

# HMP Northumberland Family Pathway



Andrew Carr  
Front of House Manager

October 2018

**sodexo**  
QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

## **Message from the Director:**

*“Maintaining links with friends, families and children is a hugely motivating factor for offenders that can positively influence behavioural change and directly reduce reconviction rates. At HMP Northumberland we are committed to working with families, the local community and voluntary sector partners to help our residents to maintain meaningful family contact throughout their period of custody. We want to strengthen the relationship between HMP Northumberland and the families of those affected by imprisonment to ensure that everyone receives the best possible support, maintains important links with loved ones and is able to prepare for release.*

*This family pathway document is designed to assist staff, service users and providers in navigating the range of services on offer at HMP Northumberland, and provides a guide for accessing the various areas of provision.*

*We aim to facilitate continuity of care and support, so that where families are already working with services in the community, we will make efforts to ensure that the family member who is in custody is either able to access the service or a suitable equivalent, or where this is not possible (for example where community services are not funded for delivery in prisons) to provide appropriate signposting to services at the pre-release stage as part of resettlement planning.*

*Where there are identified gaps in service provision we will seek to build creative partnerships in order to improve delivery and resettlement outcomes.*

*I am proud to be leading an establishment that works to reduce reoffending, protect the public and keep people safe. This approach is in line with the purpose of Sodexo Justice; to change lives for the better by reducing re-offending and risk of harm, and improving the Quality of Life of those under our supervision and care.*

*If you are a family member or loved one of a person in our custody, or are considering working with us, you can be assured that safety is our top priority. I have made a personal pledge to introduce and embed a safety culture at HMP Northumberland with the aim that staff, residents and visitors end the day in the same physical condition as they started it.”*



*Nick Leader*

*Director*

# HMP NORTHUMBERLAND

**‘Our aim is to change lives  
for the better’**



*“My report is not sentimental about prisoners’ families, as if they can, simply by their presence, alchemise a disposition to commit crime into one that is law abiding.”*

*“However, I do want to hammer home a very simple principle of reform that needs to be a golden thread running through the prison system and the agencies that surround it. That principle is that relationships are fundamentally important if people are to change.*

**(Importance of strengthening prisoners' family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime” Lord Farmer, August 2017)**

The Family Pathway which is described in the pages that follow is set out, as far as is possible, as a logical progression of the offender journey from pre-sentence to post-release. Because the needs of our residents and their families are complex, and because we work with a number of partners and stakeholders who may be involved in delivering more than one service at various stages of the sentence, we have necessarily had to condense some of the exceptionally detailed and intensive work that we do into an easily digestible format. However, contact details and website links are provided for ease of reference where additional information is required.

# **1. Pre-Custody and Reception**

The judicial process can be complicated and stressful, with families and their loved ones coping with the uncertainties and fears of a potential prison sentence often for a lengthy period of time. Some families may already be working with a range of community services, which following a custodial sentence will either continue or caseloads handed over to alternative providers. Families and their loved ones will need information about what happens next, support through the process, and signposting to facilities and services that can help.

Nepacs is a North East charity which aims to promote a positive future for prisoners, offenders and their relatives by supporting family ties at every stage of the criminal justice system.

Nepacs supports people when a loved one is sent to custody in those anxious early days when visiting prison remains a mysterious and daunting prospect. Much of their work is delivered by volunteers, who bring energy, warmth and friendship, and offer reassurance in the most challenging of circumstances.

The charity is also concerned about the damaging impact of a prison sentence on the families of prisoners themselves and seeks to limit this through informal support and signposting for help with finance, childcare and health issues. After all, the families haven't committed the crime, but they, especially the children, are greatly affected by the punishment.

Nepacs offers support at Newcastle, Teesside and Durham Crown Courts, where staff and volunteers provide relevant and up-to-date information on prison visits, ID, booking lines and maintaining contact with family members. The courts team also offers a telephone support listening service, which provides ongoing short term support to families, seeking to alleviate worries and anxiety at a time when family members are trying to cope with their changing circumstances.

Following allocation to Northumberland, Nepacs manages the visitors' centre, which is the first point of contact for families and friends who are visiting their loved one. Nepacs provides a wide range of information and advice for visitors, and can also put families in touch with the Family Support team based in the prison. Its staff team presents a welcoming environment for first time visitors to the prison, offering a tea bar and friendly face to people who may understandably have anxieties, concerns and fears. As well as the service provided directly to families, Nepacs is also involved in delivering "Hidden Sentence" and "Connect Five" training packages for prison staff, which aim to raise awareness and enhance staff skills in the needs of family and how the imprisonment of a family member impacts upon them.

[www.nepacs.co.uk](http://www.nepacs.co.uk)

Liz Arthur – Team Leader NEPACS, Visitor Centre, 01670 383736,  
01670762630, [larthur@nepacs.co.uk](mailto:larthur@nepacs.co.uk)

Jane Leak – Project Coordinator, Support at Courts, [jleak@nepacs.co.uk](mailto:jleak@nepacs.co.uk)





Family Gateway is an award-winning North East charity that is committed to using local people to deliver enterprising community-led solutions to family and child poverty. Since 2011 Family Gateway (formerly Tyne Gateway) has been supporting whole families who are living in poverty or disadvantage and struggling to bring up their children on very little money. The charity employs local parents who have experienced and overcome the same or similar issues as those it supports, and trains them to offer bespoke packages of whole family support to deliver sustainable change in their own communities across North Tyneside, South Tyneside and South East Northumberland. Family Gateway's aim is to improve life chances for children by building resilience and stability in the family home, working with the whole family to tackle issues including:

- Long term unemployment
- Severe debt and financial distress
- Addiction
- Domestic abuse
- Poor school attendance
- Ill-health
- Poor housing conditions
- Child neglect

The charity works alongside the range of professional services that are there to help families, but that often don't have the capacity to work with them or have so far failed to encourage them to accept support. The families that are helped are often referred to as 'hard to reach', meaning that they do not easily engage with professional services through fear or stigma and are therefore often missing that professional help they need; Family Gateway can either offer that whole package of support or can often be the 'bridge' to more specialist services.

Family Gateway may already be working with families prior to sentencing, and their entrepreneurs can assist in attending appointments, referring to other agencies, benefits and safeguarding. Should the individual be found not guilty, Family Gateway may still be able to assist the family with these and other concerns. Steering those found not guilty or not given a custodial sentence to Family Gateway may prevent offences being committed in the future by tackling some of the factors that make people more likely to offend.

[www.familygateway.co.uk](http://www.familygateway.co.uk)

Julie Croft Family Gateway 07715659554

[julie.croft@familygateway.co.uk](mailto:julie.croft@familygateway.co.uk)

Sally Booth Family Gateway 07917123650

[sally.booth@familygateway.co.uk](mailto:sally.booth@familygateway.co.uk)

Howdon Community Centre, Denbigh Avenue, Howdon, Wallsend NE280PP



Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company works with 5000 adult offenders at any one time, on community orders, in prison and on release from prison. On 1 February 2015 the ownership of Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company transferred to Sodexo as part of the government's Transforming Rehabilitation programme. This provided significant opportunities for harnessing the strengths of both prison and community services under the same corporate umbrella, and providing an offer which joins up services "through the gate".

Northumbria CRC does not supervise all of HMP Northumberland's residents, and the prison ensures that there are strong and effective links in place with all of the local CRCs, and the National Probation Service, with whom it works. At the pre-custody phase, the CRCs are specifically responsible for the completion of the Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST), which highlights a resettlement plan and initiates referral to other agencies where there is an identified need.

[www.northumbriacrc.co.uk](http://www.northumbriacrc.co.uk)



## **2. Reception**

HMP Durham is the Reception Prison serving the courts in the Newcastle, Durham, Teesside and Cumbria area, and where some individuals may also have spent a period of time on remand prior to sentencing. HMP Durham allocates convicted prisoners to HMP Northumberland shortly after sentence (often after only a few days), so a key consideration for both prisons is to work in close partnership to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents during this vulnerable period. Much of the immediate safeguarding and familiarisation for residents therefore starts at HMP Durham, however a reception and induction process is also delivered at HMP Northumberland, both to remind residents of information that they may have not fully taken in at the sending establishment, and also to provide an orientation specific to the regime and provision specific to Northumberland.

Families and friends often find the early days of custody equally overwhelming, especially if they are unfamiliar with the prison system, and will need information and practical support to help alleviate their anxieties.

[www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/durham](http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/durham)

[www.hmpnorthumberland.co.uk](http://www.hmpnorthumberland.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 383 100



## Induction

Residents transferred to HMP Northumberland are initially located on House Block 3 or House Block 11 where they are informed about the prison regime, how to access key services such as healthcare and personal finances, as well as the employment, education and offending behaviour opportunities that are available to them. Staff will deal with immediate concerns and assist with any initial problems such as family contact, visits or restrictions that may have been imposed by the courts. One of the most important components of the induction process is showing residents how to book a visit and ensuring that they can make telephone calls to friends and family. Induction staff will also signpost to other agencies and programmes that may be beneficial during the early stage of custody.



## Change Grow Live (CGL)

Whilst on induction, all residents will be seen by a member of the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART). At HMP Northumberland, non-clinical DART services are provided by a charity called “Change, Grow, Live” (CGL). CGL supports people in prisons to consider the effects of their drug use on their own and other people’s lives and uses psychosocial interventions to encourage people to make positive changes in their behaviour. CGL’s aim, as a key partner in delivering the prison’s substance misuse strategy, is to enable individuals to stop or reduce their drug taking so as to reduce the harm that they are causing themselves and the profound impact on their families, and to help prevent their reoffending. Services are delivered through one-to-one and group work and cover topics such as drug and alcohol awareness, relapse prevention, harm minimisation - including overdose advice and testing for blood borne viruses - healthy living skills and relaxation techniques. CGL also works with individuals with a history of offending and their families to help rebuild damaged family relationships and support families to remain together, and employs a dedicated family worker who works closely with the Nepacs family support worker to facilitate family and relationship support.

[www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)

Amanda Taylor, DART Family Worker,



## **Chaplaincy**

During the induction process residents will also meet one of the chaplaincy team. The chaplaincy at HMP Northumberland is an ecumenical provision which, as well as catering for the needs of all faiths, provides pastoral care for both residents and staff. Prison Chaplains can provide valuable personalised support to residents, and will often be able to facilitate help with maintaining family ties and links into other community and faith-based support networks.

Phil Longhurst, Managing Chaplain.



## **3. During Custody**

Serving a custodial sentence can be very stressful on both the resident and their family. Issues that may be easy to resolve in society can be made much harder by a custodial sentence and the additional difficulties imposed by not having immediate access to loved ones can lower resilience and increase anxiety levels for everyone involved. This can lead to heightened emotions which can be expressed through risky and destructive behaviours such as self-harm, substance misuse and violence. We make every effort to ensure that the right support is available to residents and their families to ensure that the custodial experience ultimately has an overall positive impact, and as an absolute minimum does not cause additional harm.

We acknowledge that not all family relationships are supportive, positive or functional. Indeed, family members may be the victims of the offence for which an individual is imprisoned, and we take our public protection responsibilities extremely seriously. Part of our duty of care towards families is to ensure that no further harm is caused to them as a consequence of a failure to enforce the directions of the courts, which include protection from harassment, child safeguarding and compliance with non-contact restrictions. The prison public protection unit and security department work assiduously to ensure that victims are protected through appropriate and lawful monitoring of communications, thorough risk assessments and swift and proportionate action where attempts are made to continue criminality whilst in custody.

Further information can be provided by:

Paul Alexander, Head of Offender Management Unit,

Clair Hutchings-Budd, Head of Security and Operations.





## **Nepacs Family Support Team**

As well as the services provided in visits, Nepacs employs a dedicated Family Support Team to work with residents throughout the whole establishment who are experiencing problems with family ties or are concerned about the impact of their sentence on their loved ones. The team provides practical support to residents and their families with issues such as negotiating child contact, local authority care and adoption proceedings, liaison with children's services and schools, support with family court proceedings and building/maintaining family ties. The team also arrange specialist visits such as first or final contact visits and "New Dad" visits.

Additional services provided include "Visitors Voice" forums for families to express their concerns and ideas, and the Nepacs Youth Project which brings together children who may feel unable to discuss their experiences at school or with friends to create a support network via one to one support, trips out and youth zones.

For further information, contact Alex O'Sullivan, Nepacs Operations Manager, [AOSullivan@nepacs.co.uk](mailto:AOSullivan@nepacs.co.uk)

## **Interventions and Services**

Whilst in custody, residents will be referred to programmes and interventions which will allow them the opportunity to address their offending behaviour and reduce the risk of re-offending in future. HMP Northumberland offers a range of formal accredited interventions, including a suite of sex offender treatment programmes, that include the option of inviting families to post-course reviews and celebration events to recognise the work that has been done and progress made in the resident's treatment journey.

## **Visits**

HMP Northumberland facilitates social visits in a soft furnished visits hall with play areas which are run by Nepacs play workers. The prison is sensitive to the need to balance security with an atmosphere that is conducive to maintaining family ties, and our experienced searching staff are often complemented on their approach to visitors and children in particular.

As an enhancement to the normal social visits provision, we run dedicated family visits around twice a month, where up to 25 residents can use whole of the visits hall with their children. There is access to various toys, games and activities including games consoles with a virtual reality headset. We also utilise the gymnasium for various activities and regularly organise special events such as a bouncy castle, Halloween, Easter and Christmas parties, and full day summer visits including a buffet meal.



Our award winning front of house team at the 2018 Service Excellence Awards picture with Matt Dawson

## Story Book Dads

As part of the family visit we run “Storybook Dads Live”. By sending a bedtime story disc to their children, imprisoned parents can provide comfort and reduce the trauma caused by the forced separation. Doing something positive and tangible for their child increases their self-esteem and belief in themselves as a valued parent.

As reading to children is the most important thing a parent can do to help with their education, the story disc also give imprisoned parents the opportunity to make a positive impact on their children’s social and learning outcomes.

For many families, these story discs are a lifeline, helping to heal rifts and enabling imprisoned parents to maintain or build vital relationships with their children. Prisoners that keep in contact with their families are up to 6 times less likely to re-offend.

[www.storybookdads.org.uk](http://www.storybookdads.org.uk)



## Other Schemes

We recognise the specific needs of those serving life, indeterminate and lengthy sentences, and organise family visit days, where this group of residents and their families have the opportunity to relax in a less restrictive visits environment, with activities that are facilitated by the front of house team and a buffet lunch provided.

We run Father /Child visits about three times a year in which other parents and guardians leave the children 15 minutes after the start and return to the visitors centre, leaving the fathers to spend quality time with their children with the same resources as on a family visit.

We have recently introduced occasional homework clubs (around 3 times a year) where a limited number of residents have an early evening visit with their family where, with the support of Nepacs and the prison education department they can assist in the completion of their children’s homework.

All of the special visits above are accessible by request to the Front of House manager. Although some basic restrictions are in place in order to ensure safeguarding, security and an appropriate atmosphere, the prison tries to ensure that special visits are provided on the basis of need rather than any other factor. For further information contact Andy Carr, Front of House manager.



## Angel Tree

The Chaplaincy team at HMP Northumberland continues to deliver pastoral care throughout the custodial period and provides support with breaking bad news and funeral/dying relative issues as well as linking with other prisons if a resident is transferred. Chaplaincy manages the Prison Visitors service which provides friendly volunteers to visit residents who are unable to benefit from social visits, and the team also co-ordinates the Angel Tree programme each Christmas. Christmas is especially difficult for prisoners and their children, and Angel Tree lessens the devastation experienced as a result of parental absence by not only helping families connect and build relationships, but by providing children with much-needed joy. Local Prison Fellowship volunteers work with churches and prison chaplains to buy, wrap and deliver the presents. As long as residents are allowed access to their children, they are given the opportunity to apply for a gift to be sent to them. Each gift is dispatched as though it is from the parent in prison and is accompanied by a personal message written by the parent for their child to make the gift extra special. The parent is also given the option of including an age-appropriate Christian story book in their child's gift.

[www.prisonfellowship.org/campaigns/angel-tree-christmas](http://www.prisonfellowship.org/campaigns/angel-tree-christmas)



## Harm Reduction, Safer Custody and Safer Prisons Line

We understand the concerns that families outside may have and the limitations on contacting their loved ones. The prison offers a Safer Prisons Line, which families may use to let us know about any concerns they may have about their loved one. The call is routed to a voice mail service that is checked at least twice every day with concerns immediately forwarded to the appropriate manager so that they can be acted upon.

[www.hmpnorthumberland.co.uk/home/contact-us](http://www.hmpnorthumberland.co.uk/home/contact-us) or telephone 01670 383 713.

If an individual is struggling to cope and it is felt that the direct intervention of family members could be

beneficial, we can facilitate individual visits which take place outside of visits hours.

**Violence**reduction  
HMP Northumberland

friend?

visitor?

family  
member?

**SAFER CUSTODY LINE**

**01670 383 713**

leave a message and the information will be acted on, 7 days a week



**contact us if you are concerned about a resident**

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QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

## **DART**

The DART family worker provides a link to the family and local community, involving them in programme reviews, 121 family work and covers the impact of family on substance use as well as the impact substance use has on the family. The family worker can be involved in CafCASS interviews, child protection, medication and visiting the family as part of social visits.

## **4. Pre-Release**

As residents enter the last six months of their custodial sentence it is vital that plans are made to reduce the possibility of a return to offending, whilst being sensitive to the needs of the family and other relationships whose situations may have changed during the period of absence. During this time issues such as housing, licence conditions, training and employment opportunities need to be considered.

### **Nepacs Family Support Team**

Nepacs delivers a specialist resettlement programme involving residents' family members. The "Re:Connect" intervention consists of a "Re:Settle" brief intervention where residents and their family are offered an information booklet with typical concerns for release. This is followed up with additional support if required.

The "Re:Connect" element of the programme delivers group work sessions to residents which explore the impact of their offending on their families and issues and concerns for release. Families are also supported to complete similar tasks to prepare for a facilitated family meeting to address concerns and develop an action plan, linking with community based agencies, to aid successful release.

General advice and support is also available to those not completing the course.





## **Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC's) and/or Probation (NPS):**

12 weeks prior to the end of sentence the CRC Through The Gate Resettlement Team will complete a Basic custody Screening Part 2 interview that will address Resettlement needs including: Accommodation, Financial Management and Income (including benefits), Debt, Education and Training, Employment, Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing, Health and disabilities, Thinking Behaviour and Attitudes, Ex Service Personnel Support, Support for Sex Workers and Support for victims of Domestic Abuse. Information, advice and guidance will be offered to all. Where appropriate, referrals will be made to dedicated support services in custody and for local CRC cases referrals will be made to Operational Partners in the community to continue this work and support. For NPS and out of area CRC residents, recommendations for referrals will be made via the pre-release plan for the offender manager or responsible officer in the community to action



## **DART team and Support Workers**

Pre-release DART services include harm minimisation activities, including the prescribing of Naloxone for at-risk individuals, linking to on-ward referrals and offering family support as residents continue their recovery journey following release.

## **Family Gateway**

The Family Gateway Service will during the pre-release phase introduce the Family Entrepreneur to the resident and his family, whose support will continue through any licence period and beyond.

## **5. Licence**

Following release most residents will remain under licence for a period of time during which their movements and activities may be subject to conditions and restrictions. This period is a structured time during which the individual can reintegrate, return to the family home or re-establish appropriate contact and avoid relapsing into criminal behaviour.

### **Departure Lounge**


Nepacs work with staff from the Offender Management Unit to provide “Departure Lounge” facility in the Visits Centre which is external to the prison, on the day of release, where residents can meet their families, use the tea bar and contact relevant agencies, making a positive start with meeting their licence conditions. Residents are also offered clothing, toiletries and “Veterans Packs”.

### **CRC's and Probation**

The CRC's work with everyone who is released from custody, in order to support each returning offender as they reintegrate back into the communities from which they came. Northumbria CRC uses a desistance based approach to rehabilitation, which is designed to give every ex-prisoner the opportunity to lead an offending- free lifestyle. By employing a strength- based model the CRC works to support ex-prisoners, through formal supervision which uses tailored interventions designed to help them avoid further offending. The CRC is also able to provide practical help to all ex-prisoners to secure accommodation, employment and access to recovery services, as well as many other types of support, by working in partnership with a number of dedicated operational partners who work through the gate with everyone seeking to make the move back into their local communities after serving a custodial sentence. Nepacs are also able to offer support once offenders are released on licence back into the community. Nepacs staff are co-located with CRC staff in Newcastle, Sunderland and South East Northumberland, and offer a range of family based interventions, including group work, 1;1 sessions and family meetings. Nepacs provides offenders and their families with information, advice, guidance and signposting to sources of help and information. Its staff work closely with the Family Support Team based in the prison and with CRC responsible officers, prison resettlement staff and other key staff workers.

### **Chaplaincy**

The Chaplaincy team provides continued support post-release, through various charities and churches.



*We believe that families hold the key to reducing reoffending and ensuring effective resettlement. We believe that if work is done to support the children and families of prisoners, helping them to maintain and strengthen contact, then it improves outcomes for all involved, including prisoners.*

**Helen Attewell**

**Chief Executive**

**Nepacs**

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