



2018–
2019



HALOW
(Birmingham)

IMPACT REPORT

Registered as a Charity No: 1150445 (formerly No: 1002675)
& Company Limited by Guarantee No: 8248116



WHY WE EXIST:

In the mid 1980's prisoner's wife Marie Curtis began helping others serving 'the second sentence', often isolated and marginalised outside of prison. This 24-hour self-helpline developed into **HALOW (Birmingham)** the charity.

Today, this legacy lives on as we continue to be a passionate and committed volunteer-led charity with lived experience at our heart, from our teams of dedicated volunteers right through to our staff and trustees.

30 years on and our work is needed more than ever. The prison population has more than doubled - as has the number of families whose lives are deeply affected as a result.



Latest statistics show that annually 312,000 children are affected by a parent being sent to prison - we do all we can, working in prisons and outside, to nurture relationships, build self-esteem and make visits special.



The evidence is indisputable: prisoners able to maintain strong relationships with family and others are 39% less likely to re-offend on release.

Positive visiting experiences are crucially important - we work with prisons to continually develop ways families can be included, valued and listened to.

WHAT WE DO:

We work in prisons providing information, advice and support to visitors. Our experienced staff teams are based at the Family Pathway Centre (Oakwood) and the Visitors' Centre (Birmingham); both centres are open seven days a week. We create a warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere for families visiting their loved ones. Our services range from delivering activities for children and young people to specialist family support interventions to rebuild family ties and strengthen relationships.

Our Mission

Our mission is 'to support prisoners, their children, families and significant others build, develop and strengthen their relationships and wellbeing'.



Our Vision

Our vision is to continue delivering high quality services to prisoner's families by ensuring we are at the forefront of service delivery in prisons and the wider community.

Our Charitable Aims

A) To relieve poverty, sickness and distress among prisoners, ex offenders, their families and significant others in need of such relief.

B) To advance education by research into domestic issues relating to prisoners, ex-offenders, their families and significant others, and disseminate the useful results of such research.

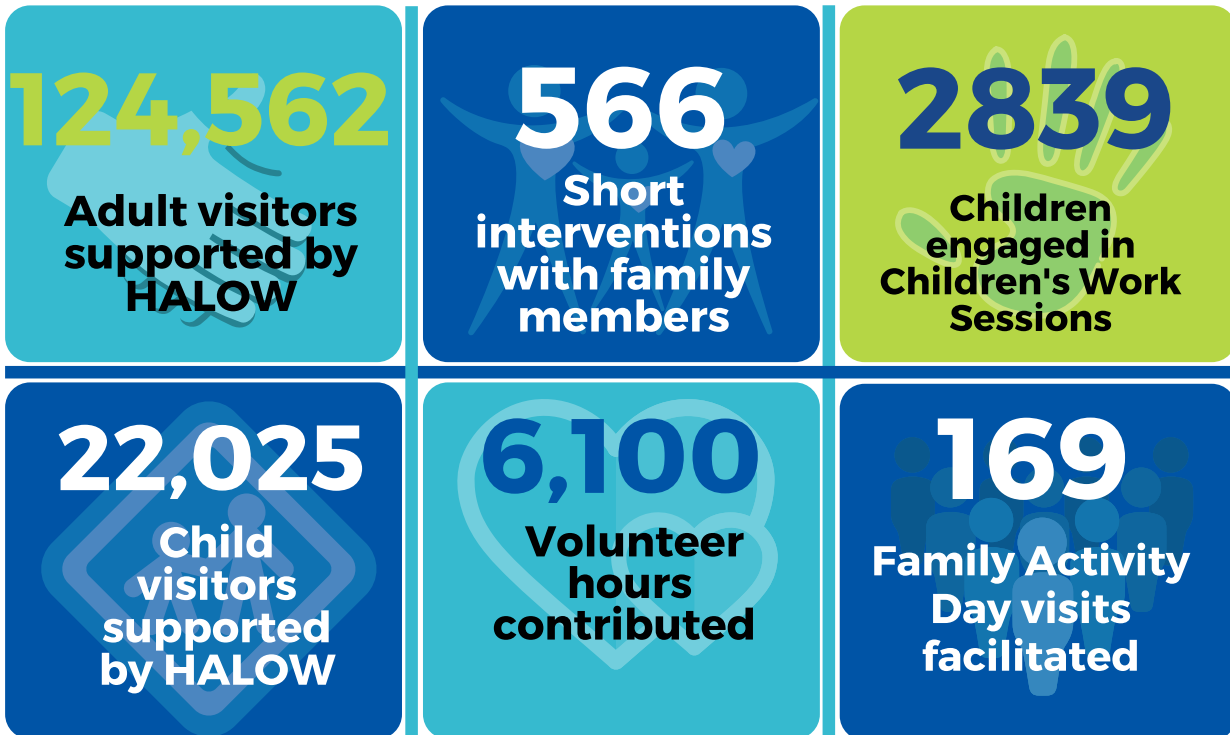
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"Relationships are fundamentally important if people are to change".
Lord Farmer 'Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties Policy Framework,
MoJ, 2017

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"For my partner to be able to see his daughter's development in ways he can't on a normal visit means a lot, and means he can interact with her better which has meant so much to our little girl."

OUR IMPACT 2018/19:



Feedback from our beneficiaries at both our centres 2018/19:

"Seeing my partner and daughter bonding has been amazing to see and I can only say thank you very much for giving us the opportunity".

"The first time I came into the visitors' centre the staff were great as I didn't have a clue what I was doing and was worried about my son. They are doing a great job".

"Lovely bonding time as a family, Small children can become so frustrated but baby has absolutely loved this visit. So appreciative and thankful to be part of this."

"My children absolutely love doing the activities and playing in the play area. Staff are amazing."

"Staff have always given their time and are very obliging regarding solving issues, as well as offering emotional support".

"I came for the first time and was very nervous and teary; the girls reassured me and guided me through the procedure. I felt warmth from inside them and felt I could ask them anything."

PRISONERS' FAMILIES STORIES- EVIDENCE OF NEED:

ANXIETY & FINANCIAL STRESS FACED BY PRISONERS' FAMILIES:

SARAH'S STORY

Sarah appeared particularly nervous while waiting in the Visitor's Centre for her first visit to see her boyfriend. Although she was aware of the need for photo ID, she did not have a passport or driving license and, through no fault of her own, her adoptive parents refused to hand over her birth certificate, preventing her from applying for either of these documents.

Instead, she brought a large selection of paperwork to prove her identity, including bank statements and utility bills, in the hope these would be sufficient. HALOW's staff called the prison on her behalf and the prison did ultimately accept this paperwork.

However, her anxiety was evident as she waited as she was not yet sure if she would be able to attend the visit and felt nervous about entering a prison for the first time, having had no previous experience of prisons and no other friends or family with a history of imprisonment.

She was also concerned about the ongoing expense of travelling to Birmingham and how she would likely be the only person to visit her boyfriend. Furthermore, she revealed that she had a history of anxiety and mental health issues, as well as 'everyday' stresses, including struggles to pay her rent and a breakdown in her own family relationships.



THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON CHILDREN VISITING DAD IN PRISON:

SAMI'S STORY

Sami is 2 years old and has struggled greatly with standard prison visits. He can become very frustrated that he cannot touch, play and move around with his Daddy and, when the visit ends, he gets very upset about leaving his father.



This reaction can become more intense after he and his mother have left the prison and, consequently, his temperature increases and he becomes unwell. Considering this impact on his health, his mother is thus unsure if she should continue to bring him to visits even though she knows he loves to see his father.

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN:

HARRY'S STORY

Harry is 8 years old and has struggled with friends. As his mother described, during a lesson, his Class were asked to explain what their parents did for work, to which Harry replied that his Daddy is in prison. His father being prison was seen as a normal part of Harry's life and his mother thus thought that he did not worry about the reaction from other children.

However, after the lesson, he was not invited to any parties and his mother has seen other parents preventing their children from saying goodbye to Harry at the school gates.

Harry was invited to his first party last weekend. Yet, he did not want to go as he does not think he has any friends.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE 2018/19:

Work supporting children and families at both our centres;

Children's Programme

- Year-round, age-appropriate themed activities ease the anxiety of visiting and help children express their feelings.
- During arts & crafts sessions children make cards, write poems and draw pictures to tell Dad how much they love him; these can be kept by Dad and are treasured memories of the visit.
- Parents share their concerns with our specialist staff who develop activities designed to build confidence, address issues like bullying and foster resilience.

Information Help-line

- It is hard to communicate directly with prison establishments; our telephone help-lines are busy all day with enquiries, particularly when a family member has just arrived in custody.

Family Support Work

- Casework service dealing with concerns either of prisoners or family members relating to child contact, school issues etc.
- In-depth support to individual family members, for example, concerning health & well-being or prison procedures.

Focus On - HMP Oakwood Family Pathway Centre



Relationship and Parenting Skills

- Pioneering 'Jolly Tots' programme for fathers and their children aged 0-2 years; 6 sessions cover feeding, changing nappies, bathing, creative play and learning paediatric first aid.
- 10 week accredited 'Nurturing' Programme helps fathers recognise the causes of challenging behaviours in children and how to address them.

Extended Family Interventions

- Veterans Days (3 per year), November Remembrance event (attended by the Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire), and partnership with Landau helping veterans find jobs and housing on release.
- Partner Days (3 per year) help couples build and strengthen relationship with a sit-down dinner, trust exercises, and quizzes etc.

Focus On: HMP Birmingham Visitors' Centre

Community Hub

- Visitors' Centre thriving community cafe, advocacy and information hub in partnership with the NewBigin Community Trust, Soho First, the Real Junk food Project Central and other local groups.

Multi-agency Support

- Open Days (4 per year) bring together a range of agencies on-site offering family and post-release support e.g. housing, substance misuse, employment, health promotion etc

The Environment

- New furniture provided by the prison has improved the visits experience for families
- The Peace Garden project led by Soho First, The Wildlife Trust and local volunteers has created an enhanced green space for visitors.



300 visitors told us how they felt before and after using our services.

Before



After

Before
Bewildering
Shocked
Terrified
Anxious
Scared
Out of Place
Horrible
Relaxed
Safer
Agitated
Comfortable

After
Welcoming
Helpful
Friendly
Comfortable
Emotional
Draining
Pleasant
Need
Very Welcoming
Positive
Relaxed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have delivered visitors' services for HMP Oakwood (G4S) and HMP Birmingham (HMPPS) for a number of years; we are immensely grateful to both establishments for the opportunity to continue working in partnership.

None of HALOW's work would be possible without the skill, experience and dedication of our staff and volunteer teams – this report highlights just a small amount of the exceptional work they carry out.

We are grateful to the Lloyds Bank Foundation for awarding an ENABLE Programme grant to HALOW (Birmingham) in 2018. This has enabled us to commission iSE (www.i-se.co.uk) to facilitate the IMPACT Report 2018/19, alongside support with governance and strategic planning.

The children and families stories form part of a short, qualitative piece of research 'The Impacts of Imprisonment and the Role of Prison Visits for Prisoners Families' written by Nathalie Hayes BSc, MA, MSc and funded by the Birmingham University Impact Internship Programme, 2019.

We gratefully rely on the generosity of Charitable Trusts to employ our teams of specialist Children's Workers and Family Support Workers. Every £1 we raise is used to support front-line services.



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