

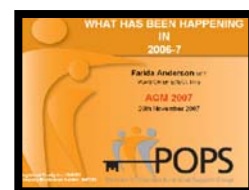
What's New?



We are currently working with Manchester Probation to develop a new post where we will have a **Family Link Worker** based in the **courts in Manchester** to support, advise and assist families of offenders who are appearing before the Magistrates. It is accepted that the court/sentencing stage of the Criminal Justice System is a time when families need additional support when the reality of a prison sentence can become a reality. Hopefully, we will have someone in post in the New Year.

We are currently Piloting and developing the **Student Legal Advice Project**. The aims of this project are to provide basic legal advice on a number of topics to offenders families accessing services through POPS. In addition it will enhance the service provided to offenders' families at HMPYOI Forest Bank Visitor Centre and the Prisoners Families Telephone Helpline. It will also raise MMU Law students' awareness of the needs of offenders' and their families by giving them experience of working with clients in a prison environment.

AGM 2007



On the 26th November POPS held its Annual General Meeting to highlight all the great work we have been doing over the past year. We would like to thank everyone who attended, including POPS Board Members and managers. It was a fantastic night which would not have happened without all the hard work of our Corporate Development Manger Zoe Gan-Rankin and her assistants Laura and Danielle.



2006-2007 has been a great year for POPS we have had an increase in staff and currently have 75 members in post. With the help of our staff we have expanded our services. We currently run seven Visitor Centres that support over 230,700 families. These Visitor Centres have become a vital service for families visiting a loved one in prison and are more than 'just a cup of tea'. Our visitors are able to access a variety of services such as Visitor Forums, Cultural Events and Healthy Eating Initiatives.



We are proud to announce that POPS has received a number of awards which include The Butler Award for encouraging effective care for offenders, the Third Sector Excellence Award for Volunteer of the Year given to Derek Harlock, and the Hope and Optimism Award given to Farida Anderson MBE for the Citizen of the Year.



Final Word...

We would like to dedicate this issue to David Watson. It was recently his 65th Birthday and we wanted to celebrate in style. David is our Finance Manager and has been with POPS for three years now. He has become a valued member of our staff and from everyone at POPS **Happy Birthday!** May the years to come be blessed with joy.



Please feel free to send any suggestions for the next issue to Laura Stevenson (Administrator) at POPS Head Office, Valentine House, 1079 Rochdale Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 8AJ. Tel: 0161 702 1000
laura@partnersofprisoners.co.uk

Family Services in 2007



Diane and Face painting at Liverpool

Our final newsletter of 2007 highlights our Family Services Department and the various pieces of work we undertake across the region to support the families of prisoners.

As you will see, POPS engage with families in a number of different ways, some of which include the work of Family Link Workers, the Prisoners Families Helpline, Family Forums and Family Information Weeks. It is through this portfolio of work that we are able to influence policy and practice through the various strategic and high level meetings our staff attend where we are able to feed our experiences and findings into the 'Children and Families Pathway', which is an integral part of the Government's 'National Reducing Re-offending Action Plan'. I hope you enjoy reading about the contributions of our Family Services staff and may

I take the opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Diane Curry OBE, Director

We have **Family Link Workers** based in various establishments across the North-West to support, empower and provide information to the families, children and friends of prisoners.

What do they do? The Family Link Worker acts as a broker between families and offenders to ensure that family ties are maintained in a meaningful way. Our experience has shown that this has a number of benefits to all involved, which include, a positive impact on successful resettlement into the community, in terms of finding accommodation, getting a job and not re-offending. Family Link Workers are able to advocate on behalf of families with the prisons and other appropriate agencies and signpost them on to services in their own area that can offer practical and emotional support. Quite often this will include Offender Management Units, Safeguarding Teams, Youth Offending Teams, Education Departments and Drug Services to name but a few.

How can families help? We believe that families play a vital role in the resettlement process and in particular reducing the odds of re-offending. Involving the family helps the successful progression and management of the offender, not least through offering positive and realistic suggestions for addressing the problems that he or she faces, such as, for example, drugs and mental health issues.

Initial Contact. We have found that although families may approach our Family Link Workers around an initial worry or concern relating to the offenders well being, or being able to cope with the experience of prison. There are often numerous other issues that we can assist and advise on, not least worries and concerns around release from prison and resettlement in general. Often families are not aware of the support that prisoners can receive in preparing them for release and our workers are able to allay these fears.



Where are they based? We have currently have Family Workers based in the following prison establishments - page 2.

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HMYOI Hindley – is the prison where we placed our first Family Link Worker back in 2002. It was the first Family Link Service to be delivered by an independent voluntary sector agency and has gone from strength to strength in that time. We currently have 2 workers based there providing a family link service, Angela and Diane.

HMP Forest Bank – Here we have developed a new Family Link Service and recently recruited one of our experienced workers to the post. Julie is based in the Visitor's Centre which is also run by POPS.

HMP Manchester – Zoe and Madhia, our 2 Family Link Workers at the prison provide advice and support around the problems faced by all prisoners families specifically related to drugs issues.

HMP and YOI Styal – Our Family Link Worker, Mary, contacts families and provides support and information at the earliest possible stage of reception, particularly for those who are experiencing a custody situation for the first time.

Our Family Link Work at **HMP Buckley Hall, HMP Haverigg and HMYOI Thorn Cross** are all pieces of work that are funded via the IMPACT project who received funding from Europe to engage in research around family link services. The work at Thorn Cross has now come to an end after 2 years of providing a proving a need for family support. Our 2 workers in Buckley Hall and Haverigg, Dan and Alicia, are in the process of a mapping and scoping piece of research to prove the need, value and worth of family link services in those prisons. At the end of December 07 and March 08 they will have both produced detailed reports with their findings.

Prisoners Families Helpline

The Prisoners Families Helpline (0808 808 2003) provides a central point of information and support for the families of offenders.



Jamal—Helpline Coordinator

Calls are taken nationally by POPS and Ormiston Children and Families Trust. The Helpline is a virtual call centre; this allows us greater flexibility and gives us more information about calls to ensure a quality service. The Helpline provides a continuum service to families from the point of arrest, during sentencing through the term of imprisonment and onto release. The Helpline provides information sheets which are also available to download from the website; these sheets include information on the subjects of; 'Telling the Children', 'Youth Justice' and 'Indeterminate Sentences'. The Helpline has been working on better ways of reaching the BME community, young people, families at court and how we can specifically help the families of serious offenders.



Danielle—receptionist
Kassim—Helpline worker

Family Information Week



Family Information Week

As part of her role as Family Link Coordinator Alicia organised a series of information events which were held in the Visitors' Centre over the duration of a week. The events, which presented the opportunity for local services to provide information and support to visitors to the prison, were held prior to the start of each day's visit session in order to potentially reach as many visitors as possible. The success of the event has lead to further information days being planned for the Visitors' Centre on a rolling basis.

During the week we had a presence from various professionals from the fields of education, drugs and alcohol, family support, health and holistic therapies. As a result we were able to not only encourage families to access local support but we were also in a position to promote key health messages. Additionally, the visiting experience was enhanced for several family members with the provision of alternative therapies including reiki, Indian head massage and hand massages.



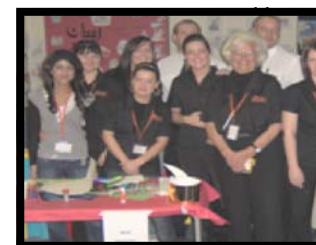
Face painting

Family Forums – Giving Families a Voice



POPS Family Link Workers, Visitor Centre staff and the prisons are working together to encourage families to attend family focus groups where prisoners families can share their concerns and ask questions about issues that concern them around the prison regime and resettlement. These groups have already proved to be of benefit to the families and to the prisons. The views of prisoner's families help POPS to develop our services to meet the needs of children and families.

Family Focussed Visits



HMPYOI Forest Bank and POPS have been organising Family Focussed Visits for the last twelve months. The prison recognises that Family Focussed Visits mean fathers can re-establish or continue to maintain bonds with their children and families. This is part of the resettlement process of helping prisoners return to normal life on release. For many children normal family life stops when a parent is imprisoned.

The POPS and prison staff at HMPYOI Forest Bank have worked hard to organise these special visits. Prison visiting can be a daunting process for children in particular, so a lot of effort has been put into making the process as child friendly as possible within the necessary security requirements.

The Family Focussed Visits are run every three months and have had themes such as Halloween, Easter and Christmas. It was decided by HMPYOI Forest Bank and POPS that an Eid Family Focussed Visit would be a good idea. The event was promoted in advance at the Visitor Centre and inside the Prison by the Imam, Prison Staff and the POPS Visitor Centre Coordinator.

Eid and Black and History Month

This event was a great success, there was a Halal buffet and lots of activities for the children including arts and crafts and face painting. Salford Book Start attended and the children were lucky enough to be given Treasure Packs containing books and reading folders, also containing books. The local newsagent very generously provided goodie bags for all the children. A talented member of POPS staff who works in another prison attended the event and henna painted peoples hands and feet. Families, prisoners and staff all enjoyed the event and thanked the Prison and POPS with letters and cards.



Kismet - Visitor Centre Worker

Every Child Really Does Matter



POPS help to maintain family ties and are here to support prisoners and families to support the children of prisoners. We also work towards raising the profile of children and have started to work with local Sure Start Centres by involving them in the family focussed visits that we organise with the prisons. Children of offenders may face barriers that prevent them from attaining good outcomes as set out in Every Child Matters. Our family centred services such as the Visitors Centres, Play Activities, Child-Centred visits and Family Link Work can help provide family ties and maintain the relationship between prisoners and their children. POPS are working towards putting the issues for prisoner's children firmly on the agenda of the agencies that are responsible for the well being of children.

