'stability and comfort' before and after her initial visit, and responded by email with 'brilliant answers' to concerns and worries.

The renewed contact with her mother was a largely positive step. It was hard to come to terms with the lost years of contact and Sally's offence, but 'since the contact got flowing and stuff, it was actually really nice to find out what she's done over the years and how she's ended up where she's ended up.'

Case Example: Michael

Michael, a male prisoner, was concerned about the poor behaviour of his teenage son – who was misbehaving badly at school and causing considerable problems for his mother (Michael's former partner). After careful planning, the FEWs convened a meeting at the prison allowing the family to discuss various options. The meeting was held in legal visits, a quieter and more formal venue than the main visits hall. Both FEWs (a male and female worker) attended, facilitating discussion and, in the words of one FEW, enabling opinions to be aired 'in a civilised way'. The outcome of this work was the decision that the son would move to live with family members outside the UK, giving him a fresh start in a more positive environment. The meeting enabled the boy's family to reach a decision that everyone understood and was happy with. The FEW understands that the move has been a positive one.

Family members spoke positively of the impact of the FES on the quality of family relationships. They pointed to the difficulty of communicating with someone in prison; communication problems were caused by lack of knowledge about the prison regime, concerns (on both sides) about people's well-being, an unwelcoming environment for visits, and hassles about making phone calls. FEWs helped overcome these hurdles, closing the gap between the family member and the prisoner. One family member (the mother of a young man) described the Pact 'Building Bridges'⁹ course as having a positive impact on her relationship with her son.

It is important to note that family contact is not always beneficial. It may be detrimental to the prisoner's well-being or it may be harmful to a family member. Part of the family engagement role involves making judgments about whether and how to support family contact. FEWs support prisoners through the ending of family relationships and manage their expectations about family contact. These judgments are made drawing on the assessments of other professionals working with the family along with the information gained from the prisoner and the family by the FEW. For example, the FES is involved in arranging and supporting final visits to prisoners before family contact is lost through adoption or deportation. FEWs work with prisoners to produce letters and other documents to be placed in memory boxes for children who are to be placed in adoptive families.

⁹ The Pact Building Bridges programme is designed to strengthen the relationship between young people in prison and their parents. The interviewee's son was not in the fieldwork prison when the two of them participated in the course.

4.22 Parenting from prison

A significant theme from the review is the way that the FES encouraged prisoners with children to maintain and improve their parenting role from within prison. For prisoners the sense that they were able to continue as a Mum or a Dad was important, both as a source of satisfaction and a way of easing feelings of guilt and frustration.

The FES supports parenting from prison in a number of ways: by facilitating family contact (as discussed in the previous section), by running parenting courses, and by enabling prisoners to take part in the Storybook Dads scheme.

On some occasions, the family contact that is possible at a routine visit or through a standard telephone call does not allow the prisoner to act as a parent. FEWs understood this and were able to find ways of providing the prisoner with the resources needed to meet their parental obligations. For example, this might include allowing and supervising additional phone calls to older children facing particular difficulties, or negotiating with prison security to allow special arrangements for visits. The FES casework model allowed for an individualised approach to imprisoned parents.



Case Example: Lorna

Lorna is serving a determinate sentence. Her daughter (an older teenager but still under the age of 18) has a chronic medical condition. The daughter has always managed this condition, discussed her treatment and symptoms, and attended medical appointments with her mother. Both Lorna and her daughter wanted the daughter to be able to visit the prison on her own to spend time with her mother privately – children visiting prison must usually be accompanied by an adult. The FEW made this possible by meeting the daughter outside the prison, escorting her into the prison and then leaving her with her mother, before returning her to the care of her father (Lorna's husband) outside the prison at the weekend.

The FEW has also helped Lorna maintain her role as an engaged parent by liaising with Lorna's child's school. This liaison includes, for example, sending and receiving emails about the support that the school is providing to the child.

Lorna applied for childcare ROTL¹⁰ to enable her to attend a hospital appointment with her daughter (at the point that her daughter was making the transition from the paediatric to adult clinical team). However, this application was rejected on the basis that Lorna was not her daughter's sole carer.

Pact does not run parenting courses in all prisons that have a FES. No parenting courses were offered at the women's fieldwork prison, either by Pact or any other provider. The FEW explained that the current education provider in the prison had ceased to offer this option on the basis that the priority was instead to be given to basic skills (specifically English and Mathematics). Furthermore, as prisoners were not actively engaged in parenting, such courses were seen as unimportant. The FEW disputed this view, arguing that parenting education was much needed for women in the prison. She argued that input in areas such as listening to children and understanding the importance of play led prisoners to behave 'better' with their children on visits.

The Pact workers at the men's prison were involved in delivering the Pact FLiP sessions. Evaluating the delivery and outcomes of relationship and parenting courses

¹⁰ Release on Temporary Licence. There are a number of types of ROTL. Some parents are eligible for special childcare ROTL, but owing to recent changes in conditions for temporary release, this is unlikely to be granted if an individual is not usually the sole and primary carer of the child, or where there is more than eight months remaining to be served on a sentence.

is outside the scope of this review¹¹, but the importance of FLiP as a means of getting prisoners thinking about their role as fathers was a strong emerging theme. FLiP concludes with a special family visit day at which participants are able to join with their children in a range of arts, crafts, and reading and writing activities. While many prisoners signed up for FLiP solely in order to qualify for this extended visit, many of them spoke of the unanticipated value of the course in teaching them about the contribution they could make to their children's education. The sessions also provided the opportunity for reflection about the qualities of a good father and a chance to challenge assumptions about the masculine role. For example, FLiP encouraged discussion about whether time or money was the most valuable contribution a father should make to his family. One FEW explained that group members sometimes began the course excusing their offence by saying: 'I did what I did to provide for my family, so I'm a good father because I provided for my family.' FLiP offered the chance to think about life in a new way.

Case Example: Dwain

Dwain is serving a determinate sentence. He is in his late 20s and describes himself as having a big family, with a partner, parents and a grandmother. He reports no problem with family contact. He speaks to family members on the telephone and receives regular visits. Dwain has been to prison in the past and acknowledges that, prior to this sentence, he made a good amount of money from criminal (drug-related) business.

Dwain has five children. He heard about the FLiP course from the FEW – the Pact office is on the wing where Dwain is located.

Dwain reflected on the way that his perspective on parenting was changing. Having previously focussed on getting money to buy material goods, he was now thinking about the importance of spending time with his children. Talking about his sentence, he said:

'This here, it's given me a new look on aspect (sic) of life - that it's not all about money and that life - trying to give them everything. As long as you're there for them, that's more important..... having time for them really.'

The Pact parenting courses have the potential both to improve the way that prisoners interact with their children on visits and change the way that prisoners think

¹¹ The FLiP course is currently being evaluated by Prof Peter Clough and Prof Cathy Nutbrown at the University of Sheffield. For more information, see <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/staff/academic/nutbrown>

about their parenting role on release. It would be good to offer these across all prisons with a FES.

The Storybook Dads scheme fulfilled a similar purpose, giving men a small practical way of being a parent. The FEWs ran this scheme, booking time with interested prisoners, assisting them with the recording (including, for some individuals, helping with the reading) and then arranging for the production and delivery of the CDs. Much of the business for Storybook Dads was generated by word of mouth, as prisoners spoke to each other. The FEWs found that prisoners were able to approach them about the practical task of making a CD as a first step towards disclosing more emotional or complex issues about their role as a parent.

Inevitably there is much that parents in prison are not able to do and, for many prisoners, this is associated with considerable guilt. Prisoners spoke about feeling bad about leaving other people to care for their children, being helpless to respond to children who were behaving badly, it being hard for family members having to deal with the demands of everyday life, and the worry of the long term impact of their imprisonment on their children. This sense of guilt is not unique to the parent in prison - parents and carers outside of prison also expressed guilt about subjecting their children to the prison experience. Katy, who had been visiting her partner in prison since their children were very young, said 'the guilt towards your children is unreal'.

4.23 Child protection and safeguarding

Many of the tasks of the FES have an element of child protection and safeguarding or involve inter-agency work with Children's Services departments. FEWs act as an information conduit between social workers, the prison, the prisoner and family members in the community. They make judgments about how to manage situations where there are concerns about risk and harm. They support prisoners who have an on-going and possibly long-term relationship with social workers, foster parents, lawyers and guardians.

In this review, safeguarding work and liaison with statutory child protection agencies was important in both the men's and the women's prison. However, the nature of the work in each prison was subtly different. A number of the female prisoner interviewees had been the sole carer of their children at the point of their imprisonment; this was not true for any of the male prisoners. The FEW at the women's prison also had experience of supervising contact between prisoners and children in cases where contact was permitted but, as a consequence of the risks that the mother was deemed to pose, subject to conditions. For example, in one case, a prisoner was allowed to speak to her child on the telephone but only if the FEW listened to one side of the call and the child's grandparent supervised the other.

The FEW also had a role supporting the carers of prisoners' children, particularly in cases where the relationship between the mother in prison and the carer in the community was strained.

Case Example: Lynn and Hannah

Lynn has been caring for her niece's daughter for 10 years - since the child was a baby. There is a special guardianship order in place. Lynn's niece, Hannah, is serving an indeterminate sentence.

The relationship between Lynn and Hannah can be tense. Hannah's daughter does visit her mother in prison but these visits have often been difficult. The FEW has worked closely with both women, facilitating a visit for both of them along with the social worker responsible for the guardianship. Lynn finds the FEW a calming presence in stressful interactions.

Hannah acknowledges the difficulties in her relationship with her aunt and her daughter, along with her own problems dealing with anger and authority. She felt that the FEW had changed things for the better: 'Since coming here and [the FEW] being here, we've managed to get somewhere with it. Like, I'm now in contact with my daughter, a lady's brought my auntie in and we've had a meeting, so it's moving quite well at the moment'.

At the men's prison, contact with social workers often involved clarifying whether there were plans or orders in place preventing the men from contacting their children. A FEW described the role as 'trying to find the middle ground' between prisoners who may have an optimistic view of the situation with their children, and social workers who often assume that prisoners 'must be bad Dads'. The FEW explained that the role required careful weighing of the evidence from records, reports and interaction with the prisoner before making a decision about whether it would be appropriate to advocate on behalf of the prisoner for increased contact with his child. Some stories could have happy endings: the FEW described being approached by a prisoner who had not seen his daughter for 7 or 8 years. A quick discussion with Children's Services established that there were no restrictions on the prisoner's contact with the child who had been expressing a desire to find her father and see him again. In this case, within the space of a few weeks, the FEW had facilitated a visit which ended several years of separation.

FEWs also advocated on behalf of grandparents in cases where the imprisonment of a parent led to a breakdown in communication between family members. For example, mothers in the community were sometimes unwilling to support contact between their children and their ex-partner's parents when the ex-partner was sent to prison. In some cases, FEWs supported grandparents in their negotiations with social workers about the arrangements for the care of the children.

Liaison with social services did not always lead to the desired outcomes for parents or grandparents; however, the FEWs argued that prisoners appreciated having

clarity about their situation as parents and information about the actions that they were allowed to take (for example, send birthday cards to their children, add items to a memory box or receive a photograph).

Case Example: Frank

Frank is serving a determinate sentence and was expecting to be released a few weeks after the research interview. He asked the FES for help to contact his children. He said that he had not seen them properly for four and a half years. Frank could not read or write – and was not sure whether he was legally prevented from getting in touch with the children. Frank's relationship with his ex-partner was poor and Frank acknowledged that his prior violence towards her, offending, and alcohol and drug use had all contributed to their difficulties.

The FEW assisted Frank in a number of ways. She established that there was no injunction or order in place that prevented Frank from seeing his children. She helped him through the process of writing letters to his children – a task that Frank did not think he could ask of anyone else in the prison. 'I don't want someone writin' a letter for me and I got no clue what they're writin' in that letter [...] And it's goin' to my kids. Whereas I know [the FEW] ain't gonna be puttin' no dodgy crap in there [...] I know that letter's gonna be safe.'

Frank also spoke unequivocally about the emotional support that he received from the FEW, explaining that this was a relationship in which he could be genuine about his feelings and open about his distress. 'I've opened up to her. I've been honest with her. I haven't given her any bullshit. That's helpful as well - bein' honest I think [...] And I don't like it in some ways. I'd rather bottle it up. But that's when I started getting' into trouble.'

Frank's ex-partner does not want him to see the children and, on his release from prison, Frank is likely to have to take legal action to pursue his hope of seeing the children regularly. However, as a result of the FES work he is considering this action and feels that the chances that he will behave impulsively and irresponsibly are reduced.

'[The FEW] has done everything possible for me, to help me, so when I'm released, if I do go round there [to see the kids] I know I'm not gonna be arrested.'

FEWs offered different views about the extent to which social workers understood the prison context and were interested in supporting prisoners to be better parents. Social workers value family engagement work in cases where this helps achieve childcare plans and tasks. They respond positively to the existence of a named professional within the prison, one who is able to communicate directly with the imprisoned parent and share information. The FEW in the women's prison reported that social workers would generally call back or email; they appeared to welcome information about arranging visits and about the input that the prisoner was receiving (for example drug or psychological treatment). Through the FEW, social workers were able to speak directly to the prisoner, talking about aspects of the care plan for the children.

Liaison with social workers is not always straightforward. Problems arise for FEWs when Children's Services departments are not able to respond in a timely manner, perhaps as a result of the allocated social worker leaving, being off sick, or juggling the demands of a high workload. The FEW in the women's prison described the frustration caused for mothers in prison and family members in the community when, for example, social workers were unable to respond quickly enough to enable a child to come to the prison for a family visit day.

The relationship between FEWs and Children's Services is more complicated in those cases where working with the prisoner is not a priority for the social workers and, particularly, in those cases where other people (professionals and family members) around the child are not positive about the prisoner continuing to be a parent. The review findings suggest that this issue arose more frequently in the men's prison, with FEWs here encountering a more negative attitude from social workers, a greater sense of 'them and us' or suspicion (from social workers) that the FEW was 'on the prisoner's side'.

The FEWs were clear that it was not their job to take on responsibility from the social worker for assessing the parent and making decisions about the care of the child, but rather to provide information and act as a link between professionals on the outside and the parent in prison. One FEW gave the example of advocating for a father, in prison for non-violent offences, who was being refused the right to be heard at meetings about his children's care plans. This was, in part, because of the incorrect assumption that he was serving a sentence for domestic violence. Another commented on the on-going lack of knowledge among some social workers, for example about whether children are able to visit prison. The FEW reflected, 'it happens every day, all over the country, children go into prison. How can you not know that as a social worker?'

The non-statutory status of family engagement work was identified as a limitation by some staff interviewees. Inter-professional work with social workers, probation officers, and others in the community depended on building rapport and gaining trust, rather than on a system of rights and obligations. FEWs are in a less powerful position than other key professionals working with prisoners' children.

Pact has provided FES placements for social work students as part of their professional training. The review findings suggest that this is a positive and fruitful strategy, although it does make demands on Pact staff in terms of supervision, assessment and support. Newly qualified social workers with experience of the FES begin their careers with a sound understanding of the complexity of parenting from prison, which they will be able to share with colleagues. Additionally, Pact staff in the prison learn from someone with knowledge and experience of the statutory sector, child protection and safeguarding.

4.24 Progress in prison, life after prison, and desistance

The review was asked to consider how the key processes of the FES practice module were linked to positive outcomes in the area of intentions about desistance. The findings suggest that there are a number of ways in which the impact of family engagement work is in line with theoretically and empirically derived principles for desistance-focussed practice (see: McNeill et al 2012). The FES is successful at: building and sustaining hope (in the present and for the future); recognising and fostering new positive identities; and developing social capital. These three points are examined further in this section. A longer term research project would be required to measure the impact of the FES on re-offending rates over time.

The link between improved family relationships and an increase in hope for the future emerged strongly in the review. For some prisoners, this hope provided the motivation required to engage with their sentence plan, attend courses, seek therapy, and aim to progress towards release. This motivation is particularly important for long determinate and indeterminate sentenced prisoners¹².



© Andy Aitchison / Pact

¹² Five (of seventeen) of the prisoners interviewed in the female prison were serving indeterminate sentences and another eight were sentenced to four years or more. The sample of male prisoner interviewees had fewer long-term prisoners with four (of eleven) serving four years or more.

Example: Sam

Sam is serving a life sentence and is now some years past his tariff. He lost contact with his sisters in childhood, before he came into prison, and recently traced them with the help of the Salvation Army.

The FEW has worked closely with Sam to help him re-establish the contact with his sisters. Sam was fearful of rejection, because of his offences, imprisonment, and status as a transgender individual. The FEW provided practical help with phone calls, letters and information. She also provided Sam and his family members with emotional support. It is still early days for these family relationships,

but the current position is positive. Sam's sisters are now in touch not just with Sam, but with other family members too. The FEW helped organise a special prison visit at which several members of the family spent time with Sam and with each other.

Sam's prison offender manager (a probation officer) observed that this family contact had changed Sam's world view. He was now looking outside prison and motivated to progress. He has applied for parole and is looking forward to a move to open conditions and a prison nearer to family members.

As a result of family engagement work, Sam has gone from being alone to having a number of family members in his life. Sam describes this experience as 'weird and exciting' as well as 'overwhelming'. He speaks extremely positively of the work of the FEW. The family contact has 'filled a hole in my heart.'

Family engagement work provides hope to people many years from release. It can also enable people to be hopeful about their prospects on leaving prison, particularly when it removes a real or perceived obstacle to a settled and stable life.

Case Example: Jackie

Jackie is nearing the end of a determinate sentence for a violent offence. Her son (now a young adult) had chosen to have nothing to do with her throughout her sentence. Jackie had been distressed by this lack of contact and anxious about her son's well-being and circumstances. Over the last few months, the FEW has begun to rebuild the relationship between Jackie and her son. The two of them now speak on the phone and exchange cards.

On release, Jackie is required to live in supported housing away from her home area. She explains that, now she is in touch with her son, she can feel positive about this plan and focus on tasks like finding work. Without the work of the FEW, she would have left prison unable to settle, with the fears and uncertainties about her son at the forefront of her mind.

Another strength of family engagement work is its capacity to foster and support alternative pro-social identities. For both men and women (as described in Section 4.22) the FES rebuilt and sustained their identity as parents. For example, in the men's prison parenting courses enabled prisoners to think in a new way about being fathers and talk about things that they wanted to do differently on their release from prison. Eugene described his own childhood as a 'pass the parcel' experience with no positive father figure. He explained that he wanted to provide a better environment for his baby son, and had chosen to attend the FLIP course in order to learn and improve as a father.

The Storybook Dads initiative also reinforced men's identities as fathers. For some prisoners it allowed for the continuation of the relationship that they had enjoyed with their children prior to their imprisonment. One man commented: 'I used to read to him before bed anyway, so the Storybook Dads was perfect because in a way I could still read to him before bed without being there.' For other prisoners, reading aloud to their children was an addition to their parenting skills.

Family engagement work also builds social capital; it supports desistance in very practical ways. Improving the quality of family contact increases the chance that potential offers of accommodation, employment, and social contact become real. However, families sometimes need support and information before they can provide practical help to people leaving prison. One FEW explained how she worked with a father who was able to provide short-term accommodation for his daughter, but only with the knowledge that a place in a hostel was available for her within days and that the prison would release her with sufficient medication for her immediate needs.

Family members recognised that it was hard for people to re-adjust to life after prison. Katy explained that her partner's time in prison and then transition from custody to the community had been very hard. She felt that the FES had been important in sustaining their relationship. She said: 'It's just a massive breakdown in your relationship. We're just getting back on track now and he's been out almost 6 months'.

The impact of family engagement work cannot be judged in isolation from the other factors that impact on the likelihood of reoffending. FEWs were cautious about the extent to which family engagement work could help people stay out of trouble on their release, pointing to the lack of resources (in areas like housing, drug/alcohol treatment and psychological therapy) for ex-prisoners. However, as one FEW concluded: 'Delivering the [family engagement] service gives people hope – something to hold onto. Having hope means that people are more likely to change'.

4.25 Well-being in prison

The review was asked to consider how the key processes of the FES practice model were linked to positive outcomes in the area of well-being in prison. This section considers well-being in terms of changes to physical health, mental health, and emotional distress for prisoners. The following section then discusses the impact of the FES on prisoners' compliance with the prison regime and their progress through the sentence.

The review findings include much evidence that family engagement work is successful in reducing the distress that prisoners experience as a result of separation from family, uncertainty about what is happening to relatives, and guilt about the impact of their imprisonment on their family. The evidence for this comes not solely from the accounts given by prisoners, but also from the experience of other prison staff and the FEWs themselves. A psychologist based at one of the prisons explained his experience that prisoners who had a particular anxiety about a family issue would focus on this to the exclusion of other topics. He found it effective to work with Pact as this meant that the individual was helped with the family problem enabling the psychologist to deliver the therapeutic intervention.

The link between family engagement work and a reduction in the risk of self-harm was made particularly strongly by staff (from a variety of roles) in the women's prison. This comment was made by a manager in the women's prison: 'Because a lot of self-harm and suicide attempts are borne of women who feel powerless, and out of control with their children and unable to help them, or feel they've let them down. So actually giving them back that voice, and that empowerment to be a parent, and have a say in their child's life, is really vital'.

An experienced prison officer at the women's prison, with more than 20 years' service explained: 'There's the mental health issues with some of them. And the contact that they can't get otherwise, they can get through [the FEW] – like

contacting social services outside to see what's happening with the children. There's one in particular – she's not allowed.... Well, there's not any restriction on her as such, but she's down as public protection. Her photographs and contact with her own children and other children is restricted. So all that contact – especially the photos – seem to end up coming through [the FEW]. And [the FEW] will sort of say “Yes, these photos are suitable; they're of her children”. And on a number of occasions [the FEW] has managed to track down photographs that have got lost in the prison system somehow, and re-united them with their owners’.

Receiving photographs of her children, including her child removed for adoption, was of vital importance to Courtney. She was asked about the emotional impact of not having the pictures and without hesitation she said: ‘I'd have cut up. I'm a self-harmer anyway. So yeah –I'd probably have overdosed at some point’.

Case Example: Dave

Dave is serving a determinate sentence of less than four years. His mental health and addiction problems. Dave came into prison extremely distressed about her and concerned about the likelihood that she would not manage to maintain their tenancy and look after her health. The practical support provided by the FEW (which included contacting the solicitor, the doctor and the council) has been crucial in improving Dave's emotional well-being.

Case Example: Leona

Leona is serving a determinate sentence of four years or more. Her two children live with Leona's mother more than 100 miles from the prison. Leona described the value of the emotional support that she received from the FEW. She explained “on the days when I can't concentrate in class, if I come see [the FEW], by the time we're finished I feel so much better – like I was probably feeling about a ‘10’ but then I'm feeling a ‘20’ or ‘25’! She's very helpful”. Leona went on to explain that, for her, effective family engagement work was linked with a reduction in the likelihood of self-harm. “When I was at [another prison] I was quite down. And I sometimes had self-harming thoughts. But then when I came here, a friend told me about the Family Support Worker during my Induction, and I made an appointment. And obviously it helps when you've got someone to talk to. So like, it's took a lot... How would I put it? [The FEW] takes the burden, a bit, for us.”

Family engagement work is successful not just because of the practical help and advice provided by FEWs, but (and this is an important point) because of the way that this help and advice is provided. Service users judged that input from FEWs improved their emotional well-being and reduced their distress because FEWs really listened to them and provided an environment in which it was safe to express vulnerability, acceptable to cry. This was particularly, although not exclusively, an issue for male prisoners. The example of Frank (see section 4.23) illustrates this, as does this comment from Charlie (a man in his 60s who had, immediately prior to his imprisonment, attempted suicide): 'They've given me a lot of emotional support, and I know they've given other prisoners a lot of emotional support and helped them through all different problems and situations. And they never sort of get angry with anyone – you know, I've seen the way they stand there and talk to people. They just listen and try to help them'.

The FES also contributes to the emotional well-being of prisoners by acting as a link between family members and the prison. The FEW is a named point of contact for family members who are anxious about the circumstances of the prisoner or who are concerned that problems outside the prison (for example, on-going feuds and unpaid debts) may lead to issues inside the prison. Daniel explained how his link with the FES came about after his family initiated the contact: 'because they was concerned about my well-being also – because they knew that I wasn't the same as I used to be'.

Family engagement work has the potential to reduce distress and improve the emotional well-being of service users in prison. As a consequence, it has a part to play in strategies intended to reduce the likelihood of self-harm and suicide.

4.26 Compliance with the regime/ behaviour in prison

Prisoners and prison staff also made a link between the relief and reassurance that came from effective family engagement work and a reduction in poor, non-compliant or violent behaviour in prison. This point was made at both the men's and the women's prisons. For example, a senior governor at the men's prison made the link between problems on the outside and problems on the inside. He explained that he sometimes made referrals to the FES as part of the adjudication process, understanding that prisoners' behaviour could be shaped by family problems. Recognising that it is difficult to quantify the outcome of family engagement work on prisoner behaviour, he said: 'Sometimes a referral to Pact means that they never appear on my security screen again. But other times, we throw resources at people and their behaviour continues to be poor. It must help. Without it, that behaviour would be even worse'.

Violent and disruptive behaviour, although less common in the women's prison, was a concern for staff here too. Emotional distress was seen as increasing the risk, not just of self-harm, but also aggressive behaviour directed at staff or other prisoners. Sally (see section 4.21) explained how, from a prisoner's perspective, the support

from the FEW made her feel happier and more at ease: 'Without this support I'd be self-harming or kicking off. I'd be very angry or finish up in fights'.

Effective family engagement work which reduces stress and anxiety can lead to a reduction in aggression and an increase in compliance. Family engagement work which provides additional opportunities for prisoners, such as longer child-centred visits, can improve behaviour in prisons because it makes prisoners feel better. However, the possibility of family contact can also be used to reward prisoners who do not break the rules. Prison staff and FEWs recognised the tension between thinking of prison family work as existing to meet the needs and respect the rights of prisoners' children, and using it as an incentive to improve prisoner behaviour. While the possibility of spending extra playful time with their children does increase the chances that prisoners will comply with the requirements of the regime, those who are judged to deserve the reward of a family visit are not necessarily the parents of the children who would most benefit from the visit. FEWs were able to exercise some discretion about which prisoners to include on courses and at family days, but this was inevitably constrained by the operation of the prison. As one explained: 'I would always say "if you end up going onto basic¹³ it's beyond my control, I won't be able to get you onto the family day, so you do need to do the right thing, otherwise..."'

4.3 Is there any evidence to suggest that different approaches are needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

Four key points about the significance of gender emerge from the review findings. These are: family and children are not synonymous; 'family' can mean different things to men and women in prison; both men and women in prison experience pain and distress in relation to family; and the concept of family engagement as 'women's work'.

The work of the FES is about family engagement in a broad sense; it is not simply about the parenting responsibilities of prisoners and the service provided to their children. While FEWs did much work that was about child protection, parenting courses and special prison visits, they were also providing support to partners, adult children and the wider extended family. The FES recognised and valued diversity in family composition; prisoners identified the people who were significant to them and FEWs did not operate with a narrow model of the nuclear family.

However, in the women's prison, concern about care arrangements for children was the significant issue. Fifteen (of seventeen) women prisoners interviewed were mothers, with three of these being mothers of adult children. The remaining twelve women were the mothers of children under the age of 18, and were seeking help from the FES to deal with problems of contact, visits, kinship care, and child protection plans. The sample included women who had been single parents at the point of their imprisonment, women who had been living with their children's father,

¹³ Basic: The lowest level of the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) Scheme. Moving between levels is a reward (or sanction) for good (or bad) behaviour in prison. The privilege of improved or extra visits is not extended to basic level prisoners.

families where social workers were involved with the family prior to the mother's imprisonment, and mothers who were trying to maintain some level of connection with children who had already been adopted. Aasmah and Becca provide two contrasting examples.

Case Example: Aasmah

Aasmah is serving a determinate sentence of more than four years. She is a widow with four children: the oldest three children are in their 20s and 30s, the youngest is a boy of 14. Her youngest son is now cared for by his oldest brother, who has a formal guardianship order. Prior to her conviction, and the need to confirm the suitability of the care arrangements for the 14 year old, the family had had no contact with social workers.

Aasmah was working with the FEW to apply for Childcare ROTL and spoke very warmly of the practical help and emotional support she had received with this. She identified the FEW as going 'over and beyond' in order to help. 'At least I know that if there's anything to do with my children, my family, their well-being... I can always come and see [the FEW] you know.... And I think that really, she's the only person [here] that I could go to about those things'.

Case Example: Becca

Becca is serving a determinate sentence of less than four years. She is the mother of two children who were removed from her care and have been adopted. Becca has a history of drug use and has served previous prison sentences.

With the help of the FEW, Becca has been able to send an annual letter to her children. By contacting the children's social worker, the FEW has also been able to confirm to Becca that all is well. For Becca, limited and constrained contact with her children is better than a complete loss of contact. 'It's quite hard [sending letters], but it's something you have to do innit? To make sure that they know that you're there and you're still thinking about them'.

The sense of parental responsibility was more evident in the women's prison than the men's prison. All but one of the male prisoner interviewees were fathers, but none of them had been the sole, or principal, carer for their children prior to their

imprisonment (indeed, the FEWs could not recall ever working with a father who had sole parental responsibility). As a consequence, there was a greater focus on complex childcare, guardianship, and family court work in the women's prison.

Considerations of motherhood were identified as predominant for women and, as described in Section 4.25, are related to depression, other mental health problems, and the risks of self-harm and suicide. However, an important finding from the review is that male prisoners felt the pain and distress of family separation too. Male prisoners may have been more adept at concealing their feelings or less used to expressing them, but they were certainly experiencing them. Eugene talked in his interview about his anxiety and distress.

Case Example: Eugene

Eugene is serving a determinate sentence of less than four years. His first child, a boy, was born while he was in prison. He feels guilty that he has left his girlfriend managing with the baby alone, and worries that she is not coping well.

Eugene's mental health is not good, and he suffers with depression. He was positive about the practical and emotional support he received from the FES. He described the FES as both helping and hindering his mental health problems. 'It's 50% good, but 50% bad because it reminds you of what you can't do [as a father].'

The majority of FEWs are women and, as a consequence, male prisoners are typically interacting with a female worker. Gender is only one component of this interaction, but one FEW did observe there was a 'notable difference' in the way that male prisoners responded to male and female workers. This pattern (female workers and male service users) exists elsewhere in the criminal justice system. In the probation service, the increase in the proportion of female practitioners has been accompanied by debate about the advantage, through the diversity of staff teams, of providing a range of role models for service users (Bailey, Knight and Williams 2007).

The findings from the review suggest that different approaches to family engagement work are not needed for men and women in prison. An approach that combined care and interest with knowledge and reliability was appropriate regardless of gender. However, the review suggests that the priorities of the FES vary with the prison, reflecting the focus on childcare and child protection that is inevitable in the women's estate.

A note of caution is necessary. Fieldwork for this review was conducted only in two prisons (although many participants, both prisoners and staff, had experience of

other establishments). The two prisons were different in a number of respects: size, history, average length of stay for prisoners, architecture and geography. There is no straightforward way to disentangle gender differences from these other dimensions of difference. For example, the women's prison held a greater proportion of long term and indeterminate sentence prisoners. Such prisoners, if they are parents, must plan for a lengthy separation from their children. They face the prospect of the loss of children through adoption or of negotiating for many years with people (family members or foster carers) who look after their children on a daily basis. Conversely, the parenting concerns of prisoners with shorter sentences are often different.



4.4 Additional Findings

4.41 Being a FES worker

The characteristics, skills and values of the FEWs emerged strongly from the review as crucial to the process of family engagement work. These attributes were identified by all participants in the review. They included: having excellent communication skills; being knowledgeable; being well-organised; being reliable and consistent, trustworthy and honest; showing authentic empathy and care; being brave; acting as a role model; and going the extra mile. While the things that FEWs did were important for prisoners and their family members, the way in which they undertook this work was at least as important.

The work of a FEW requires excellent communication skills - FEWs do a lot of listening. They also explain complex and sensitive issues to prisoners, family members, and

professionals both inside and outside the prison. Much of this communication takes place in less than ideal circumstances, for example in situations where privacy is lacking, mobile phone connections to family members are poor or time is short. The review found much evidence of FEWs doing this aspect of their job well. Staff in both prisons rated FEWs as good at listening and good at communicating.

Prisoners and their family members also spoke very highly of the way that FEWs listened properly and were easy to talk to. As Aasmah said: 'It's just nice knowing that if you want to talk about the children, or talk about anything, you can talk about that to [the FEW]. Cos she's such a caring person as well, you know? She listens and she sort of takes everything [in], and she just listens to you. And I think that's what you need when you're in prison you know?'

Male service users equally recognised that one of the strengths of the FEWs was their communication. As Dave said: 'He's a good listener; he listens to my problems and takes it all in'. Frank agreed: 'I think that's probably the biggest bit of it. She's sat there and she's listened – and she's taken time out to listen to me'.

It is not sufficient, though, for FEWs to have good communication skills. In order to be effective and credible they also need to be well-informed about the statutory processes faced by prisoners and the resources available to provide support. Prisoners commented positively on the knowledge that FEWs brought, both from their family engagement role and from previous work experience. One prisoner, for example, was grateful that the FEW was well-informed about drug problems. Prison staff were confident that FEWs had the technical knowledge needed to help prisoners with their problems as well as a good understanding of the psychological and emotional importance of family contact for prisoners. Family members appreciated the information and advice that was available from Pact, through services such as the Family Support Group as well as the FES.

The FEWs themselves highlighted specific types of knowledge as essential for their job, including knowledge about the experiences and prejudices likely to be experienced by prisoners as well as the practical knowledge needed to liaise and negotiate with social workers and other professionals. The FEWs also noted the importance of organisational and administrative skills in their role. The job demands the ability to work within the timescales set by prison and social work processes, and also to record this work on both the prison and Pact IT systems. Accurate recording of information relevant to child protection risks, self-harm, and other aspects of safety and security in prison is essential both for the credibility of Pact and the quality of the work undertaken with families. Maintaining the Pact client database and providing monthly reports to Pact HQ enables the organisation to measure workload and performance. FEWs described their role as a balance between, on one hand, completing and recording work in a timely manner and, on the other hand, being able to respond in a sensitive and spontaneous way to an immediate crisis. This required them to move nimbly between different roles, approaches and styles of

communication, managing the competing demands of time spent interacting with people and time spent in front of the computer.

Good organisational and time management skills enabled FEWs to be reliable - a quality that was of considerable importance to prisoners. The reliability of FEWs combined with their openness and honesty about their work built a sense of trust with prisoners. For many prisoners, trust was necessary, but had to be earned by FEWs through diligent work and positive outcomes. Without trust, disclosing and discussing family issues would be impossible and some prisoners were clearly reluctant to deem prison staff trustworthy.

Case Example: Dawn

Dawn is serving a life sentence. She has been in prison for 12 years. She would like to keep her prison life separate from her life as a mother. She is not comfortable when the two entwine. Ideally she would prefer her children's social worker not to be told about her behaviour (including drug use) in prison. She does not like the idea of prison staff 'getting to know' the children.

She sees the FEW as separate from the prison and explained that she had built a rapport with her. Dawn described the FEW as 'good at what she does' and stressed the significance of reliability. '[The FEW] always does what she sets out to do. There's nothing negative I can say - that's unusual for this environment. Everything that I've needed she's helped with.'

Dawn is clear that she prefers to keep a distance from prison staff and the prison regime. She is not enthusiastic about prison courses and does not see herself as a prisoner with a 'face that fits'. She explained that she had agreed to participate in the research as a way of thanking the FEW with whom she had a genuine relationship. 'I can't express how much that woman has done for me and my children. She's fucking good at what she does. Doing this interview is giving something back. I don't do that often, you should know.'

Many other prisoners were similarly complimentary about the service that they received from the FES, contrasting this favourably with the responses that they felt they received from other parts of the prison and wider criminal justice system. As Frank said: 'If she's said she'll contact this person for me, contact that person for me - she'll do it. And everything she's said she'll do, she's done. But, on the wing in this prison, anything you ask for here is a battle to get done - it doesn't matter what it is'.

The FES also has a reputation for honesty and reliability among prison staff. An officer at the women's prison explained that prisoners trusted the FEW because they saw that she was open and truthful about the work that she was doing. At the men's prison, a governor talked about the reliability of the FES staff: 'And they stick to their word, which is a big thing for a prisoner. You know, if you say "I'm going to find you an answer by Wednesday", you go back and – even if you can't find the answer – you go back on the Wednesday and you tell them'. This governor had a sense that having restricted access to people and to information left prisoners feeling powerless and frustrated. This frustration was relieved by the FEWs because they brought timely and trustworthy news about issues from the outside world.

FEWs were also perceived as worthy of trust because prisoners believed that the empathy they communicated was genuine. This sense of authenticity in the relationship with the FEW stemmed from the personal characteristics of the FEW as well as from the skills that they brought to the role. FEWs were seen to have a real care for prisoners and their family members. They communicated this care by remembering details of family circumstances, by approaching difficult issues without judgement, and by showing a passion for their work. This sense of authenticity was evident in both prisons, and all the FEWs were spoken of positively in this regard. One female prisoner said: 'I think she cares, genuinely cares, and that's a good thing to have especially if you're dealing with a family situation when it comes to children'.



© Andy Aitchison / Pact

This sense of compassion without judgment was appreciated by family members too. Katy, who felt the stigma of being a prisoner's partner, said: '[The FEWs] are very impartial. They don't take notice of the crime or what's gone on. They just stick to the task in hand. And have compassion'.

Case Example: Daniel

Daniel was coming to the end of a long determinate sentence for a violent offence. He admitted that he had been having trouble in prison – with money, drugs and bullying. This had made him reluctant to keep in touch with his family. For their part, family members were concerned about him and contacted the FES to find out whether Daniel needed or wanted help.

The FEW facilitated contact between Daniel and, primarily, his mother. This was done by passing messages between them and, sometimes when Daniel had no credit for a telephone call, enabling him to phone. Daniel explained that the FEW was also supporting and encouraging him in his bid to be drug-free.

However, it was the caring relationship that Daniel had with the FEW that he really valued. He said: 'Well what made it nice for me was that genuine smile, that – that I genuinely believe that she was interested in how I felt. And I don't know if that's her as a person or that's how she was trained – but she actually genuinely cares, you know? She looks like a person that could be in a lot better place than this, and could be successful and that... And the fact that she's in a prison, and in a prison like this – she could be in a woman's jail, but she ain't, she's in this jail. It's crazy! But she obviously genuinely cares about some of the people in this place, and without her, it would have been a lot lot worse.'

The complexity of family engagement work in prison has the consequence that FEWs spend much of their time breaking bad news and dealing with intractable problems. Much of the work lacks a clear happy ending. A number of prison staff praised FEWs for their ability to tackle difficult and sensitive issues effectively and kindly, acknowledging that work with families could be very fraught and required great sensitivity. One staff member at the women's prison, a probation officer offender manager, described the FEW as going where 'angels fear to tread'¹⁴. Another staff member (a governor at the men's prison) explained that, in his experience, the FEWs were very skilful at breaking bad news. For example, they would be clear about the

¹⁴ The original line is 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread' but there was no sense that the staff member was implying foolishness on the part of the family engagement service.

current position but also able to offer some practical plan for the future: 'You know, not just saying "You're not seeing your kids again because of this and you're a horrible Dad" or whatever. It's about "If you do want a relationship in the future with your children, this is what you would have to do to get there, and it might take you x amount of years, but you must first demonstrate this behaviour"'.

Another skill identified in the review is that of acting as a pro-social role model for prisoners, both in dealings with professionals and interactions with family members. For example, prisoners saw FEWs dealing with other staff in a way that was assertive and effective, but polite and respectful. As a consequence, some prisoners had begun to think differently about the way that they should respond to authority figures such as prison officers and social workers.

Case Example: Dawn

Dawn has contact with two of her children (now older teenagers) who are both in care and living in separate placements. A third child, a baby at the time of the offence, was adopted and there is no contact. Dawn is concerned about her two children: there are problems with mental health, self-harm, and the quality of their placements. Dawn does not think that her daughter is always truthful when they speak on the phone.

Dawn's relationship with her children's (most recent) social worker is difficult. Dawn views her as a 'pen pusher', not interested in family contact and preoccupied with saving money.

Dawn described using the FEW as a role model, learning from her how to interact productively with the social worker. 'I was very 'feet first'. If the social worker annoyed me, without [the FEW's guidance] I would give her a piece of my mind and think afterwards. But that only gives the impression that I can't behave. But I watch the way [the FEW] does stuff, I think about perceptions, about how I can get what I want from a situation. Where I'm talking to professionals about my kids there is a way of going about things'.

Prisoners also described the way that FEWs modelled ways of rebuilding family contact. Jackie (who had been out of touch with her son for some years) appreciated having the FEW with her during their first phone call. Jackie said that her mind was a blank and the FEW helped her by writing down questions for her to ask. Sally had gained confidence in her ability to support her daughter and grandson from the praise and encouragement that she received from the FEW. Leona had been reluctant and uncertain about whether to tell her children (aged 10 and 5) that she was in prison. Speaking of the older child she said: 'My daughter,

she does know where I am – that I'm in prison. And with the support of [the FEW] I actually managed to tell her where I am. Instead of telling her "I'm at work" and then she sees these officers – do you know what I mean? So [the FEW] managed to support me in telling her where I am, which has helped because now.... I don't have to lie to her'.

The final point about the values and characteristics of the FEWs is their willingness to go beyond a narrow definition of their role and to bring a helpful problem-solving approach to their work. This approach was appreciated by prisoners, family members and colleagues who provided many varied illustrations of FEWs going the extra mile.

For example, the FEW at the women's prison made a particular effort to ensure that visits would be successful. These efforts included: coming to the prison at weekends to meet family members and escort them into the prison; negotiating with prison security about the taking of photographs (either to prepare family members for meeting after a long absence or to serve as a memento of a special day); and borrowing toys to use at specially arranged visits (for example, at which the prisoner's suitability to care for her child was being assessed). Alex (a prisoner) said: '[The FEW] has always seen me whenever I've needed any help. So she does a little bit more than she's supposed to I think, but she's really been a great help'.

In the men's prison too, the FES had a reputation for being flexible and easy to work with. In part this was because staff from other agencies in the prison were not entirely sure what the Pact remit was, but experienced the FEWs as willing to take on any enquiry or query that was something to do with families. A worker from another voluntary sector agency explained that she approached the FEWs by saying: 'I'm not sure whether this is a suitable referral, but...'. She had never yet had the response that her referral was unsuitable, but always an offer to explore the situation on behalf of the prisoner. Similarly, a prison-based psychologist described the FES as welcoming of referrals, not precious about criteria and open to thinking about how to be helpful. Two governors at the men's prison, both with knowledge and understanding of the aims and objectives of the FES, praised the FEWs (both the current staff and a previous post-holder) for their inter-personal skills and their ability to work innovatively in the difficult prison environment.

Male prisoners also perceived FEWs as going beyond their job descriptions in order to be helpful and contrasted this positively with their experience of other aspects of the regime. Charlie said: 'Most of the people in here are jobsworths you know -I can't do this; I can't do that. Well, from what I've seen from everyone who works for Pact, is that they haven't got that attitude. If there's anything they can do for you, they'll do it. They're very helpful and very kind'.

In summary, the review found very strong evidence that the characteristics, skills and values of FEWs are a key component of the service. Furthermore, the evidence also supports the argument that, in the two prisons, the current post holders are highly

regarded by prisoners, family members and professionals. The praise was almost universal. Kiera (whose re-union with her mother was discussed in Section 4.21) raised a query about the independence of Pact from the prison but summed up her experience of the FES by saying 'I think [the FEW] is doing an extraordinary job dealing at a personal and close level with everyone'.

Many interviewees found it hard to separate the attributes required of a good FEW from the specific talents of the person in the post. For example, when asked to explain the personal qualities needed in a good FEW, a prison officer in the women's prison said 'She has to be [name of FEW]! How do you explain that?' In a very similar way, a male prisoner, when asked what makes a good family engagement worker, replied 'Well, [name of FEW]' before going on to explain what about the input of the FEW he particularly valued.

While prisoners and professionals were full of praise for FEWs, the FEWs themselves were more circumspect about the extent to which they felt equipped to meet the demands of their job. They knew that they delivered a complex service, balanced the competing interests of different family members, played a key role in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and listened to a great deal of pain and distress. In order to do this work they drew on a combination of past work experience, specific training and personal characteristics.

The FEWs expressed differing views about whether they had the skills and knowledge needed to do a good job. One FEW was confident about all aspects of the role, and argued that years of experience were not necessary. What was required was 'someone able to listen, have empathy and with IT skills'. Another FEW took a different position: 'I feel that we are slightly understaffed and not as trained as much as we should be. There is not enough emphasis put on the value of these positions.' A third reflected on the need for more training and support for work with suicidal prisoners.

In part, this variety of view reflects the different backgrounds of the staff who participated in the research. FEWs who came to the job with existing experience in areas such as counselling and social work transferred these skills to their family engagement work. All the FEWs noted the emotional impact of the job. One FEW explained that it could be disturbing to check a prisoner's details on P-NOMIS¹⁵ and learn more about their history: 'This doesn't happen often – but you can get some pretty heavy stuff'.

The FEWs also identified a range of personal characteristics as useful for the job such as resilience, stamina and humour. These attributes overlap with the positive assessment of FEWs made by other prison staff, who spoke about the approachability and good humour of Pact staff. A governor explained that FEWs had to be able to build rapport with all sorts of people in a number of difficult situations. She went on to say that, as a FEW: 'You have to be able to cope, and be

¹⁵ NOMIS The prison database.

comfortable in all of those environments and with all of those people and that takes someone quite special'.

Some elements of family engagement work are highly stressful, particularly where they involve working with prisoners who are at risk of suicide or self-harm. FEWs are supported by the prison's processes for dealing with these risks but did not always find these sufficient (for example, waiting times for prisoners to receive mental health input could be lengthy). One FEW believed that these stresses are inevitable in family engagement work: 'it's stupid and naïve to come into this job and not let it affect you. I'd be more worried if I wasn't affected by it. So obviously I'm going to go home sometimes and really think about certain cases, but I've got to kind of accept that'.

The FEWs offered mixed views about the support that they received, from Pact, to deal with this pressure. They were not always sure that their managers understood the depth of the emotional impact of the work. One FEW was a firm advocate of clinical supervision as a professional way of processing this and benefitted from one session of clinical supervision a month: 'I know not everyone wants it or needs it – but I'm quite passionate about it.' Other FEWs talked about the value of support from immediate colleagues; it was clearly possible for them to share both practical dilemmas and emotional impacts with each other. One felt 'very able' to do this, another spoke of being 'thrown' by an incident in the prison and resolving this in discussion with a colleague FEW.

The importance, for FEWs, of being adequately supervised and supported was also identified by prison staff who understood the emotional demands of the work. For example, one probation officer highlighted the risk of 'burn out' for FEWs who worked hard with too little opportunity to deal with the pressures of the job.

The FEWs were generally pleased with the training that they received, both through Pact and externally. However, they did identify some gaps, particularly in the area of counselling and working with prisoners in distress. The workers knew that they were not qualified counsellors, psychotherapists or psychologists, but often found themselves providing emotional support to very distressed individuals in circumstances where it was not immediately possible to make a referral to another agency. As one FEW explained: 'Cos, ok, you could refer [the prisoner] on to the IAPT¹⁶ team or mental health – but that could be a while. What is being done for them during that time and that process?' Another FEW talked about feeling ill-equipped to deal with disclosures of past sexual abuse: 'Should I be working in this environment if I don't have... if I haven't been given those skills to deal with that situation?'

4.42 Workload and Resources

All interviewees were asked to suggest how the FES could be improved and the most frequent response was that its capacity should be increased. This answer was given by prison staff, prisoners, and Pact workers themselves.

¹⁶ IAPT Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.

Prison staff knew that the capacity of the FES was constrained by the available resources, but often took the view that there was a gap between the demand for the service and the staff available to provide it. When invited to suggest an improvement to the FES, a governor at the women's prison said that, given the complexity of the work, there was a need for more than one FEW. She suggested that a ratio of one FEW to every hundred prisoners would be good, but acknowledged that this was unrealistic. A very similar point was made by a governor at the men's prison: 'I think we need more Pact services in the prison, if anything [...] I think "just give them more staff!" you know? That would give them scope to do what they do brilliantly'.

A staff member from another voluntary organisation working in the men's prison contrasted the size of her team with the small number of Pact workers. She described a previous FEW as always rushing between tasks: 'I thought "where's your team?"'

Expanding the FES also makes demands on the resources of the prisons. New initiatives for developing family contact and improving family visits often require prison staff to book in visitors and to escort prisoners. These things are not impossible for prisons to organise, but are challenging at a time when staffing is under pressure.

When asked to propose improvements to the FES, prisoners made similar suggestions, usually requiring an increase in resources. For example, some female prisoners (without prompting) identified parenting courses and more opportunities for prisoners to engage with and play with their children. Male prisoners, who had experience of Pact courses, also suggested that they would benefit from more (and longer) programmes, along with the linked benefit of special family visits. Some recognised that the FEW was very busy and would benefit from more support. One prisoner, helped by the FEW to rebuild family relationships that had been fragmented some time before his imprisonment, recommended that this sort of family support service be extended to teenagers who were homeless or getting into trouble.

A number of prisoners made the point that it would be good to have a bigger team of FEWs, but were concerned about the quality of any additional staff. Courtney said: 'Oh, you need more [name of FEW] – you always need more [name]. But you can't... there's only one [name] really, isn't there? You won't get another [name], nuh-uh.' Other prisoners could not suggest any improvements, replying that the service was good and the staff did all they could.

Simon explained that his family members agreed with his view that the capacity of the FES should be increased: 'They [his family members] have been really happy. They've even said themselves that there should be more people like [the FEW] working in prisons, because that way it would make things a lesser burden on ourselves'. The family members interviewed for the review made a number of suggestions for improving their experience including: having more information about

prison available in the community, increasing the amount of face-to-face contact (rather than telephone contact) with support services like the FES, and allowing more family visits to prisoners.

The FEWs themselves were well aware of the limited resources available to the service and the need for Pact to manage staffing within a structure set by the contractual arrangements agreed with the various prisons. They accepted that salaries in the voluntary sector were traditionally lower than those in the statutory sector, but wondered whether higher pay could lead to improved staff retention and increased expertise. However, as one FEW commented, if the contract is only for a certain amount 'you can't get money out of thin air'.

FEWs spoke of the need to prioritise cases, be well organised, and good at time management. One suggested that staff based at Pact HQ were not always realistic about the extent to which FEWs could reduce their workload by referring on to other agencies, closing cases, and making use of other Pact services (like the support group for family members or the Pact helpline). The FEWs were positive about the idea of running more Pact courses, including parenting courses in the women's prison, but only if this was accompanied by an increase in resources.

4.43 Prison without family engagement work

The review also considered the likely consequences, for prison and prisoners, of life without the FES.

Some of the work of the FES would fall to other professionals working in related or overlapping specialisms in the prison, but without any increase in their time, knowledge or resources. The chaplaincy was identified by a number of staff interviewees in both prisons as a source of support for prisoners with family issues.

Staff from the offender management unit in the women's prison felt that a lot of family work would fall back to them in the event that the FES no longer operated. OMU staff already viewed their workload as high, and they lacked the expertise to take on family engagement work additional to this and do it well. Looking back to the time before the appointment of the FEW, an offender supervisor reflected on the family work carried out in the OMU: 'That's not to say we didn't try, we did, but it just wasn't as effective. And the fact that we have Pact has given the prison a new string to their bow, and something we should be proud of.' The FEW at this prison agreed that the OMU team would deal with family issues, but would not have the time to spend with family members: 'the contact with the family would be lost'.

One prison officer at the women's prison anticipated that, without the FES, some family work would be done by wing staff. She acknowledged that she and her colleagues lacked the time and expertise to do this well. Without the FES: 'I guess it would be wing staff, trying to find stuff out and bumble their way through'.

In the men's prison there was less confidence from staff that, in the absence of Pact, family engagement work would be taken on (even in a limited way) by other

workers in the prison. The chaplaincy was mentioned by three people as a possibility, and the visitors centre was identified as a resource for family members. The OMU was identified by a couple of interviewees, but then dismissed on the grounds that it was already overwhelmed with work. The FEWs took somewhat differing views about the likelihood of wing staff taking on this task. One said: 'There will always be some officers who care more than others'.

From the perspective of prisoners and their family members there was no realistic alternative source of help and support to that provided by the FES. Prisoners were dismissive of the notion that wing staff or other agencies working in the prison would have the time, inclination or expertise to help them build and sustain complex family relationships. Male prisoners frequently stated that no one else in the prison was able to help. Women prisoners explained that they would be left to deal with problems on their own. Four women and one man chose the word 'lost' to describe life in prison without the support offered by the FES.

Ella said: 'Without it [family support] you're lost. I was lost before I spoke to [the FEW]. I couldn't deal with the emotions I was dealing with, with the children, not knowing what was going on'.

Dave reflected that, without the FES: 'I'd be lost – be lost without Pact.... [The FEW] is the only one that's helped me out in here – no one else is interested'.

Jenny explained that she would not know what to do without the FEW, and made an explicit link with her emotional well-being: 'Because honestly I don't know what I would do if I didn't have her. Probably I would maybe sometimes go back to my room and probably try to self-harm or do some stupid things or something'.

Women prisoners voiced a specific doubt that other staff in the prison would have the time or the inclination to negotiate in detail with social workers about care arrangements for children. Maureen said: 'if you've got children that are in care, and you have still got access to them but it has to be with a social worker, who arranges that? The prison staff can't arrange that, they don't arrange that, it's [the FEW]. If [the FEW] went, my god! I don't know what would.... it'd be a lost cause'.

Significantly, for family members, the FES is a dedicated and specialist link with the prison. Family members with a concern, if not able to contact a FEW, would have to work their way through the prison switchboard to find a member of staff able to respond. The review found examples of cases where family members were able to communicate concern about the mental health of prisoners, threats or bullying. FEWs were then able to work with the prisoner and share information with security or safer custody in the prisons.

When asked who would have supported her in the absence of the FEW, Katy said: 'There is no-one – there is absolutely no-one you can call.' Susan's son had moved on from the fieldwork prison to an establishment without a FES. She explained that she had tried to use a helpline linked to that prison but had not been given the

information that she needed. Her final comment about her experience of the FES at the men's prison was: 'I don't think you should ever get rid of the Pact team.' Two (of six) family members interviewed, having very much appreciated the support received by Pact, were considering volunteering to support prisoners' families in the future.

The evidence from the review suggests that, in the absence of the FES, some family engagement work would fall to other staff and agencies in the prison, with implications for their workloads and priorities. Some work, for example that requiring lengthy communication with family members or external professionals, would likely not be done, with consequences not just for prisoners but also vulnerable family members such as children in care. Without the FES, the voices of family members are particularly unlikely to be heard.



5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The review began with three primary research questions:

- What are the key processes of the FES practice model?
- How are these linked to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance, and well-being in prison?
- Is there any evidence to suggest that different approaches are needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

5.1 The key processes of the FES practice model

The review found that the FES practice model relies on a combination of the interpersonal and professional skills of the family engagement workers, and the structural fit between the work of Pact and the operational demands of the prison.

Family engagement workers demonstrate high levels of emotional literacy (Knight 2014). The context of their work is inevitably emotional. They work with vulnerable people (in prison and outside) and deal daily with loss, grief and separation - they hear a lot of tough things. The FEWs provide a casework service, which is inevitably therapeutic as well as practical. They act as role models, on points such as parenting from prison and communicating with social workers and others in authority.

The FEWs are approachable, reliable and consistent in an environment where these qualities are sometimes lacking. They gain the trust and confidence of prisoners and family members because they combine these personal characteristics with good levels of knowledge about the workings of both the prison system and of agencies in the community. Unusually, this is a service that builds a bridge between custodial and community contexts, providing support to prisoners and family members.

FEWs also contribute to the education and professional development of other staff both in prison and in the community. The review found particular evidence of this in the area of child protection social work. Despite the numbers of children affected by parental imprisonment, many social workers knew little about the penal system, the possibilities for family contact with prisoners, and the rights of and opportunities for parents in prison. In both their direct work with service users and their inter-agency work with other professionals, FEWs operate at a level of professional skill and responsibility that is equivalent to that of staff in the statutory sector who enjoy superior pay and benefits.

The FES practice model depends both on the skills of the staff and the interface between the service and the prison. The review found much evidence of support for the FES at a senior level in both fieldwork prisons. The FEWs interviewed had worked hard to maintain the profile of the service with staff across both prisons, for example, by speaking at meetings and producing written publicity material. Inevitably prison

staff tended to learn about, and come to appreciate, the FES when their work brought them into direct contact with it.

The organisational link between the FES and the prison differed in the two fieldwork prisons for reasons of history, physical location and resource constraints. Both structures had merits and limitations for the FES practice model. Locating the FES in the OMU enabled effective integration of family and childcare issues into sentence planning. On the other hand, locating the FES on a wing eased access for some prisoners and raised the profile of the service with some staff.

Pact is to be commended for its commitment to assessing and evaluating the quality of its work, both through independent reviews (of which this is the latest in a series of studies) and the use of casework tools such as the Relationship Radar. This review has identified that the effectiveness of the FES depends on a range of factors that include the content of the casework, but also the skills and characteristics of the FEWs and the place of the FES in the wider prison context. There are evidence-based research instruments¹⁷ designed to measure the quality and impact of criminal justice services and such a tool could be developed for further evaluation of the FES.

The review findings lead to these recommendations:

- Pact makes an important and effective contribution to the training and education of other professionals (both inside and outside the prison). FEWs do this work well, but there is scope for a more consistent and systematic approach. In prison this could include: ensuring that all wings have up-to-date information about the service; Prison Listeners know about the service; staff from other voluntary agencies are familiar with the FES; and that Pact works closely with the visitor's centre. In the community, Pact is well-placed to provide training input to health and social care professionals. This work brings efficiency benefits (more appropriate referrals, less time spent giving information to individual prison staff or social workers) as well as the potential for improved outcomes for prisoners and family members.
- The support and supervision of FEWs should reflect the emotional and practical demands of the role. Independent clinical supervision should be available. The reward and recognition systems for FEWs should take account of practice elsewhere in the sector.
- The review identified that the efficiency of the FES depends on the integration of the service into the structure of the prison. This may be achieved in different ways in different prisons. However, the findings of the review suggest that these features in particular are important: FEWs are visible in and around the prison, by staff and prisoners; FEWs are easily able to share information and discuss casework with staff from Safer Custody and OMU; and family engagement work is championed at a senior level in the prison.

¹⁷ For example, the Swansea Service Evaluation Inventory – Youth Justice (SSEI-YJ) – available from Dr Pamela Ugwudike, College of Law and Criminology, Swansea University.

5.2 The link to positive outcomes in the areas of family contact, positive intention about desistance, and well-being in prison

The FES makes a unique contribution in the area of family contact. In particular, this contribution is valuable because it builds and sustains contact between prisoners and family members in complex and challenging circumstances. The FES does not simply duplicate advice and support that is available elsewhere, for example in visitor's centres, on the internet, or at the chaplaincy. A significant proportion of the work of the FES is in cases where the gap between the person in prison and the family outside is wide, and shaped by a long history of difficulties and concerns about child protection or risk management. In more straightforward cases, positive outcomes in the area of family contact include: prisoners re-establishing contact with relatives after many years of estrangement, children enjoying crafts and stories on a family day visit, and mothers in prison liaising with schools about their children's progress. In more complicated cases, desired outcomes (that is, outcomes judged to be positive by service users) include: confirming the limitations on contact with children; writing a personal contribution to a memory box for a child moving to an adoptive family; and being well-supported through unsuccessful applications for childcare ROTL. Looking to the future, there is scope to explore the contribution that technology (such as Skype) can make to improving the quality of family contact for prisoners.

The review identified much work in line with the principles for desistance focussed practice (McNeill et al 2012). In particular, the operational philosophy of the FES views people as individuals, taking their circumstances, needs and emotions seriously. The service is responsive; it does not offer a limited repertoire of interventions. Through rebuilt and strengthened family relationships, prisoners are able to take on new roles, such as parent, sibling, aunt or uncle. Families are a source of social capital, providing routes to housing and employment. The FES approach is congruent with current theoretical understanding about desistance.

In practice, the review gathered many examples of prisoners explaining that family engagement work provided them with hope, and caused them to feel calmer about the present and more in control of the future. This evidence supports a link between family engagement work and the increased possibility of desistance or, for long-term prisoners, the motivation to progress through the stages of the sentence. However, (and as many review participants observed), re-offending outcomes depend on a complex web of factors and rarely hinge on a single intervention.

The review provides strong evidence of the link between family engagement work and the well-being of prisoners. This evidence comes from prisoners, family members and staff. FEWs work in a way that leaves people feeling calmer and less distressed, not so reliant on medication, and less likely to behave aggressively or violently.

The positive outcomes achieved by Pact benefit the prison service in a number of tangible ways. Without the FES, additional work falls to prison staff, adding to already high workloads or displacing other tasks. Additionally, work done by FEWs

allows other prison-based staff to focus on their specialist intervention, for example delivering drug treatment or psychological therapy. In the absence of the FES, some work would not be done at all, leaving prisoners more likely to be distressed and less able to sustain hope for the future. In addition to benefits for the prison, the work of the FES also achieves outcomes for agencies in the community, for example: improving the quality of social work assessments, supporting prisoners' children at school, and ensuring the effectiveness of child protection plans.

The review findings lead to these recommendations:

- Pact should use campaigning and publicity opportunities to continue to make the case for child-friendly visits and for a less risk-averse use of ROTL for family contact purposes. Children's contact with their parents should be viewed as an entitlement for the child, not a good behaviour incentive for the parent.
- Prisons should provide sufficient resources to ensure that family engagement work continues to operate in line with the principles for desistance focussed practice (i.e. delivering a responsive and enabling service that builds social connections).
- Prisons should involve FEWs in strategies intended to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm. Pact should ensure that new FEWs receive sufficient training to equip them to work with prisoners who are suicidal or at risk of self-harm.

5.3 Are different approaches needed to family engagement work for women and men in prison?

The review findings are in line with the existing literature relating to gender and imprisonment (Corston 2007): women and men in prison face similar difficulties but their needs differ in intensity. This was particularly the case with respect to parenting. Women were more often the sole carer of their children prior to imprisonment, more likely to feel a sense of automatic parental responsibility and, importantly, were more likely to be acknowledged by family members and professionals as having a parental role to play. The FEW in the women's prison undertook much joint work with social workers and guardians. By contrast, in the men's prison, more time was taken trying to judge whether father/child contact was prohibited or appropriate.

The Pact course FLiP was only available in the men's prison. FLiP was a well-received opportunity for men to think about their role as fathers and, with their family, benefit from an additional family visit. The course (along with the Storybook Dads initiative) served, for some men with more complex family contact problems, as the route into FES casework. Without the courses some prisoners may not have known about the FES or been prepared to share their distress and anxiety with the FEWs.

Men and women in prison were distressed and depressed about separation from family members. Prisoners in both prisons felt guilty about being away from their children and leaving family members to cope with the responsibilities of daily life. The

findings from the review suggest that it was more acceptable and expected for female prisoners to express these feelings. In the men's prison the FEWs were staff with whom prisoners felt able to be open, honest and raw about their feelings.

The review findings lead to these recommendations:

- The processes of family engagement work are similar for women and men, but the work often has different priorities. For example, joint work with outside professionals on child protection issues is a more significant task in women's prisons. A consistent, reliable, expert service delivered by staff who convey authentic care for and interest in service users is recommended in both the male and female estate.
- Parenting courses are relevant for both men and women in prison. Prisoners have limited contact with their children, but courses teach skills that improve parent/child interaction on visits and foster the prisoner's sense of themselves as a parent. Pact should pursue sources of funding for courses, so that these can be run more widely.

5.4 Bridging the Gap

The FES is held in high esteem by all stakeholders: prisoners, family members and prison staff. Through sensitive and thorough casework, links between prisoners and family members are rebuilt and sustained. For prisoners this can lead to a more positive approach to the future, to a greater readiness to progress through a long sentence, and to an improvement in emotional well-being. The FES benefits prisoners' children, negotiating good outcomes in a complex environment constrained by the prison and, in some cases, child protection systems. The work of the FES depends on the skills and characteristics of the FEWs, whose knowledge, reliability and humanity secures the trust and confidence of service users.

The review identifies that, in the absence of the FES, its work would not be easily absorbed elsewhere in the prison system. Some tasks would fall on other workers in the prison; many (including much of the work with family members) would not be done. The review findings suggest that an increase in resources for family engagement work in prison, and the FES in particular, could bring a range of benefits such as: improved support for existing staff, greater provision of courses, and the expansion of the casework service.

Looking to the future, a longer-term and larger-scale impact evaluation of family engagement work would be necessary to assess whether the positive findings from this review (about positive intentions to desist and improved family engagement) led to improved outcomes for prisoners after release. However, the immediate impact of the FES on family contact, intention to desist, and the well-being of prisoners is not in doubt. The FES does bridge the gap between prisoners and family members. As Maureen said:

'I believe that the whole purpose of family support is to build those bridges, and work with both the families and the prisoner, to gain back that

relationship, that trust and that honesty back, for both parties. I don't believe it just works if they just do all the work with the prisoner, and they leave the prisoner to feed back to the family. I believe that the importance of a family link worker is for the family too.'



6. REFERENCES

- Adams K (1992) 'Adjusting to Prison Life' *Crime & Justice* Vol 16 p275-359
- Agnew R (2005) *Why Do Criminals Offend? A General Theory of Crime and Delinquency* Los Angeles: Roxbury
- Bailey R, Knight C and Williams B (2007) 'The Probation Service as part of NOMS in England and Wales: fit for purpose?' In L Gelsthorpe and R Morgan (eds) *Handbook of Probation* Cullompton: Willan
- Bales WD & Mears DP (2008) 'Inmate Social Ties and the Transition to Society: Does Visitation Reduce Recidivism?' *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency* Vol 45 No 3 p287-321
- Boswell G, Poland F & Price P (2010) *An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Family Support Worker role piloted in four English prisons during 2009-10*. Pact: London
- Bottoms A & Shapland J (2011) 'Reflections on Social Values, Offending and Desistance Among Young Adult Recidivists' *Punishment and Society* Vol 13 No 3 p256-282
- Bottoms A (2014) 'Desistance from Crime' In Ashmore Z & Shuker R (eds) *Forensic Practice in the Community* London: Routledge
- Bourdieu P (1986) 'The Forms of Capital' In Richardson J (ed) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* New York: Greenwood
- Brunton-Smith I & McCarthy DJ (2016) 'The Effects of Prisoner Attachment to Family on Re-Entry Outcomes: A Longitudinal Assessment' *British Journal of Criminology*. Available at <http://bjc.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/01/13/bjc.azv129.abstract> (Accessed 19/8/16)
- Casey-Acevedo K & Bakken T (2002) 'Visiting Women in Prison: Who Visits and who Cares?' *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* Vol 34 No3 p67-83
- Cochran JC (2012) 'The Ties That Bind or the Ties That Break: Examining the Relationship Between Visitation and Prisoner Misconduct' *Journal of Criminal Justice* Vol 40 No 5 p433-440
- Corcoran K (1994) 'Violence and the Mentally Ill in Prisons' In Stanko EA (ed) *Perspectives on Violence* London: Quartet Books
- Corston J (2007) *The Corston Report: A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*. London: Home Office

De Claire K & Dixon L (2015) 'The Effects of Prison Visits From Family Members on Prisoners' Wellbeing, Prison Rule Breaking, and Recidivism: A Review of Research Since 1991' *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* p1-15

Ditchfield J (1994) *Family ties and recidivism: Main findings of the literature*. Home Office Research Bulletin 36 London: Home Office

Farrall S (2004) 'Social Capital and Offender Re-integration: Making Probation Desistance Focused' In S Maruna & R. Immarigeon (eds) *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration* Devon: Willan

Farrant F (2013) *Improving outcomes for prisoners and their families: key lessons from the Integrated Family Support Service*. University of Roehampton: London

Glaser D (1964) *The Effectiveness of Prison and a Parole System* Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill

Gordon J & McConnell EH (1999) 'Are Conjugal and Familial Visitations Effective Rehabilitative Concepts?: Yes' *The Prison Journal* Vol 79 No 1 p119-135

Hairston CF (1991) 'Family Ties During Imprisonment: Important for Whom and for What?' *Sociology and Social Welfare* Vol 18 No 1 p87-104

Halpern D (2005) *Social Capital* Cambridge: Polity Press

Harer MD (1995) *Prison education program participation and recidivism: A test of the normalization hypothesis*. Washington: Federal Bureau of Prisons

Hedderman C, Palmer E & Hollin C with the assistance of Gunby C, Shelton N and Askari M (2008) *Implementing services for women offenders and those 'at risk' of offending: action research with Together Women* Ministry of Justice Research Series 12/08

HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation (2001) *Through the prison gate: A joint thematic review by HMP Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation*. London: Home Office

Holt N & Miller D (1972) *Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships* Sacramento: California State Department of Corrections

Home Office (2004) *Reducing reoffending: National action plan*. London: Home Office Communication Directorate

Home Office (2006) *Five year strategy for protecting the public and reducing re-offending*. London: The Stationery Office

Jardine C (2014) *The role of family ties in desistance from crime*. Edinburgh: Families Outside

- Knight C (2014) *Emotional Literacy in Criminal Justice* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Laub JH & Sampson RJ (2003) *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70* Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Laub JH, Nagin DS & Sampson RJ (1998) 'Trajectories of Change in Criminal Offending: Good Marriages and the Desistance Process' *American Sociological Review* Vol 63 No 2 p225-238
- Layder D (2013) *Doing Excellent Small-Scale Research* London: Sage
- Leverentz AM (2006) 'The Love of a Good Man? Romantic Relationships as a Source of Support or Hindrance for Female Ex-Offenders' *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* Vol 43 No 4 p459-488
- Liebling A (1992) *Suicides in Prison* London: Routledge
- Liebling A (1999) 'Suicides in Prison: Ten Years On' *Prison Service Journal* Vol 138 p35-41
- Liebling A and Krarup, H (1993) *Suicide attempts and self-injury in male prisons*. London: Home Office
- Lösel F, Pugh G, Markson L, Souza KA & Lanskey C (2012) *Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of fathers and their families*. Milton: Ormiston Children and Families Trust
- Maruna S (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives* Washington: American Psychological Association
- May C, Sharma N & Stewart D (2008) *Factors linked to reoffending: A one year follow-up of prisoners who took part in Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004*. Research Summary 5 London: Ministry of Justice
- McNeill F, Farrall S, Lightowler C & Maruna S (2013) 'Discovering Desistance: Reconfiguring Criminal Justice?' In Mc Neill F (ed) *Scottish Justice Matters: Desistance: Moving on Desistance and Rehabilitation* Vol 1 No 2 p2-6
- McNeill F, Farrall S, Lightowler C & Maruna S (2012) *How and Why People Stop Offending: Discovering Desistance* Iriss Insights 15
- Mills A & Codd H (2008) 'Prisoners' Families and Offender Management: Mobilizing Social Capital' *Probation Journal* Vol 55 No 1 p 9-24.
- Mills A (2003) 'Coping, Vulnerability, and Disruption: Facilities for Prisoners with Special Needs' Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Cardiff

Mills A (2005) “‘Great Expectations?’”: A Review of the Role of Prisoners’ Families in England and Wales’ Paper presented at the British Society of Criminology Conference, July 30, 2004

Ministry of Justice (2012) Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds. Ministry of Justice Research Series 4/12

Ministry of Justice (2013) Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending. Ministry of Justice Analytical Series: London

Monahan KC, Goldweber A & Cauffman E (2011) ‘The Effects of Visitation on Incarcerated Juvenile Offenders: How Contact with the Outside ImPacts Adjustments on the Inside’ Law & Human Behavior Vol 35 No 2 p143-151

Murray J and Farrington D (2008) ‘The Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Children’ In M Tonry (ed) Crime and Justice: A Review of Research Vol 37 p133-206

Nesmith, A & Ruhland, E (2008) ‘Children of Incarcerated Parents: Challenges and Resiliency in Their Own Words’ Children and Youth Services Review Vol 30 No 10 p1119–1130

New Economics Foundation (2012) Economic study of Integrated Family Support Programme (IFS). New Economics Foundation: London

Pact (2014/15) ImPact Report 2014/15. Pact: London

Pact (2016) About us. Available at <http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/about-us> (Accessed 8/8/16)

Pact (2016) Our services. Available at <http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/our-services> (Accessed 8/8/16)

Prison Reform Trust (2016) Prison: the facts: Bromley Briefings Summer 2016. Prison Reform Trust: London

Putnam RD (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community New York: Simon and Schuster

Sampson RJ & Laub (1993) Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Shover N (1983) ‘The Later Stages of Ordinary Property Offender Careers’ Social Problems Vol 31 No 2 p209-218

Siennick SE, Mears DP & Bales WD (2013) ‘Here and Gone: Anticipation and Separation Effects of Prison Visits on Inmate Infractions’ Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency Vol 50 No 3 p417-444

Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners. London: Social Exclusion Unit

Sykes GM (1958) *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Taylor CJ (2016) 'The Family's Role in the Reintegration of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals: The Direct Effects of Emotional Support' *The Prison Journal* Vol 96 p331-354

Toch H & Adams K (1989) *Coping: Maladaptation in Prisons New Brunswick*: Transaction Publishers

Visher C & Travis J (2003) 'Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways' *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol 29 p89-113

Warr M (1998) 'Life-Course Transitions and Desistance from Crime' *Criminology* Vol 36 p183-216

Wright S (2015) "'Persistent" and "Prolific" Offending across the Life-Course as Experienced by Women: Chronic Recidivism and Frustrated Desistance' Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Surrey

7. LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Interviewees broken down by group and by prison

Figure 2: Detail of Prisoner Interviewees

Figure 3: Women's Prison - Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Jan-March 2016

Figure 4: Women's Prison - Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Over Time

Figure 5: Men's Prison - Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Jan-March 2016

Figure 6: Men's Prison - Frequency of the 10 most common E-CINS measures: Over Time

Figure 7: E-CINS measures used fewer than 10 times since the introduction of the system in October 2014

Figure 8: Women's Prisons: Comparison of use of measures between fieldwork prison and all prisons over time

Figure 9: Men's Prisons: Comparison of use of measures between fieldwork prison and all prisons over time

APPENDIX 1 SAMPLING CRITERIA

Prisoners

All prisoners who have had a contact with Pact are eligible for inclusion.

The aim is to construct a sample that includes a proportionate balance of cases categorised by Pact staff as low, medium and high. The sample should include those whose family engagement intervention was practical and brief as well as those who used the Pact service to work on complex and long-standing problems. It should include a wide range of types of prisoner/Pact worker interaction (as captured by the Pact E-CINS record system).

The initial sample of prisoners should, so far as possible, be mixed in terms of:

- Age, ethnicity
- Sentence length and time remaining until release
- Offence type
- Reason for contacting Pact
- Success of Pact intervention (as perceived by the prisoner)
- Success of Pact intervention (as perceived by Pact worker)

Prison Staff

Prison staff and prison-based staff from other agencies whose duties bring them into contact with the family engagement work of Pact are eligible for inclusion, subject to their workload and agreement of their managers.

This may include:

- Governor grade staff whose responsibilities (e.g. for safer custody or for reducing re-offending) have brought them into contact with Pact
- Offender supervisors
- Visit Centre staff
- Chaplaincy staff
- CRC staff

APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE PRISONER

OPENING STATEMENT

Personal introduction: Name, position.

Overview of research: Brief description.

Initial questions: How long have you been in xxx? How long is your sentence? How long until you are released? What service/s have you used from the Pact worker? (Depending on the answer, move onto the relevant subheading in the next section).

AREAS OF SUPPORT

Family contact (frequency, quality): How would you describe the contact between yourself and your family before you received support? What difficulties did you experience? How often do you have contact with your family (e.g. letters, phone calls, visits)? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Relationships and social networks: How would you describe your relationships with friends and family before you received support? How important are these relationships to you? What aspects of your relationships were challenging? How do your friends and family react to your current situation? Do you feel able to ask your friends and family for support? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Children and parenting: How would you describe your relationship with your child/ren before you received support? How often do you have contact with your child/ren? Do your child/ren come to visit you in prison, if so, how do you think they find the experience? If not, why is this the case? How do they normally behave, and have you noticed any differences since you have been in prison? Do you have any concerns about your child/ren's safety or well-being, if so, can you elaborate? How would you describe your relationship with social workers? Are you able to get your point of view across to social workers? How confident are you in your parenting abilities? What have you told your child/ren about your current situation? What challenges have you experienced? Have you noticed any improvements since

receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Emotional or mental health: How would you describe your prison experience before/after support? How did you feel about your current situation before you received support? How able do you feel to cope with the separation from your family and friends whilst you are in prison? How confident are you to deal with future challenges in prison, and upon release? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Physical health: How would you describe your physical health before prison? Have you experienced health improvements since you received support, if so, can you elaborate? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Other (managing money, meaningful use of time, accommodation): How did you earn/spend your money before you went to prison? How did you spend your time before prison, and do you think this will change upon your release? What are your plans for accommodation upon release?

MOTIVATION/FUTURE GOALS

What are your plans after release? What would you like your life to be like after prison? Would you make any lifestyle changes upon release, if so, can you elaborate? Do you feel that the support you have received in prison will help you upon release?

VIEWS ON SUPPORT PROVISION

FSW role: What do you think is the purpose of family support work in prison? Do you think it is important that this support is available? What would you have done without this support/ who would you have contacted for support? Are there any services that family support workers do not provide that would be beneficial to you? How does the support you have received compare with the support in other prisons (if applicable)?

ENDING STATEMENT

Note of thanks: Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the research study. If you should require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your prison establishment.

Contextual information: age, ethnicity, offence type, sentence length

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FAMILY MEMBER

OPENING STATEMENT

Personal introduction: Name, position.

Overview of research: Brief description.

Initial question: What service/s have you used from the Pact worker?

(Depending on the answer, move onto the relevant subheading in the next section first).

AREAS OF SUPPORT

Family contact (frequency, quality): How would you describe the contact between yourself and your relative in prison? What difficulties did you experience? How often do you have contact with your relative in prison (e.g. letters, phone calls, visits)? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support from Pact, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Children and parenting: How would you describe your relationship with your child/grandchild/niece/nephew before/after you received support? How do they normally behave, and have you noticed any differences since your relative has been in prison? Do you have any concerns about the child's safety or well-being, if so, can you elaborate? How confident are you in your parenting abilities? What challenges have you experienced? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not-how would you suggest the service could be improved? Has the support you received from Pact helped you to deal with social workers or probation officers?

Emotional or mental health: How did you feel about your current situation before/after you received support? Can you describe what it is like to be separated from your relative? What challenges did you face, and did you feel able to cope with these? Have you noticed any improvements since receiving support, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Physical health: How would you describe your physical health before your relative was imprisoned? Have there been any changes to your physical health since your relative has been in prison, if so, can you elaborate? Have you experienced any health improvements since you received support, if so, can you elaborate? If not, why not- how would you suggest the service could be improved?

Other (managing money, meaningful use of time, accommodation): Have you experienced changes to your financial situation since your relative has been in prison, if so, can you elaborate? How do you spend your time since your relative has

been in prison, are there any differences, if so, can you elaborate? Has your relative's imprisonment affected your housing situation, if so, in what way?

VIEWS ON SUPPORT PROVISION

FSW role: What do you think is the purpose of family support work in prison? Do you think it is important that this support is available? What would you have done without this support/who would you have contacted for support? Are there any services that family support workers do not provide that you feel would be beneficial to you? Is there anything unique about the support that you have received from Pact in xxx?

ENDING STATEMENT

Note of thanks: Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this research study. If you should require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the research team.

Contextual information (if not provided): age, ethnicity, relationship to prisoner

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE PRISON STAFF

OPENING STATEMENT

Personal introduction: Name, position.

Overview of research: Brief description.

Initial questions: What is your role at the prison? How long have you been in your current role at xxx? How does this role bring you into contact with Pact?

THE WORK OF Pact

Key processes: What support service/s does Pact provide in this prison? How easy is it for prisoners to access these services? Can you provide an example of a situation that Pact resolved particularly successfully, why was this the case? Can you provide an example of a situation where you were unhappy with the outcome from Pact, why was this the case?

OUTCOMES OF Pact SUPPORT

Effectiveness of Pact: How well do you think Pact works in the prison? What aspects of the Pact role do you feel work well, and what aspects do you think require improvement, why is this the case?

Do you feel that Pact helps to facilitate contact between prisoners and their families, and improve relationships, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Do you feel that the prisoners Pact works with are more likely to cease offending as a consequence of the support, if so, why is this the case? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Do you feel that prisoners' well-being improves following Pact support, and they are more compliant with the prison regime? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

OTHER

How well do you think other prison staff understand the Pact role? Who would prisoners (and their families) contact for support if Pact did not exist in this prison? Is there anything special about the Pact work in xxx?

ENDING STATEMENT

Note of thanks: Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this research study. If you should require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the research team.

Contextual information: age and employment history (e.g. length in current job, previous occupation, previous establishments)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE Pact STAFF

Reminder about the research and check re consent

Initial questions: Can you describe your role in this prison? How long have you been in your current role at xxx? What was your role prior to this appointment? What motivated you to apply for your role here at xxx?

THE WORK OF Pact

What services does Pact offer in this prison? What is the most/least common form of support you provide to prisoners? What is a typical 'Day in the Life' of a FES worker?

Work with prisoners: How easy is it for prisoners to access the support services you provide? What is your estimated current caseload, and do you feel equipped to meet these demands? What is the attitude of prisoners to your input? Do you think prisoners understand your role?

Work with prisoners' families: What support do you offer to prisoners' families, and how important is this aspect of your role? What challenges do you encounter in this role, and how do you cope with them? What is the attitude of prisoners' families to your input? Do you think that family members understand your role?

Work with prison staff: Which prison staff do you work most closely with? Do you think they understand your role? What is their attitude to the service you provide? Do they support you in your role? How well do the Governor and senior managers understand your role?

Working with agencies outside the prison: Which other agencies do you liaise with? (prompt: probation, CRCs, health, social care) What are your experiences of working with staff from other agencies? Do you think they understand your role? What is their attitude to the service you provide? Do they support you in your role?

OUTCOMES OF Pact SUPPORT

Overall effectiveness of Pact: What aspects of your role do you feel work well, and what aspects do you think require improvement, why is this the case? (xxx only: How effective do you think the 'FLiP' course is in supporting prisoners? How effective do you think the 'Storybook Dads' invention is, and how important do you think this is for prisoners?)

Family contact and relationships: Do you feel that the work you do helps to facilitate contact between prisoners and their families, and improve relationships, if so, in what ways? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Reduced reoffending: Do you feel that the prisoners you work with are more likely to cease offending as a consequence of the support? If not, why not- how would you

suggest that the service could be improved? Do you feel that the prison sufficiently equips prisoners to re-enter the community on release? Do you feel that your work with prisoners' families helps to promote better outcomes for the prisoners you support? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Well-being in prison: Do you feel that prisoners' well-being improves following your support (probe: self-harm, suicidal thoughts, self-perception)? Are they more compliant with the prison regime (fighting, aggression)? If not, why not- how would you suggest that the service could be improved?

Measuring outcomes: Do you use the 'relationship radar tool' to measure prisoners' support needs? If so, what are your experiences? If not, why not? How else might your work be measured?

Can you provide an example of a situation that you resolved particularly successfully, why was this the case (probe for specific outcomes)? Can you provide an example of a situation where you were unhappy with the outcome, why was this the case? What obstacles do you face in trying to achieve positive outcomes? (probe: elements of prison regime, prisoners' characteristics, attitude of other agencies)

GENDER AND Pact's WORK

Do you think men and women prisoners have different support needs in relation to maintaining or rebuilding contact with 'family'?

In your experience, do you think that 'family' means similar or different things to men and women in prison? In your experience, do you think that 'family' and 'family contact' are important to men and women in prison in similar or different ways? (If so, in what ways?)

In your experience, is Pact's work different in anyway in men's and women's prisons?

FINAL POINTS

Who would prisoners and their families contact for support if Pact did not exist in this prison? What do you feel that Pact provides that is otherwise missing within the prison service?

Is there anything special about the Pact work in xxx? If so, can you elaborate? What could other establishments learn from xxx?

What are the key qualities in a good FES worker (don't be modest!)? Are you confident about all aspects of your role? If not, are you more confident about some more than others? Which, and why? Do that you feel you are trained to carry out all aspects of your role effectively? If not, why not- how would you suggest that this could be improved? Do you feel able do to talk to colleagues and managers about triumphs and problems you encounter in your role? If not, why not? How able do you

feel to balance the face-to-face work with prisoners with record keeping and paperwork?

If you could say a few words to the funders of Pact what would it be, and why?

ENDING STATEMENT

(Note of thanks for participating in interview, and all their hard work setting up the fieldwork days etc)

Contextual information: age, ethnicity, employment history and goals

We would like to thank NOMS Public Sector Prisons and
AMEY for their financial support for this review.



For further information about the Family Engagement Worker service,
or the work of Pact in general, please contact:

info@prisonadvice.org.uk
0207 735 9535

Pact
29 Peckham Road
London
SE5 8UA

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 219278



Prisoners · Families · Communities
A Fresh Start Together