Prison Visitors’ Centres – Logic model

There are significant benefits to the prisoner, the prisoner’s family, the prison and to wider society if prisoners can maintain positive family ties while serving their sentence. Maintenance of family ties during custody can reduce the likelihood of re-offending post release by up to six times. However prison visits can place significant stress on families. The costs and logistics of travel, prison rules, institutional visiting environments, challenging attitudes among prison staff and fear of other prisoners can all deter families visiting a loved one in prison.

Nearly half of prisoners lose contact with their families while they are inside.

Families affected by imprisonment face emotional, financial and practical difficulties as a result of their family member’s imprisonment and they can find it difficult to access the information and support they need to overcome these difficulties.

A Visitors Centre is a service which:

- Improves the visits experience for families and friends  
- Provides independent and impartial advice, information and support to prisoners’ families, which meets their needs  
- Advocates for the needs of prisoners’ families towards the prison system

So that:

- Families feel welcome, less stressed and more confident about visiting their family member in prison  
- Families have improved access to and take up of emotional, financial and practical support and increased capacity to meet the challenges they face  
- Families have increased quality contact with their family member in prison and their family relationships are improved
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<th>Initial activities to establish Visitors’ Centres</th>
<th>What the Centres will do *(Activities) → Activities once Centres are established. The focus of activities may vary across Centres</th>
<th>The difference that Centres expect to make (Outcomes)</th>
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<td>Allocate and adapt / build space Commission a service provider Recruit Local Management Team Recruit and train local coordinator and volunteers Centre staff undertake Family Impact Awareness training Identify and engage with strategic partners Identify and link activities/plans with local and national organisations and frameworks Assess local need and develop locally appropriate responses Consult with and involve service users (families) Secure community family support services to deliver support through the Centre Promote the Centre Establish ways to monitor, evaluate, adopt, share, and develop best practices Develop plans for fundraising and sustainability</td>
<td>Centres directly support families: Provide information, and practical and emotional support to families Liaise and advocate alongside families with the prison Provide a welcoming environment, appropriate to families’ needs (e.g. refreshments, play facilities, relevant opening times) Work constructively together with the prison Build relationships with other agencies and local communities to improve or deliver support for families, share good practice, and promote the service Centres are well managed and viable: Have clear quality plans, and governance and management roles Support staff and volunteers Maintain facilities and resources that meet visitors’ needs Sustain funding/money Self-evaluate to inform improvements Centres’ deliver services that are underpinned by best practice principles: Services are visitor-centred, family focused, and confidential Centres provide a safe environment and equal-opportunities for all</td>
<td>For visitors/families Families feel welcome, less stressed, and more confident about visiting their family member in prison Families have improved access to and take-up of practical support Families have increased and quality contact between with their family member in prison For children and young people Children have increased and quality contact with their parent in prison Children have enhanced emotional wellbeing For people in prison People in prison have maintained and increased contact with their family and community For the prison Prison policies, facilities and procedures are informed by visitor perspectives Prison and visitors have improved communication For other agencies and local community Agencies and Centres’ increase their partnership working Agencies increasingly incorporate needs of families who are affected by imprisonment</td>
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* Reflects essential criteria and good practice standards as outlined in Recognising Quality, An evaluation toolkit for Prison Visitors’ Centres, 2011. This outlines indicators that may inform how Centres’ can evidence their quality of delivery and the difference they make.

** GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) is the national approach to improving outcomes through public services that support the wellbeing of children and young people. All services working with or for children and young people must play their part in making sure that children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and, above all, safe. These form the eight ‘SHANARRI’ indicators of wellbeing.