

# L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE



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# Family Learning in Prisons

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 LEARNING AND  
WORK INSTITUTE

Forum for Adult Learning

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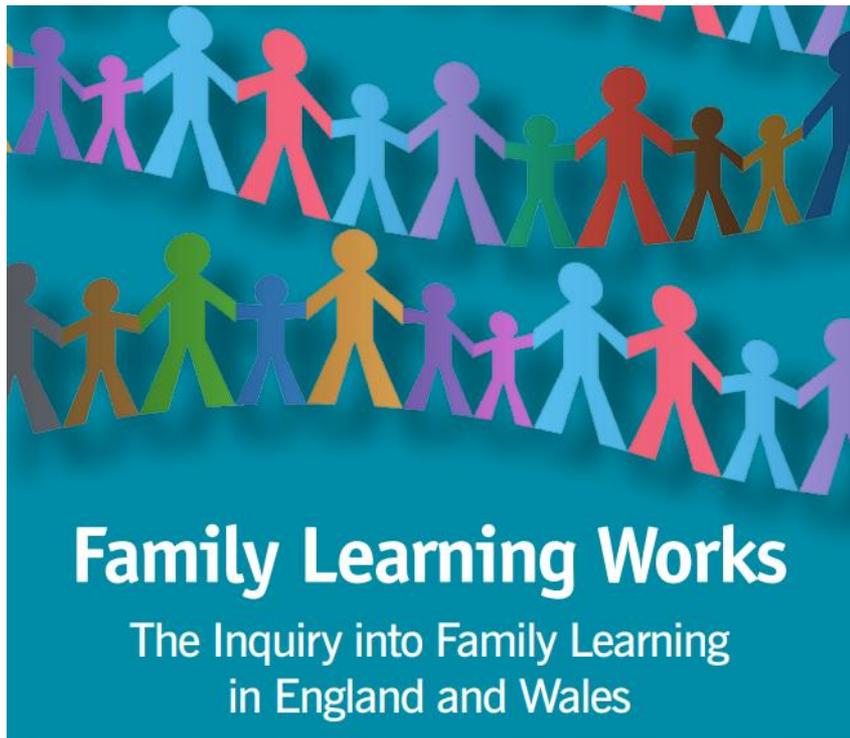


Scotland's Learning Partnership



Co-funded by the  
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# L&W Policy on Family Learning



## Family Learning Works

“Family learning can close the attainment gap and help end the ‘life-chance lottery’ by creating a culture of aspiration in every family.”

# National Family Learning Forum and FFLAG

## Resources:

[https://padlet.com/susan\\_easton1/family\\_learning](https://padlet.com/susan_easton1/family_learning)

EU UK  
Coordinator FL  
programme 2017  
- 2019

Family Learning Forum (NFLF) and FFLAG (Family Learning Local Authority Group)

LEARNER STORIES

CASE STUDIES

REPORTS

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ily - Leeds

id never read to my son until I

nded the 'Story Sacks' and 'Play

anguage' courses."

**Employment & Skills**  
Case Study

**Strengthening Families - Blackburn and**

Strengthening families is a nationally recognised evidence based parenting programme for parents/caregivers and young people aged 10 to 14 years.

Family Learning Works

The Inquiry into Family Le

England and Wales

niace\_family\_learning\_report\_ PDF document

niace

Confident Parent Confident

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# Prisons and Families

There are approximately

**200,000**

children in England and Wales with a parent in prison



**45%**

of prisoners lose contact with their family whilst in prison



Offenders who maintain family relationships and receive visits while in custody are

**38%**

less likely to reoffend than those who do not receive visits



**54%**

of offenders have children under 18 when they enter custody



Children of offenders are three times more likely to experience mental health problems, exhibit antisocial behaviour and become 'Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)'.



**Two-thirds** of women prisoners are mothers



**65%**

of boys who have had a father in prison go on to offend themselves



# The Purpose of Prison Education

The purpose of education in prisons is to give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities. It should also build social capital and improve the well-being of prisoners during their sentences and once released.

# Prison education – Current picture

- There are prisoners studying at every level from basic primary education to advanced degrees.
- 47% of prisoners have no qualifications prior to custody.
- 42% of adult prisoners have been permanently excluded from school
- 29% of offenders have a learning difficulty or disability.
- 65% and 59% respectively of the 64,000 prisoners assessed upon reception have maths or English abilities at or below the level of an 11 year-old.

# **‘Children and Families’**

For many years, ‘Children and Families’ has been one of the acknowledged rehabilitation pathways in English prisons

The pathway assumes that ‘maintaining strong relationships with families and children can play a major role in helping prisoners to make and sustain changes that help them to avoid re-offending’

# Family matters

- Prisoners' children are at twice the risk as their peers of developing antisocial behavior and poor mental health outcomes
- Prisoners' families are negatively affected socially, financially, emotionally and practically by the fact of a family member being imprisoned



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkR93kxBmj4>

# Children and Families - Driver for change

## Lord Farmer's Review August 2017

Investigated how engagement with families in the adult male prison estate could reduce reoffending and address intergenerational crime

Clear and simple structure for accountability as regards prisoners' contact and relationships with their family

Family ties included in accountabilities.

Performance Agreements with governors must include a 'local family offer'

Family work should include:

Visitor base/centre and visiting services

Suitable staffing structure

Extended visits

Family learning

'Gateway' communication system.

[https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/farmer\\_review\\_briefing\\_september\\_2017.pdf](https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/farmer_review_briefing_september_2017.pdf)

# Farmer Review

- Places family ties at the heart of prison reform
- Articulates how family engagement can reduce reoffending and assist in addressing intergenerational crime
- Recommendations to enhance a prisoner's relationships with their families, including **Family learning**
- MoJ is taking forward recommendations, including giving governors the budget and flexibility to help prisoners keep important family ties

# Benefits of Family Learning

- Family learning programmes in prisons result in benefits for offenders, their children and their families
- Farmer Review emphasised the importance of evaluation, evidence and data, in order to ensure quality across family learning programmes

# Offenders

- Changed attitudes to parenting
- Maintain, rebuild and strengthen their family relationships
- Continue their own learning
- Increase their own self – esteem
- Improve their skills (e.g. Maths and English)
- Reduce reoffending

# Children

- Maintain, improve or rebuild father/mother– child relationships and sibling relationships;
- Increase their confidence
- improve early learning
- Support to learn and achieve at school
- Reduce intergenerational transmission of crime

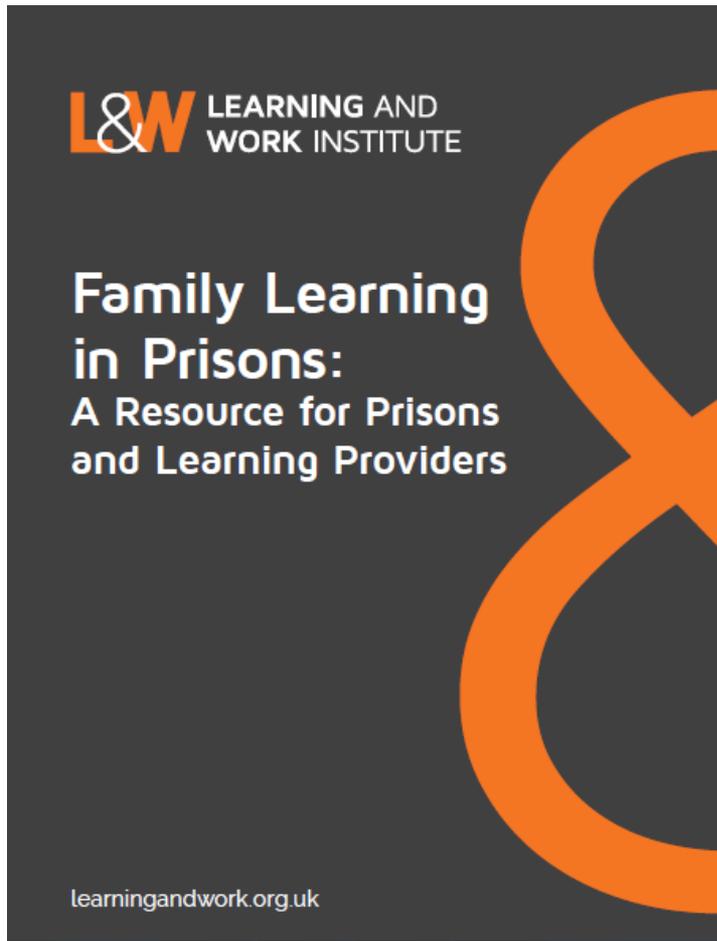
# Families

- Build strong family relationships
- Increase family contact
- Increase dialogue and interaction
- Increased time parents spend with their children
- Ensure that, when released, parents are more involved in their children's lives
- Wives, husbands, partners, significant others better able to work as a team to nurture and children and each other.

# Prisons

- Improve prisoners' social interactions with each other and with prison staff
- Supports the process of prisoners to settling down into and coping with prison life
- Improves prisoner behaviour and conduct, including improved behaviour on the wing, in
- employment, workshops and education etc.
- Gives prison staff a more positive view of prisoners

# Family Learning In Prisons



- Reviews family learning programmes in prisons
- Summarises evidence
- Demonstrates that Family Learning has a positive effect on offenders and their families

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LW-Family-Learning-In-Prison-Report-V3.pdf>

# Family Learning Programmes

- **Family relationship programmes**
- **Family Days**
- **Family reading and storytelling Programmes**
- **Homework Clubs**
- **Transformational programmes**

# Family Learning Programmes

Informal engagement activities to formal, accredited learning programmes

- Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) programmes
- Wider Family Learning (WFL) programmes which encourage adults to engage with their children in learning.
- “Good parenting skills”, “Learning and Playing” and “Creativity and Games”, Family reading, language, maths and parenting programmes

Pact's "Building Bridges" is a four- day relationship building course for younger prisoners and a parent or other significant adult relative who is required to attend the course alongside the prisoner.

Evaluation<sup>22</sup> of a course delivered to young males and their families found that the programmes succeeded in strongly improving the communication between parents and their sons in prison, resulting in:

- Improved behaviour of the young person
- Greater involvement of the parent with their child's sentence
- A greater chance of the parent allowing the young person to return home
- Opportunities for case workers and Youth Offending Team (YOT) workers to work with the parents.

Designed to maintain and improve relationships between family members

# Family relationship programmes

## HMP Woodhill - bringing families together prior to release

Community Learning Milton Keynes and Pact work with families to deliver "Family Days" and "Father and Children Days" – activity based visits organised by the prison to bring families together prior to father's release date.

"We witnessed fathers working together with their children on projects that could be taken home and treasured, building up relationships that they may not have been able to do on a regular visit... Over the family learning impacted the children the most, they enjoyed being given the opportunity to come into the prison and spend quality time with their fathers..."

Short interventions providing opportunities for families to spend quality time together and take part in activities which promote engagement between family members.

# Family Days

## HMP Leeds – working with partners

The HMP Leeds Homework Club takes place in the Jigsaw Visitor Centre in HMP Leeds and is delivered in partnership by centre staff, Manchester College and HMP Leeds. In the homework club, prisoners support their children to complete homework tasks within the prison.

- Homework clubs take place in both female and male prisons, often supported by library staff, peer mentors and/or volunteers and enabling parents to play a positive role in their children's lives
- Evaluation demonstrates that homework clubs are valued by both parents in prison and other family members as a positive opportunity
- for maintaining relationships..

# Homework Clubs

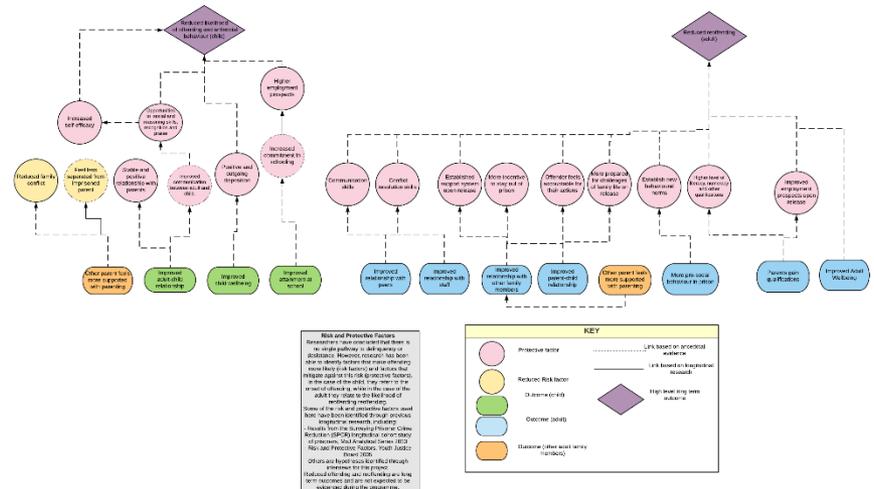
# Commissioning

- The Prison and Courts Reform Bill (2017) gives Prison Governors control over their budgets for education, employment and health
- Empowered prison governors have the freedom to set the strategic vision for their establishment's education programme
- This provides an opportunity to develop and
- expand family learning provision in prisons.
- Family learning commissioned under EPL (Engagement and Progression) learning funding
- Family Learning Commissioning Boards provide QA

# Evidence of impact

- To argue successfully for this, providers must make a strong case for family learning in the new commissioning context
- Can be challenging and resource intensive
- Evidence often inconclusive e.g. issues around follow-up post release, impact on families etc

# L&W Common Outcomes Framework



Family learning in prisons can be a vital factor in enabling prisoners, their partners and children to contribute to a more positive future for themselves

L&W advocate an expansion of family learning in prisons as a major contributor to rehabilitation and resettlement, dove-tailing with the Secretary of State's commitment to using reform to strengthen the place of families in the rehabilitation process

Not only does this benefit prisoners and, more importantly, the families and communities to which they return

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