



Our Impact 2024



Prisoners • Families • Communities
A Fresh Start Together



Building stronger families
and safer communities

What we do



We reduce reoffending by building stronger families and healthier relationships



We work to make prisons safer and healthier



We support people to live good lives after prison



We involve the people we serve and enable them to speak truth to power



We innovate and develop evidence-based practice

Welcome to our Impact Report 2023/24

Our prisons are in crisis. There are record numbers of people behind bars. Inspectors regularly report instances of vermin, violence, self-harm and people languishing in cells with nothing to do. Too many people are released with no home, no job, no family, and no hope.

The ripple effects of this crisis are felt well beyond the prison walls. The lives of hundreds of thousands of families, including nearly 200,000 children, are affected as they too serve a hidden sentence.

But hope is in the air. We have a new government willing to make tough decisions and deliver change. Despite the challenges, we continue to work with dedicated partners and organisations to deliver safer prisons, reduce reoffending, and keep families together. We are hugely grateful for the many prison staff, probation practitioners, and court officials who make our work possible.

This year, Pact made a difference in the lives of more people than ever before. We launched more services, continued to test new ideas and approaches, and strengthened our work to ensure that everything we do is informed by people with lived experience of the justice system. This work depends entirely on the dedication, skills and compassion of Pact people – our incredible staff and volunteers across England and Wales.

We are also indebted to those who financially support our work, allowing us to deliver vital services and trial new initiatives. We are hugely grateful for the support of His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS), NHS England, and our generous donors, parishes and faith communities, charitable foundations, and corporate partners.

The achievements in this report stem from our vision, mission, and values, as well as the combined support of many thousands of people who share our ethos. We hope you too will feel a sense of achievement in being part of our story and continue to journey with us as we look towards another year, supporting many more people to make a fresh start.

Andy Keen-Downs
CEO



Support for defendants and their families in courts

For many defendants and their families, court dates mark the beginning of a long and arduous journey. With a growing backlog of court cases and the remand population at a 50-year high, families face prolonged waiting times, distress, isolation, and fear of judgment. Often, they are left in the dark about what to do next.

Pact has developed its court service to address the urgent need at this stage of the criminal justice process. Operating in London and South Wales, the service supports defendants and their families during trials, sentencing, or hearings, empowering them to understand and actively engage in court proceedings.

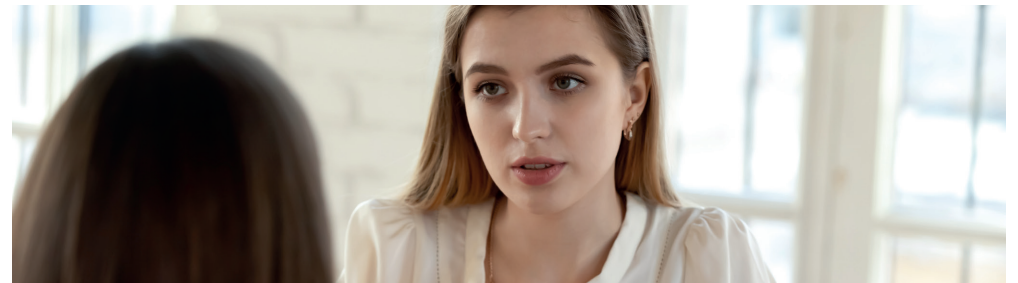
Our dedicated volunteers provide confidential support and advice on what to expect at court, explain court terminology, and advise families on what to do if a loved one is sent to prison. They can also help access other services, including Pact's befriending service, peer support groups, and prison-based family services.



We work in **10** courts in London and **1** in South Wales.



In 2023-24, our volunteers supported **101** defendants and families.



“

Thank you to the Pact court trio who supported me through the worst day of my life. The help you've given me is invaluable. Court can be very isolating and frightening, but Pact has enabled me to navigate it.

Defendant's Family Member

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On call seven days a week

We run the Prisoners' Families Helpline and website on behalf of HMPPS. Our helpline team offers free, confidential support and advice seven days a week for anyone with a loved one caught up in the justice system at any point, from arrest to imprisonment and release.

Last year, we:



answered **33,000** calls



answered more than **5,000** emails



escalated **1,314** urgent concerns about a loved one in prison

In addition, as part of our groundbreaking 'Safer Custody' partnership with HMPPS and prisoners' families, we launched an online portal for every prison in England and Wales on the Prisoners' Families Helpline website. The initiative offers up-to-date advice for families on what to do if they are concerned about a loved one in prison and a web form to contact prisons directly. The project was highly commended at the Inspire Justice Awards for its contribution to making prisons safer.



“

It made me feel that the distress of not knowing what would be happening to my son in prison was quite normal. It put me at ease by providing me with experienced insight into the whole process.

Helpline Caller

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Supporting people in prison and their families

We support people in prison to keep in touch with their families at **62** prisons, making us the biggest family services provider in England and Wales.

This work helps deliver safer, more stable prisons, builds stronger families and safer communities, and empowers individuals to reintegrate after release. Prisoners who receive visits during their sentence are 39% less likely to reoffend.

In 2023-24, our teams of staff of volunteers:



supported **485,417** prison visits (including **97,767** visits for children and young people)



supported **2,139** new people in prison with mentoring and courses in communication skills, parenting, positive relationships, and setting and achieving life goals



supported **125** people through our national befriending service and peer support groups



What our service users say



93% of people in prison said Pact's casework support had made things better for them.



People in prison scored a **96%** satisfaction rating for Pact Family Days.



Prisoners' family members scored an **88%** satisfaction rating for the support they received from our teams.



64% of those using our befriending service reported improved resilience and coping strategies.

Giving families a say in our services

This year, we have continued to grow our 'family forums' to bring prisoners' family members together with one another, Pact staff, and prison teams. This work ensures those directly affected by imprisonment have a say in how we design, develop and deliver our services.



“

Pact has helped me to have video links with my children and also got me a family day after not seeing my kids for three years. It was the best day of my life.

Prisoner

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“

Some of the most genuine and caring souls I have ever met. Always happy to help and go above and beyond for visitors.

Prisoners' Family Member

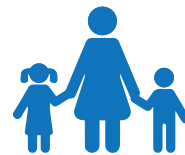
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Driving innovation in the justice sector

Thanks to generous funding from the government, corporate partners, trusts and foundations, we deliver innovative projects in courts, prisons and the community.



431 men and their families supported through **Routes2Change**, our family-focused rehabilitation programme at HMPs Brixton and Isis.



140 women, **42** children, and **54** carers supported through **Together a Chance**, our social worker project in HMPs Send and Eastwood Park, which supports mothers with complex needs.



17 women supported through **Journeys to Freedom** - a small but high-intensity support programme for women leaving prison in London and Kent.



91 young men (18-25) with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) supported through our trauma-informed mentoring programme **Dealt an ACE**.



50 new families supported by **Visiting Mum**, enabling children at risk of losing contact with their mothers to visit them in prison.



408 emergency welfare grants (totalling £85,0141) awarded to prison leavers and prisoners' children and families. Grants are awarded in vouchers or as purchased items, with the most common requests being food, clothing, appliances, and mobile phones (required for job and benefit applications and probation contact).

Improving prison healthcare

This year, we continued to develop our services to give prisoners' families a voice in how prison healthcare is developed and delivered.

As part of the NHS-funded project in London, Listen to Families, we:



interviewed over **1,000** families about their experiences supporting their loved ones with health needs



published **5** Listening Reports to give families a public voice



welcomed **17** Family Team Members, working with Pact as family and carer representatives and sharing their experiences with the NHS directly



escalated **77** safeguarding cases to keep people in prison safe



We worked with the NHS and healthcare providers to agree on the Family and Carers' Charter for Health and Justice, the first set of formal commitments from healthcare providers to families and carers of those in custody.

We created 'Your Guide to Prison Healthcare' – a practical guide with step-by-step information created by families for families.

We are also piloting Family Link Workers at five prisons across London and the South East. Their role is to bridge the gap between families, prisoners and the healthcare teams, helping to ensure that families and carers can get more involved in their loved one's healthcare.

Support for children and young people

New data published by the Ministry of Justice suggests that each year, almost **200,000** children in England and Wales have a parent in prison. Many more are impacted by the imprisonment of stepparents, siblings, grandparents and other loved ones.

These children often face disruption to their home lives alongside the emotional distress of being separated from a family member. They may also experience stigma and judgement in their community, which can lead to difficulties at school and social isolation. The right support is crucial in minimising long-term harm and helping them to thrive.

In 2023-24, we introduced our toolkit for primary schools, secondary schools, and early years settings, developed in collaboration with education practitioners. This free resource helps teachers to:

- gain the confidence to talk about imprisonment
- create a safe space for the whole class to explore who might be affected by imprisonment and how
- ensure children affected by family imprisonment understand it is not a shameful subject and that there are people who want to listen to how they feel
- support other pupils in understanding and empathising with the situation



“

From this, I am able to understand my role as a teacher and what I can do to support a child with a family member in prison.

Catherine Trainee Teacher

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Support available through the gate and in the community

Every year, we support hundreds of people leaving prison to build and strengthen relationships and adapt to life beyond the gates. In 2023/24, we delivered these sessions through the HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) programme and community

mentoring. These schemes support people in improving their wellbeing, developing and maintaining healthy relationships, and successfully reintegrating into the community.



More than **2000** people on probation supported.



963 people supported through the CFO3 programme.



513 service users supported through CFO Activity Hubs.



772 people supported through community mentoring



The dark days still come and go, but it's just about having that hope that things will get better. And I know the right tracks and the right resources to get to that better place.

CFO Activity Hub Participant



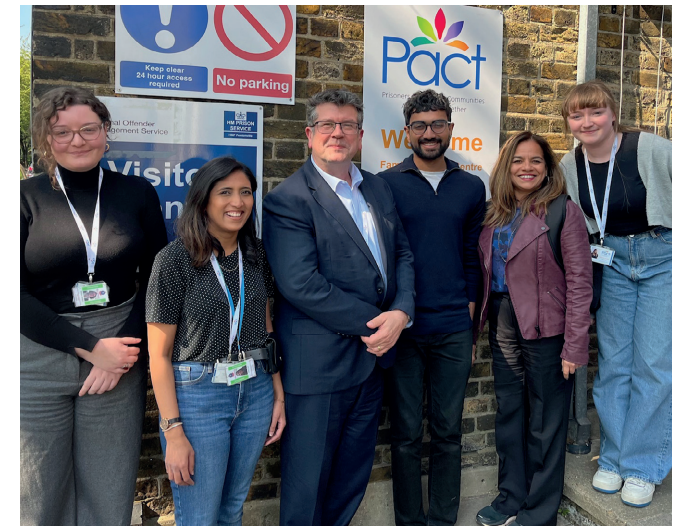
A great place to work and volunteer

We are an inclusive, welcoming organisation with a diverse workforce who share our core values. By 31 March 2024, our team had grown to include **338** employees, **66** casual workers and **461** volunteers. We were pleased to publish our gender pay gap results for the first time this year and have set out actions to ensure we continue promoting equality of opportunity.

Our team completed **8,427** courses during the year, including Pact-developed modules on safeguarding, trauma-informed practice, family group conferencing, and restorative approaches. To ensure our services are informed and shaped by the people

we serve, we also provided all Pact staff with a new Service User Involvement Toolkit and began a national training programme to embed good practice.

This year, Pact secured the prestigious 'Investing in Volunteers' quality standard, demonstrating our commitment to offering the best possible volunteering experience. In 2023/24, our volunteers (including students on placement and prison or community-based peer workers) gave nearly **73,000** hours of their time (up from 46,000 last year), making a difference in the lives of thousands of people.



Faith in Action

As a Catholic charity, we continue to be blessed by the kindness and encouragement of the Church and so many people of faith who share our mission and answer the Gospel call: 'I was in prison, and you visited me.'

This year, we saw a record response to our Prisoners' Sunday appeal. Over **50** new volunteers joined Pact as Parish Representatives, acting as our link in local faith communities. The Catholic Women's League adopted Pact as their charity of choice. It provided hundreds of backpacks filled with essential items for men and women who would otherwise leave prison with

nothing. Some parishes even organised pilgrimages to prisons. The Holy Father, Pope Francis, blessed a picture of Mary for the prisoners of England and Wales.

In so many ways—through prayer, action, and generosity—the Catholic and wider Christian communities showed solidarity with Pact. We thank them all.



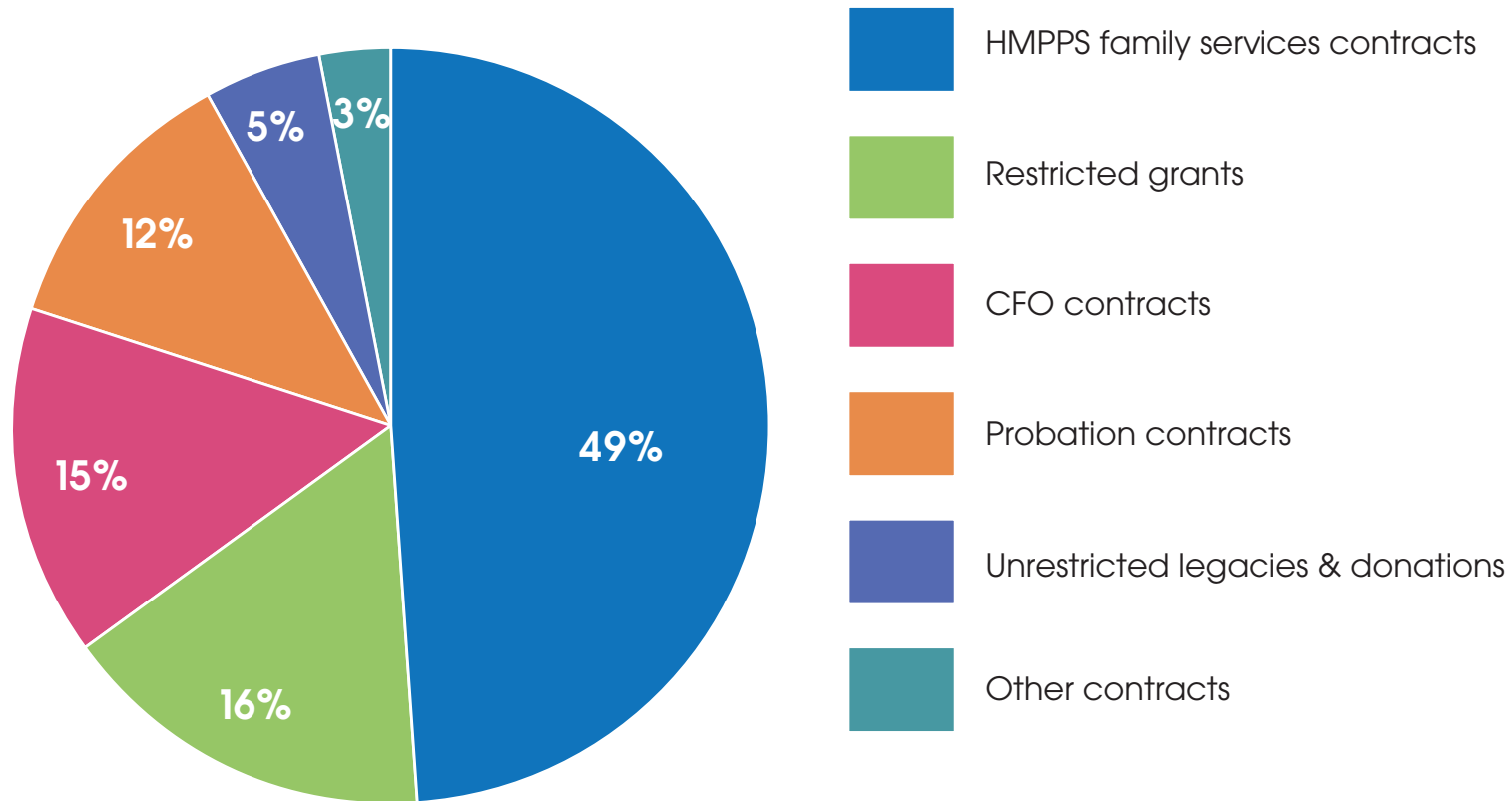
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I've been blessed to have quite a long association in one way or another with Pact. I would really encourage you to pray for and reflect on how it might be possible for you to support the families of those in prison and to assist Pact in its work.

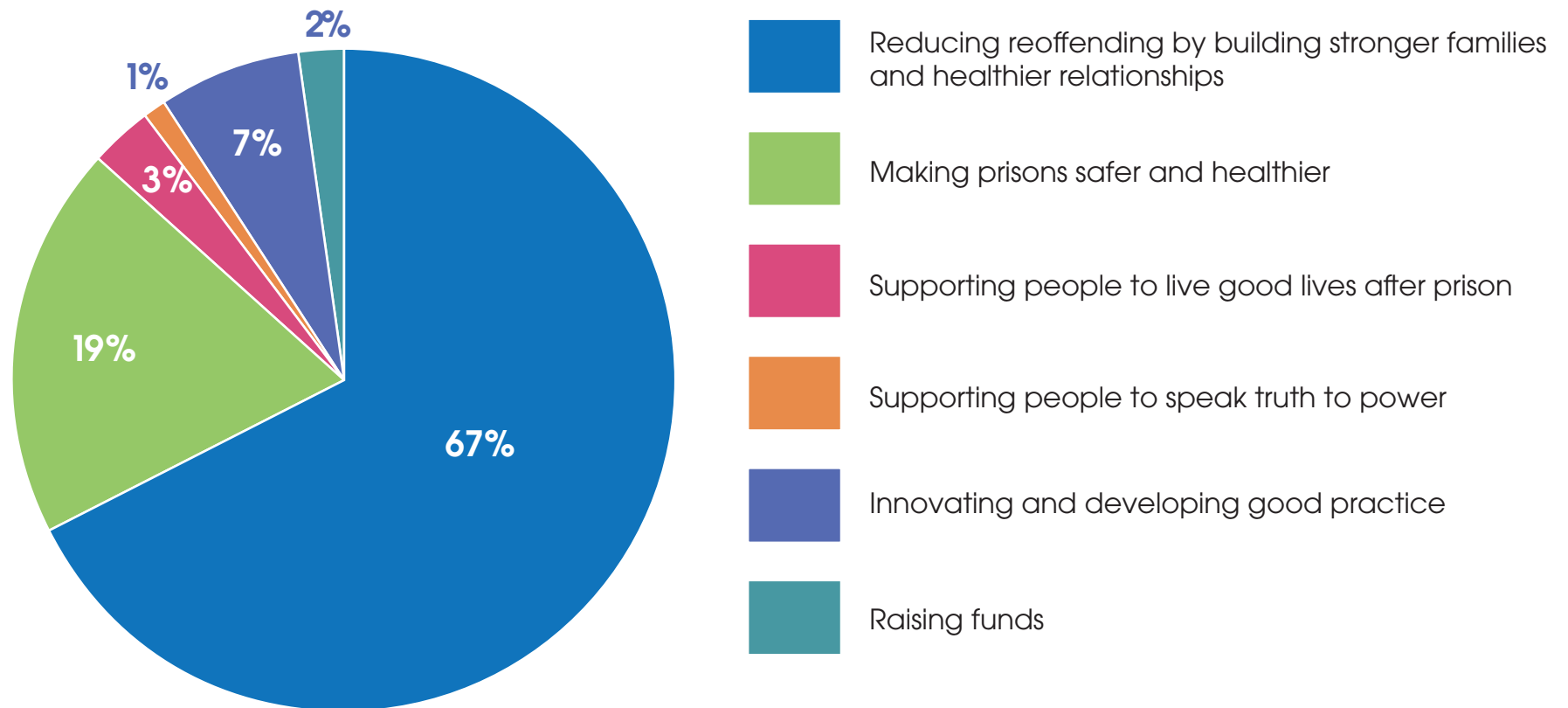
Rt Rev Richard Moth, Liaison for Prisons,
Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

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Where does our money come from?



How do we spend our money?



For more comprehensive details of income and expenditure please visit www.prisonadvice.org.uk/about



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member
caritas
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