

Family Connections Strategy

HMP MILLSIKE

Version	Author / Lead Committee	Version Written	Annual Review 1	Annual Review 2	Annual Review 2
1.0	Head of Connections	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028	Jan 2029
Signed:	<i>n. gavaza</i>				
Ratified:	Jan 2026				

Introduction

In the context of prison family services, the foundational principles guiding our work are deeply rooted in established frameworks and evidence-based approaches that emphasize the transformative power of family connections. The HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) sets clear expectations for prisons to support meaningful family ties, as outlined in their inspection criteria and reinforced through the Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties Policy Framework. These objectives focus on creating environments that foster positive relationships, ensure families are seen, heard, and valued, drive continuous improvement in service delivery, and maintain high-quality, compliant, and safeguarding-focused practices—all aimed at enhancing prisoner well-being, reducing reoffending, and promoting successful reintegration.

Central to this is the landmark Lord Farmer Review, "The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime," which describes family relationships as the "golden thread" running through rehabilitation efforts. Commissioned by the UK Government and published in 2017, the report highlights how maintaining strong family bonds can reduce reoffending rates by up to 39% for those receiving visits, while also addressing intergenerational crime and improving prison safety. Its recommendations underscore the need for prisons to prioritize family engagement as a core element of reform.

Complementing these is the Whole Family Approach, a holistic strategy that extends support beyond the prisoner to encompass children, caregivers, and extended family members. Adopted in various prison and community services, regional violence reduction partnerships, this method bridges gaps caused by separation, mitigates trauma, and fosters resilience across the family unit—ultimately aiding recovery, rehabilitation, and long-term societal benefits. Together, these references form the bedrock of our organisational commitment to delivering impactful, inclusive family services in prison environments.

The narrative and desistance approach in criminology focuses on how offenders reconstruct their personal stories to support the process of ceasing criminal behaviour, emphasizing the role of self-narratives in building a prosocial identity. This involves shifting from "condemnation scripts," where individuals blame external factors for their crimes, to "redemption scripts" that highlight personal agency, growth, and hope for a crime-free future, ultimately aiding rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

In conclusion, Forward Trust's family services at HMP Millsike embody a transformative commitment to rehabilitation, drawing on HMIP's rigorous objectives for fostering positive family ties, continuous improvement, family empowerment, and safeguarding excellence. Aligned with the Lord Farmer Review's emphasis on family relationships as the "golden thread" for reducing reoffending and intergenerational crime, our Whole Family Approach integrates holistic support across incarcerated individuals, children, and caregivers to build resilience and hope. By incorporating narrative and desistance principles, we empower participants to rewrite their stories towards prosocial identities, ensuring our bespoke services not only meet immediate needs but pave the way for lasting societal reintegration and family thriving.

1. Family Services Vision & Mission

We envision a world where families impacted by incarceration thrive as resilient, connected units, breaking cycles of separation and hardship. Through our family support work, we aim to strengthen relationships and interpersonal connections, ensuring every person feels safe, supported, and valued by those around them. That's why we take a 'Whole Family Approach' to recovery and rehabilitation, empowering incarcerated parents, children, and caregivers—alongside clients and family members—through specialist one-to-one and group support, rebuilding bonds, accessing opportunities, and contributing to safer, more supportive communities, fostering healing and hope for generations

2. Core Values

Our nine core-beliefs

Our service models reflect and apply the evidence based on what works in supporting recovery and desistance - in particular, the work of Dr David Best ('recovery capital' and 'recovery-orientated systems of care') and Shaad Maruna (identity formation, becoming a 'Desistor' and narrative approaches).

In addition, our in-house Research Team evaluates individual services, interventions and programmes on an ongoing basis, driving continuous improvement and innovation

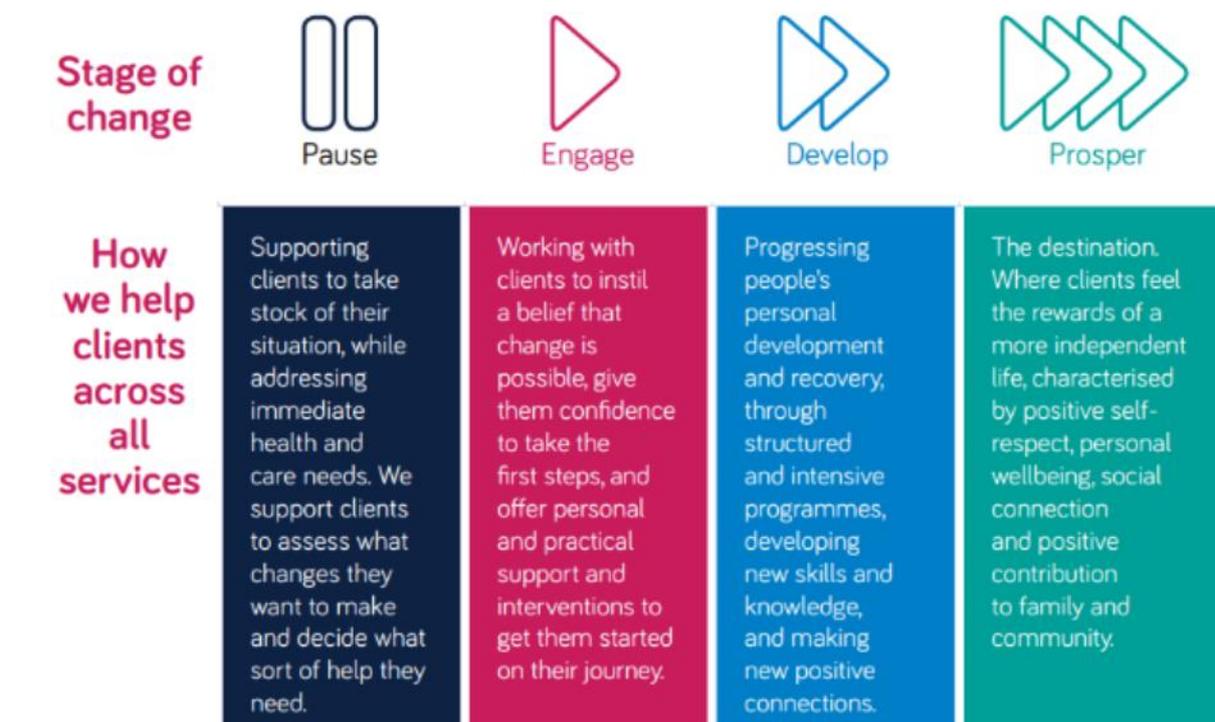
1. Addiction or offending behaviours are often rooted in adverse childhood experiences - neglect, abuse and trauma - or mental health problems in adulthood.
2. Poverty, and lack of positive opportunities or networks, are also significant factors in the development of drug or alcohol addiction, or criminal lifestyles.
3. Anyone, irrespective of their past or current circumstances, is capable of confronting their problems and challenges in life and, with the right support, making lasting and positive changes.
4. Change and recovery depend on people taking responsibility for their own actions, and for confronting negative behaviour patterns.
5. Instilling self-confidence and self-belief in people who have become accustomed to alienation and disappointment, is core to enabling change.
6. Change and recovery are grounded in human connection and community, with family, friends and loved ones involved wherever possible, and opportunities provided for people to build self-respect through making positive contributions to the communities in which they live.

7. People who have succeeded in turning their lives around are important role models and sources of support and inspiration for others, as peers, educators and members of staff.
8. The benefits to communities and society of enabling change and recovery are long-term and wide-reaching.
9. Wider understanding of the causes of addiction and offending will reduce the prejudice and shame that stops people asking for and getting help.

3. Our context and approach

Forward's Theory of Change – Summary

As with all Forward services, our Family Support is structured to assist clients and family members on a 'journey' that has four stages of change. Psychosocial interventions are categorised and aligned to the Forward Trust stages of change model, progressing in therapeutic intensity from Pause to Engage to Develop, and with increasing levels of commitment expected from clients to change their thinking and behaviour.



Clients start by taking part in a comprehensive assessment to identify what their level of need is and what support is required. The decision of which pathway to follow and how by a client, will depend on the outcome of that assessment.

Co-ordinated by a collaborative Care Plan - jointly developed with clients to set and review actions and goals - each support pathway can combine a range of psychosocial

interventions.

Family Support Interventions

The family support service provides the following range of support and interventions:

Pause

- **Family Support Referrals** – all client and/or family member referrals to the family support service. Referrals can come from a range of professionals working for the Forward Trust, as well as other organisations. Self-referrals for selected programmes are also accepted.
- **Brief interventions** – self-help focused resources, publicly available, for individuals or families to access in their own time. Such resources provide advice and education on a range of areas connect to whole family recovery and rehabilitation

Engage

- **Family Support assessments** – completion of a comprehensive assessment which focuses in more depth on the individual and their family system.
- **Family support care plans** – specific care plans which address any of the 4 core areas of need. Goals and actions are jointly agreed and reviewed on a regular basis.
- **Family support 1:1 sessions** – working with the individual on a 1:1 basis to monitor progress against the agreed goals and actions in the care plan and monitor changes in circumstances, risks and needs.

Develop

- **Whole family recovery** – working therapeutically with the individual plus one or more family member. Includes facilitating family contact, facilitating family meetings and visits and family focused release planning.
- **Relationships Matter** – a structured group intervention delivered over 6 or 8 sessions. The programme supports participants to understand how their relationships impact their thoughts, feelings and behaviours and they impact their relationships. There is also a focus on interpersonal skill development.
- **Recovering Families UK Online** – This programme is an online, psychosocial group intervention for adult family members, delivered over 9-10 core sessions. The aims of the programme are to support the family

member to improve their wellbeing and self-care, improve coping, improve relationship boundaries, increase support networks and reduce isolation.

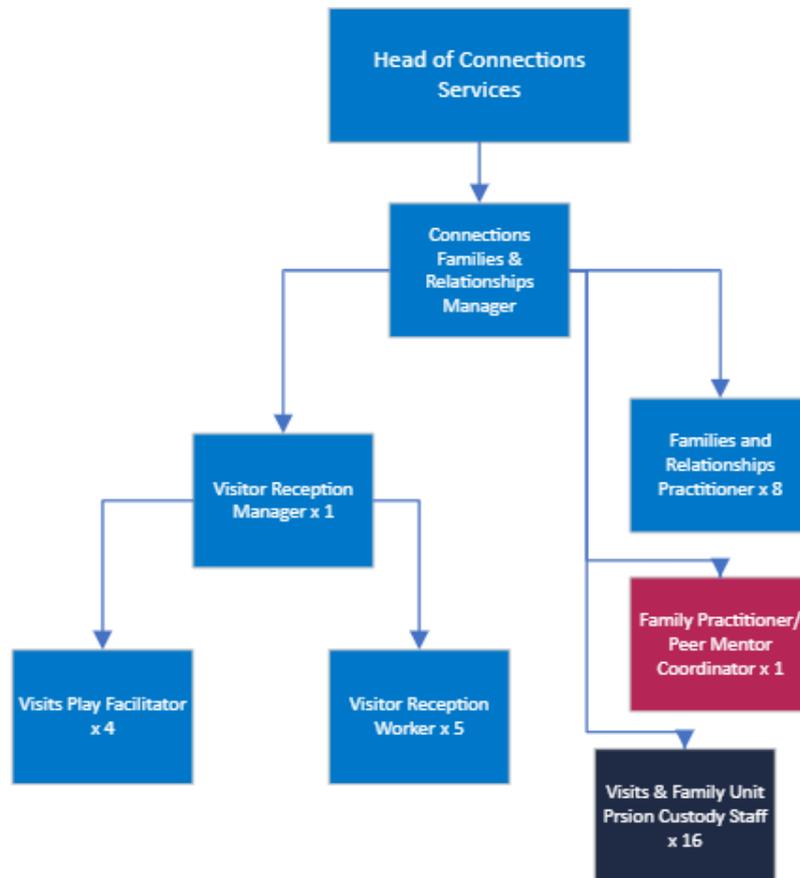
- **M-PACT** – a whole family, multi-family programme which puts children at it's core. M-PACT programme brings together a small number of families (up to 8), often including at least one child aged 8-17 years, at least one adult (affected other) and in some cases also including at least one parent (or parenting figure) with a substance use problem. The programme aims to improve global family functioning, family coping and family communication.
- **Parenting programmes** – specialist programmes addressing the specific needs of imprisoned parents. The aims of the programme are to maintain and improve parent/child relationships where appropriate, improving coping with parent/child separation, improve relationships and communication with caregivers during imprisonment.

Prosper

- **Forward Connect** - Forward Connect and Forward Connect for Families provides an ongoing, online space for clients and family members/affected others who have completed the family support service and who wish to still be part of a recovery community. Referrals to Forward Connect are made by the family support practitioner or other member of staff from the family support team.

The Forward Trust is committed to providing specialist bespoke Family Connection Services for you and your loved ones here at HMP Millsike. We adopt a multidisciplinary collaborative approach working alongside both custodial and community partners.

Meet the team:



Our dedicated team are here to help and can be contacted for non-urgent queries: Email: millsikefamilysupport@forwardtrust.org.uk or Contact number for urgent queries: 0175948887 or 0175948886.

If you are concerned about a prisoner's safety, health or wellbeing and think the prisoner is at immediate risk, please call the switchboard on 01759 488 875 and ask for the Orderly Officer and explain that your concern is an emergency.

If your concern is urgent but not life-threatening, please call the Safer Custody Helpline on 01759 488 216 or contact the prison Safer Custody team at safety.millsike@mitiecc.com.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.prisonersfamilies.org/hmp-millsike>.

4. Objectives with associated targets

Objective	Aim	Performance Improvement Measures – Family Services	Rationale
Foster a Positive Culture for Re-establishing Family Ties	Cultivate a supportive and hopeful environment at HMP Millsike that actively encourages and enables men in custody to rebuild and strengthen meaningful family connections. This will instil optimism for the future, support personal motivation for change, and enhance prospects for successful resettlement and reduced reoffending post-release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 3 (The Family Offer) • Target 6 (Hard-To-Reach Groups) • Target 7 (Progression, Interventions, Sentence Progression & Preparation for Release) • Target 10 (Reception, Induction & Early Days) • Target 11 (Prisoners who do not have positive Family or Relationships contact) 	These Targets emphasize creating an encouraging environment for rebuilding family connections, including direct provisions for visits and learning, support for vulnerable groups, integration with rehabilitation and release planning, early identification of needs, and assistance for those lacking positive contacts—all aimed at instilling optimism, motivation, and reduced reoffending.
Drive Continuous Improvement in Service Delivery and Staff Expertise	Commit to the ongoing development and refinement of the bespoke family service, including regular review of delivery models, innovative practices, and staff training. This ensures high professional standards, adaptation to emerging needs, and sustained enhancement of staff competencies in family engagement, relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 1 (Local Management) • Target 4 (Needs Analysis & Response) • Target 5 (Partnerships) • Target 8 (Responsivity) 	These Targets focus on refining services through leadership roles, staff training, data-driven feedback and surveys, partnerships, and incorporating external reports (e.g., HMIP) to adapt practices and enhance competencies in family engagement.

	support, and trauma-informed approaches.		
Ensure Families of Men at HMP Millsike Are Seen, Heard, and Valued	Prioritise the voices, experiences, and needs of families and significant others, making them central to service design and decision-making. Through active listening, feedback mechanisms, dedicated support, and inclusive opportunities (e.g., family days and consultation), families will feel respected, informed, and empowered throughout the period of imprisonment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 2 (Emergency & Contact Procedures) 	This Target centers on prioritising family voices through accessible communication, feedback protocols, and involvement in decision-making, ensuring families feel respected and empowered.
Deliver a High-Quality, Compliant, and Safeguarding-Focused Service	Provide an exemplary bespoke family service underpinned by robust quality assurance, full compliance with HMPPS standards, statutory requirements, and best practice guidelines. Embed rigorous safeguarding practices at every level to protect vulnerable adults and children, promote wellbeing, minimise risks, and ensure all interventions are safe, ethical, and rights based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 9 (Public Protection and Safeguarding) 	This Target directly addresses compliance, safeguarding protocols, training, and risk minimization to protect vulnerable individuals, aligning with ethical, rights-based service delivery.

5. Action Plan

Action Number	Objective	Date by	Owner
1.	Complete a full Prisoner Survey ascertaining feedback on family service provision to direct improvement and development	31 st March 26	Head of Connections
2.	Easily accessible Visitor survey to be placed on reception coffee tables for visitors to scan using phones.	12 th February 26	Head of Connections
3.	Conduct a whole prisoner review of access to visits to determine who on main population is accessing visits regularly and who is not. Ensuring all those who are not are contacted by family services offering support to establish connections.	12 th February 26	Head of Connections
4.	Implement induction process for all new prisoners as of February 2026	By February 2026	Head of Connections

References

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