

PRESS RELEASE

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE REST!

Letter written to Inside Time in July 2007, in response to a letter published in the June 2007 edition that was promoting WRVS.

'I write in response to the letter in your June issue by Paul Banfield in HMP Parkhurst. In his contribution (Let's hear it for the WRVS), Mr Banfield quite rightly praises the excellent work undertaken by the WRVS in prison visits halls - namely providing a much needed cup of tea, a smile and a friendly word. However, I would like to point out that this facility is also provided in prisons up and down the country by other charitable organisations and prisoners' families support groups.



Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group (POPS), which has 20 years experience in supporting prisoners' families, provides tea bar facilities in six North West Prisons in addition to managing the Visitors' Centres and providing Play-Workers in the main visits hall. POPS Visitors' Centres are there to provide a warm and friendly atmosphere where families can sit down, have refreshments and relax within comfortable surroundings. Traveling to see a loved one in prison is a very stressful time, whether it is because of nerves, long distances or worry about how your children will cope. The Centres help to bring stress levels down, as our staff are on hand to listen and provide practical advice and emotional support when needed.

Our Play-Workers provide play activities that promote an informal and relaxed atmosphere for children during visits. They also work with our Family Link workers and prison staff to provide special visits days for families - these visits are longer, more relaxed visits, where prisoners can play with their children.

POPS' Family Link Workers are based in the prison environment to guide families and offenders through the 'maze' of the prison system and act as a broker between the two parties. They do this by providing them with the necessary information and identifying the support options available to them along the way.

Nationally, other organisations providing facilities to prisoners' families within prisons include: Contact (Cheshire), Jigsaw (Leeds), Ormiston Children and Families Trust (East), NEPACS (North East), PFFS (London), FFOPS (Wales), PACT (South) to name but a few.

So yes, please praise and highlight the hard work of the WRVS, they do indeed provide a valuable service, but please remember there are many other groups out there who are committed and dedicated to providing support and facilities to offenders and their visiting families.'

Alicia Craythorne

Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group