



# project news

May 2007

## Welcome

The project has a wide scope. Therefore it is difficult to include everything in our newsletters but if there is anything you want further details on, please let us know. Likewise, if you would like to make suggestions or share knowledge and experience, please get in touch.

### Prison Based Activity

A review of the Reception and Induction process at each of our pilot establishments has been conducted. This included face to face surveys of prisoners at each location. Analysis of the findings is taking place currently and a final report to Governors will follow. The resulting recommendations will be incorporated into the existing action plans for the prisons and our project team will continue their work to help local staff work on these. Our thanks go to all staff and partners that participated in this process and those who facilitated the interviews with offenders.

### Information Review

Brinsford YOI was identified as the trial establishment for the information review. The first phase, erecting new notice boards and refreshing and re-presenting the information displayed in the visitor centre is now complete and we will be building on this work to further improve the displays there and make similar provision at the other establishments

In addition to visits centres, the information on visitor's routes within the pilot establishments is also to be refreshed and presented in a different way. Brinsford will again be first in this process.

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*Working together to improve outcomes for offenders and their families*



## HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET?

Registration of your organisation on our website means that you become a part of our searchable data base and will automatically receive copies of our newsletters and any other bulletins we publish.

It's simple to do – visit the website today at [www.familiesdomatter.co.uk](http://www.familiesdomatter.co.uk) and follow the instructions – be part of it and **REGISTER NOW!**

During our surveys of visitors as part of the review of prison visiting, it emerged that, despite there being information available, a high proportion of visitors were either unaware of the Assisted Prison Visiting Unit (APVU) or were unclear on the type of financial assistance available and their eligibility. This had also been highlighted by partner organisations, both in the West Midlands and other regions. With the help of Alan Jones of APVU, we commissioned a set of high visibility marketing materials for the service, to see if this would help. Posters and leaflets will be tested at our pilots during June & July. They will be available in visitor centres and visits halls. They will also be freely available on the wings and we have specifically chosen an A2 leaflet to enable prisoners to enclose them in written correspondence to their families.



### ***HMYOI Brinsford***

The walls of the Visitor Centre at Brinsford have undergone something of a transformation in recent weeks. Old notice boards and their contents have been removed and replaced by new, lockable boards displaying refreshed and updated information. Notices have been displayed in distinct subject groupings e.g: transport, visiting procedure etc and information has been simplified. Visitor



Centre staff have been very supportive of the scheme and helped considerably. It has already been noticed that there is more interest in the information by those visiting in the new displays. Staff have also noticed an increase in the number of APVU application packs being taken since they have been placed adjacent to the board advertising the service. Feedback is welcomed so that the displays continue to improve as they are rolled out at each of the pilot establishments – Shrewsbury is next.....

### ***HMP Shrewsbury***

Work has progressed on the major refurbishment of the visits room at Shrewsbury. The new dedicated play area is now almost complete and stocked with toys and has received many very positive comments. Prisoners have been actively involved in the development of the facilities. Two colourful murals are currently being painted to fill the walls. A competition was held to design the notice for the area and the winning entry is currently being worked up into permanent signage for the area. Discussions are currently underway to provide a child/family support worker in the visits hall every weekend and on occasions during school holidays and we will be actively looking at whether volunteers can be recruited to support this work.

### ***HMYOI Stoke Heath***

The play area in the visits hall at Stoke Heath is almost complete. The Pre-School Learning Alliance will be providing a dedicated play leader for two sessions per week as soon as preparations are completed. This is a big improvement for an establishment that prior to this scheme had nothing to offer visiting families with children.

### ***HMP&YOI Drake Hall***

The visits room at Drake Hall has now been provided with a food servery. That together with other improvements to the visits area has been received very positively by visitors to the establishment.

### ***HMP Birmingham***

The outside atrium in the visitor centre has been cleared and slab laid. This area is visible from all

areas inside the centre and was neglected, somewhat spoiling the appearance of what is a relatively newly decorated centre. A play area has now been identified within the visits hall and work is in progress on fitting it out and equipping it.

### **General**

To build on the project's activity around families visiting prison, officers involved with the visiting process at all our pilot establishments will receive training provided by Annetta Bennett of Kids VIP over the summer.

We will shortly be conducting an independent Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) at a selected establishment. This will ensure that the project develops services and facilities that are inclusive. The findings will provide a potential model of good practice for other establishments.

### **Research & Evaluation**



The consultancy work by PA Consulting detailed in the last newsletter is now complete. This piece of work was 'troubleshooting' for the project rather than research. It examined the project environment with a view to establishing the best way forward for the project, especially in the community setting. PA looked at answering three main questions:

- What are the current partnership arrangements and what is the capacity to support the delivery of the project – ***can we do it?***
- What are the existing performance management & monitoring and to what extent can these be used to use these to evidence the impact of the project – ***can we prove we did it?***
- What are the risks and issues the project faces – ***what will get in the way of us doing it?***

PA were asked to give the project a very practical report with recommendations that would enable work to focus on areas with maximum potential benefit and risks and issues to be overcome early. Their work included identifying and talking to key stakeholders in our pilot areas and. Focus groups were also held that enabled round the table discussion with partners. The findings will largely drive community based activity, particularly in the early stages. The project team has acted quickly on the findings and has already addressed some of the recommendations.

### **Community based Activity**



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Gill Scott to our team, who is on secondment from Telford & Wrekin Borough Council. Gill will be based at The Swan Centre in Stirchley and will be covering the whole of the Telford & Wrekin local authority area for the project. Gill brings to the team a wealth of experience in working with families in the community stretching back over many years. She has spent her early weeks being introduced to the prison environment, the Family Man course and establishing herself within the community partnership in Telford. Gill's contact details appear on the last page of this newsletter.

In Telford & Wrekin, the project will sit within the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and will report progress to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. We are currently working actively with partners in Coventry to establish the project there, examining the options available that would enable us to compare and contrast alternative approaches in the pilot community areas to maximise the learning.

### Parenting/Relationship Education & Training



Our pilot establishments now all have agreed training plans in place. These plans contain all types of family type interventions, from visitor inductions, to structured family days, to parenting/relationship education, to family mediation and more. A single evaluation framework will allow comparisons to be made between existing provision and new/different approaches.

We are holding an event on 22<sup>nd</sup> May for key personnel involved in family in prisons in the West Midlands. Delegates will have a packed agenda and we will be asking those who attend to give comprehensive feedback and information, so we can get a good idea what is happening across the region and not just in our pilot establishments. Once we have had time to gather the results, we will be compiling a special edition of our newsletter specifically around this area of our project. This will contain full details of our current work and plans for the remainder of the project.

### Partner Events & News



### Post-Event Reports

#### Reaching Out – A Conference on Social Exclusion 28 March 2007

This conference was run by the Social Exclusion Task Force held locally in Birmingham. It was one of three similar conferences being held in different regions throughout the country. There were some dynamic and engaging speakers including Polly Toynbee and Lord Victor Adebawale. They both talked about the inequalities within society particularly in relation to wealth and opportunity but were of the view that sufficient funds were available to tackle social exclusion but monies had to be targeted and spent effectively. Lord Adebawale advocated consultation with the end user prior to construction of action plans and also said that commissioning "was everything" both in relation to understanding the customer and the market as well as procuring services. Workshops then followed which addressed better partnership working and linking in with other agenda's e.g. the Every Child Matters agenda. It was a full and invigorating day and produced a variety of views and ideas which the Social Exclusion Task Force took back with them.

#### Family Man – Dad's Inside Seminar 29 March 2007

Doug Hemmings attended this event on behalf of the team and in so doing was treated to a visit to the House of Lords which is where this event was held! The Governor of HMP Wandsworth together with the Head of Resettlement spoke about the positive impacts that the Family Man course had had at their establishment particularly on those more challenging prisoners. Safe Ground have provided support to HMP Wandsworth in delivering the

Family Man programme. HMP Belmarsh also provided anecdotes of positive effects upon participants in their establishment.

Baroness Scotland gave her firm endorsement of the Family Man course having observed delivery of it at various locations. She said that the drop out rate for the course was low and it enabled prisoners to make more of their potential.

Most impressive was a presentation given by a graduate of the course who explained the positive effect it had had upon his life, enabling him to change his outlook and therefore make different life choices.

The conference messages were well received, with attendees' identifying the links between the content of courses and the all of Pathways featuring in the Prison Service Resettlement structure.

### Forthcoming event

#### **National Family Learning Network Conference Exploring Ideas, Discovering Opportunities**

**4 June 2007 at The Botanical Gardens, Birmingham**

The NFLN are holding this high profile conference in Birmingham to explore ideas and discover opportunities for developing family learning. There are to be 15 different, exciting and interactive workshops from which to select. Early booking is encouraged to ensure that your choice of workshops can be accommodated. To view the full programme please visit

[www.familylearningnetwork.com](http://www.familylearningnetwork.com)

### Publications



#### **Families Do Matter Website**

Please do take time to look at our website at [www.familiesdomatter.co.uk](http://www.familiesdomatter.co.uk). You can **register** as an individual to receive newsletters and ad hoc publications upon release and **registering your organisation** will ensure that you become part of our searchable database. Go onto the website at [www.familiesdomatter.co.uk](http://www.familiesdomatter.co.uk) and from the home page click on Partnerships from where you can register.

If you would like to register but are unsure how to do so online, please give me a call, I will ask a few basic questions and then I can then complete the registration process for you – Janet Chinnock: 0121 345 2863 mobile: 07796 997242.

Work has now begun on the creation of a virtual library on our website which will include documents and links to other useful and interesting publications. If you have anything that you would like to be included please get in contact.



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