

Ormiston Children & Families Trust



Time for Families

HMP/YOI Warren Hill:
Visits & Family Ties Survey

2004/2005

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1.0 Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 HMYOI Warren Hill | 2 |
| 1.2 Ormiston Children and Families Trust | 2 |
| 1.3 Importance of strengthening family ties | 2 |
| 2.0 Methodology | 3 |
| 2.1 Staff | 4 |
| 2.2 Trainees | 4 |
| 2.3 Families | 4 |
| 3.0 Identified Issues | 4 |
| 3.1 Distance from home | 4 |
| 3.2 Visitors Centre | 6 |
| 3.3 Visiting areas | 6 |
| 3.4 Domestic and family visits | 7 |
| 3.5 Contact by letter and telephone | 8 |
| 3.6 Sentence Planning reviews | 8 |
| 3.7 Family Liaison Officers | 9 |
| 3.8 Other sources of family support | 10 |
| 3.9 Parenting/relationship courses | 10 |
| 4.0 Areas for possible development | 11 |
| 4.1 Upgrade the Warren Hill Visitors Centre | 11 |
| 4.2 New all-day family visits/family therapy building, Carlford Unit | 12 |
| 4.3 Play area, Warren Hill | 12 |
| 4.4 Family support workers | 12 |
| 4.5 Overnight accommodation for visiting families | 13 |
| 4.6 Proposals to promote family ties through organisational changes | 13 |
| 5.0 Conclusion | 14 |
| References | 14 |
| Appendix 1: Proposal for all day family visits building, Carlford Unit | 15 |
| Appendix 2: Lucy Faithfull Foundation: Work with families in Carlford Unit | 17 |

Introduction

1.1 HMYOI Warren Hill

HMYOI Warren Hill is a juvenile offender establishment housing up to 220 males aged 15 - 18 years old in two sites, Warren Hill and Carlford Unit. It separated from its parent establishment, HMP Hollesley Bay (now an adult male open prison) in 2002, but still retains some shared services.

The Warren Hill site houses up to 190 juveniles in four units. Carlford Unit takes up to 29 young people serving Section 53/91¹ sentences for more serious offences. The Unit opened in February 2000 as one of only two specialist national units for young people serving long sentences for serious crimes, including lifers. One third of the boys in Carlford Unit are convicted sex offenders.

1.2 Ormiston Children and Families Trust

This report has been produced by the Ormiston Children and Families Trust as part of its *Time for Families* programme. The purpose was to assess the facilities at Warren Hill for promoting family ties for trainees and identify possible ways in which these might be strengthened.

Ormiston Children and Families Trust is a voluntary organisation providing both community and prison-based services for children and families in the eastern region. It has been engaged in work with families of prisoners in this region since 1989.

Time for Families is a region-wide initiative established by, and funded through the Eastern Region Families Partnership (ERFP). The Partnership combines the funding power and strategic goals of three organisations: Ormiston Trust, the Lankelly Foundation and the Prison Service, to meet the needs of the children and families of prisoners.

Time for Families supports families affected by imprisonment by working within prisons and in the community, and with partner agencies such as schools, social and community services. Key aims of the initiative are the provision of good quality visiting and contact opportunities in prison, and delivery of support and information for children and families. The initiative also provides parenting courses in prisons, and is working to enhance the role of families in sentence planning and resettlement.

This initiative now manages projects based in six prisons, as well as four community based posts providing support to schools, information and support for families and action research. To date this work has focussed on adult offenders and their families. Engagement in HMYOI Warren Hill however will highlight the needs of children and young people who are in prison. This study will form the basis for the development of new work at Warren Hill, as part of *Time for Families*.

1.3 Importance of strengthening family ties

The role played by family involvement in helping in the successful resettlement of young offenders is emphasised in many recent research studies and government reports. The 2004 report for the Youth Justice Board (YJB), *Key Elements of Effective Practice - Resettlement*, lists among the factors required for successful resettlement:

¹ Section 90/91 of the powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000; also Section 53 of the 1933 Children and young people Act.

- *Support in building new and better relations with family - both existing family and new young family they may be fathering.*

Recent reports from the Social Exclusion Unit (1999, 2000, and 2002) recommended policy developments which improve family support. The Policy Action Team report on young people (2000) recommended:

Improving family support to help parents and children deal with problems, improving availability and take-up of a range of family services from school-family partnerships and parent training to family mediation, therapy and counselling.

The 2002 report included in its recommendations the need to '*engage families in rehabilitation*'.

In response to the reports of the Social Exclusion Unit, the Home Office drew up the *Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan* (2004), which stresses the importance of family support in reducing reoffending and highlights the value of partnership working to achieve this.

Messages from several research studies show evidence of the positive benefits of family involvement with young offenders and young people at risk of offending. These include parenting programmes (Ghate and Ramella, 2002). Studies show that many parents welcome the opportunity to be involved; this was also the view of most families who participated in this consultation study at HMYOI Warren Hill.

Utting and Vennard's research (2000) confirmed that interventions which do *not* work include those programmes which failed to include families. Farrington (2002) and others noted that many family members may also be offenders and that in these cases, both the young people and their families might need extra support to address those factors which reinforced offending or antisocial behaviour. The YJB report (2004) comments:

Balancing the need to keep families informed and involved, with the need to teach trainees how to stand back from family influence, is a crucial but difficult task during resettlement.

The work of the Time for Families initiative also links with the desired outcomes of *Every Child Matters*, the Government's vision for children's services. In relation to potential developments at HMYOI Warren Hill, two outcomes are particularly important:

- *Making a positive contribution - encouraging young people to engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour.*
- *Staying safe - ensuring that children and young people are safe from crime, exploitation, bullying and discrimination; and have security, stability and are cared for.*

The *Change for Children in the Criminal Justice System* document (DfES 2004) stresses that '*Engaging families so that they benefit from these reforms is vital.*' A key goal is to '*value the input of parents and carers as partners at every stage*'.

2.0 Methodology

Four day-long visits were undertaken to HMYOI Warren Hill between 29th September and 3rd November 2004 by Gill Pugh, Action Researcher for Time for Families and Stuart Haworth, Operations Manager seconded to Time for Families from the Prison Service. The aim of these

sessions was to seek the views of staff, trainees and families about issues and priorities around family contact.

2.1 Staff

Meetings were held with the following staff:

Warren Hill

Stuart Robinson, Governing Governor
 Pete Bevan, Deputy Governor
 Steve Middleditch, Residential Governor
 Matt Cunningham, Head of Security and Safeguarding
 Jenny Johnson, Family Liaison Officer
 Ryan Nolte, Youth Offending Team Manager

Carlford Unit

Jerry Wright, Residential Principal Officer
 Steve Carr, Prison Officer
 Julian Russell, Prison Officer
 Wendy Hall, Prison Officer
 Pippa Crisp, Head of Education
 Sue Shields, Probation
 Heather Welfare, Head of Psychology
 Rowland Coombes, Lucy Faithfull Foundation

2.2 Trainees

Focus groups of up to six trainees (the term used for juvenile offenders) were held - two in Carlford Unit and one on each of the four units in Warren Hill - Orwell, Gipping, Deben and Alde. They were facilitated by Gill Pugh and Stuart Haworth. The groups lasted half an hour each and were tape-recorded with the trainees' consent.

Informal discussion focussed on themes around family contact in Warren Hill, allowing participants to identify issues important to them. Participants were selected by unit staff, with a bias towards including trainees who were fathers.

2.3 Families

Two methods of obtaining the views of families were used. Face-to-face discussions were held with as many families as possible who were attending a Family Day at Carlford Unit.

All trainees on Carlford Unit and up to 50 trainees from the rest of Warren Hill were asked for permission to contact their families by telephone. As a result, telephone interviews were carried out with a total of 22 members of the trainees' families.

The views of staff, trainees and families have been collated and summarised and are presented in this report. Some issues are specific to Carlford Unit, some to the rest of Warren Hill and others to the whole establishment.

3.0 Identified Issues

3.1 Distance from home

The biggest single barrier to achieving regular family contact was distance from home. Although probably the most difficult to overcome, this issue was highlighted by everyone

consulted. The problem is particularly acute for trainees in Carlford Unit, which due to its specialist role takes boys from all over the UK. Around half the families live over 100 miles away.

Some families have to arrange overnight stays in order to visit, which adds to the expense of a visit. Even where a family qualifies for financial help from the Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU), the maximum overnight allowance payable is only £26 per night (2004). One disabled mother travelling nearly 400 miles each way said she slept overnight in her car.

The problem of distance is compounded by Warren Hill's remote location, which makes it extremely difficult and expensive to access by public transport. A high proportion of families of trainees were reliant on public transport. Poor signposting around Warren Hill and Carlford Unit exacerbates the problems for car and taxi drivers. Several families were unsure about how to get help with travel expenses through APVU or were not eligible for help.

It is noted however that the prison started running a free bus service for weekend visits from the nearest mainline station at Ipswich in November. This is now available for up to 11 visitors from both Carlford Unit and Warren Hill.

Several parents of trainees showed remarkable commitment to visiting their sons despite the difficulties, but most felt unable to visit as frequently as they would have liked due to the difficulty and cost of the journey. A family from South Wales commented:

We have to leave home at 8am, get four trains, the tube and a taxi and we get back home about 9.30pm. But it's worth it. But we're on benefit so we can't afford to come up for family days, though we'd love to.

Many families however felt it was not feasible to make a long journey for a visit of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours, especially with children, so visited very infrequently.

Travel difficulties do not only reduce the frequency of visits. Many staff in both Warren Hill and Carlford Unit feel strongly that more intensive engagement with families would be of great benefit to the trainees and to the families themselves and feel they would have the capacity to offer more therapeutic intervention with families at the unit if only families could take up the opportunity. The issue of how to facilitate families spending longer at the establishment is explored further in sections 3.2 and 4.2. A senior therapist working in Carlford Unit explained:

I think that the greater inclusion of families in the therapeutic work of the unit would increase greatly the chances of engaging young people to reduce reoffending.

A third of the boys on Carlford unit are convicted of sexual offences but from research into the type of population and my contact with the other boys through teaching sex and relationship courses, I think that more are at risk of sexually offending (if they haven't already and have just not been convicted). In both groups, this risk is frequently related to traumatic experiences or attachment disorders originating in the family. These problems can often be resolved through professional advice to the family. Where the sex offending is not related to family issues, the improvements made by boys on our programme still need to be recognised and understood by the family/carers/ significant others in order for progress to be maintained upon release. The stigma associated with this type of offending is immense and the family usually need considerable help to come to terms with it.
(Rowland Coombes, Lucy Faithfull Foundation).

3.2 Visitors Centre

This is a modern, brick-built building situated outside the main Warren Hill gate, which is one mile from the Carlford Unit. The 2002 Inspection Report for Warren Hill stated:

The Visitors Centre seemed little more than a bleak bus shelter - ironic given that there was no bus service.

The Inspection Report recommended urgent refurbishment of the centre. The area contains toilets (litter-strewn on my visits), comfortable blue chairs arranged in long rows, a screened booking-in area, notice boards and little else - no refreshments after a long journey, no toys. It is staffed only for the purpose of booking visitors in on visits days.

Visitors were remarkably uncomplaining, many having little experience with which to compare the Visitors Centre. They often described the centre as "functional". However, at minimum they would greatly welcome a vending machine for drinks and something to amuse children frustrated after a lengthy journey and often having to wait long periods for visits to start. Re-arrangement of chairs into groups around tables might improve the ambience at no cost, whilst some visitors suggested background music and magazines would help to diffuse boredom and tension.

It is now generally recognised that a well-run, staffed prison Visitors Centre can play an important role in providing information and emotional support to families and make visiting a far more child-friendly experience. A relaxed and supportive environment can help to reduce tensions during and after visits for families, prisoners and staff alike. However the 'Just Visiting' report (2002) noted that:

Centres which had no paid staff...were less likely to provide meaningful support to visitors or to the prison on a consistent basis...If prisons want good quality service, value for money and a genuine contribution to the visits process and maintenance of prisoners' family ties, an adequate and stable base of funding must be made available, from the individual prisons or otherwise.

Whilst Visitors Centre facilities for visitors to Warren Hill are poor, for visitors to the Carlford Unit they are non-existent. There is no expectation that Carlford Unit visitors would use the Visitors Centre a mile up the road and most families were unaware of its existence. Visitors who arrive early (as they must in order to ensure their full visit entitlement) by public transport, and therefore cannot even wait in a car, have to wait outside the unit in all weathers until the start of visits. Options to address this are explored later in this report.

3.3 Visiting areas

3.31 Warren Hill visits room

The visits room was not unattractive and has been refurbished since the 2002 Inspection Report to provide blue soft chairs and low rectangular tables. A canteen provides light refreshments. Large pot plants are filled with pebbles which restless toddlers apparently tend to throw around the floor during visits. There are three private rooms for legal visits which are very occasionally used for either large family groups or particularly sensitive family visits.

Two main problems with the visits room were highlighted. Firstly, over-crowding, leading to high noise levels and a lack of privacy. One trainee commented:

You can touch backs with other families, hear their conversations.

Secondly - linked to the lack of space - there are poor facilities for young children. In 2003, 14% of trainees had children of their own, while many more have younger siblings who visit. A very small unstaffed play area provides some toys and books for children, but this provision is very poor compared with that in some establishments and does little to encourage families to bring children to visits. Space to expand is clearly limited, but both these issues were a source of great frustration for both trainees and families, and indeed for visits staff.

3.32 Carlford Unit visits area

Here also, limited space is a major issue. The visiting area itself is attractively decorated and carpeted and provides interesting distractions in the form of a glassed case of reptiles, as long as visitors are not snake-phobic. The tables and chairs, though of modern design, are hard, which some trainees and families found uncomfortable for two hour visits. Other families felt visits were "ok" and "relaxed". There is a small kitchen opposite this area where light refreshments are served. There are few toys available for young children and little space for them to play.

A disabled visitor reported that she felt that access to the unit for people with disabilities was good.

Two health and safety issues demand attention - firstly, a nappy change area is provided (praiseworthy in principle) but this doubles as the Mandatory Drug Testing area, containing an open sharps box which presents a serious risk to curious toddlers. This room was generally untidy and not child-friendly. Secondly, the kitchen area where refreshments are prepared for visitors is also used for preparing live animal food for the reptiles. Does this meet hygiene regulations?

Unit staff are very conscious of both the importance and the physical limitations of the visiting environment. The head of the Unit is extremely keen to provide facilities for all-day visits where boys could engage more actively with their families, prepare and share food with them, and where young fathers could develop closer bonds with their own children. There is some potential for enlarging the existing visits area a little by moving glass partitioning. However to enable extended visits and other therapeutic work with families to take place, larger premises would be required. Detailed draft plans have been drawn up to show how a purpose-built area could provide such facilities.

3.4 Domestic and family visits

Domestic visits for sentenced trainees at Warren Hill and Carlford Unit take place from 2.00 - 3.45pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Remand visits also take place at those times on Tuesdays and Thursdays and legal visits on Wednesdays.

Some families of sentenced trainees felt that having only weekend visiting was too inflexible and caused problems for those with work or other commitments at weekends. They also pointed out that public transport was especially limited on Sundays.

Several trainees wished the visits could be longer. A typical comment was:

When you're in here, you realise how much you miss your family and how important to you they are.

'Family Days' are held quarterly in Carlford Unit, usually from 11am to 3pm on Fridays. These provide a much more relaxed environment when families and trainees can move around, have light refreshments and share activities such as pool or sports and families can see trainees' rooms and other areas. They also provide an opportunity for families

to speak informally to staff. Family Days are much appreciated by both trainees and families. Suggestions from families for minor improvements to these arrangements included using outdoor play space on fine days and giving families more notice of dates.

Warren Hill holds less frequent Family Days - usually at Christmas and Easter, run along similar lines. Because of the higher turnover of trainees here, few trainees or families had actually experienced a Family Day. More frequent extended visits would be greatly welcomed, especially in view of the difficulties of travelling for shorter visits.

One trainee suggested that there should be special provision for birthdays:

I had my 18th birthday in here. I couldn't have a visit 'cos it wasn't a visiting day and my credit had run out so I couldn't even phone my family. It was supposed to be a special day but it was just like any other day.

There are no special 'Children's Visits' anywhere in Warren Hill for trainees who are fathers. Several trainees and staff felt there should be better facilities for young fathers to maintain their relationships with their young children and that this would also encourage a greater sense of responsibility for their children, especially if visits were tied in with parenting or relationship education. One trainee commented:

People that have babies or little brothers or sisters, they have a bigger sentence than other people.

3.5 Contact by letter and telephone

Families and trainees expressed no problems with contact by post, although Carlford trainees complained about their mail being read and their privacy being violated. Trainees' access to telephones was generally considered to be reasonable. Two issues however generated strong feelings.

Firstly, telephone calls were felt to lack privacy and were too noisy because many telephones are situated in areas where there is a lot of movement, shouting, and noise from TV, music, etc. Not all telephones had acoustic hoods. There was a strong preference for them to be situated in a quieter location or inside a closed booth.

Secondly, all trainees and several families were unhappy about the high cost of telephone calls, especially since many friends and relatives only had mobiles. They felt the cost of calls was significantly higher in the prison than in the community.

3.6 Sentence planning / reviews

Every trainee has a review within ten days of his arrival at Warren Hill, then another a month later and then every 2 - 3 months. Both the trainee and his family, and staff from different disciplines, are invited. A range of needs are assessed at these meetings and family involvement and input is regarded as a crucial part of the process.

Unfortunately however the problems of distance and inaccessibility again prevent many families from attending. Many families said it was particularly difficult, or impossible, for them to get to reviews because, for operational reasons, they are usually held early in the morning on weekdays.

Also, families (and staff) believed that because the Sentence Planning Reviews are not classed as visits, they were not eligible for help from APVU. Many said they could not afford to attend these as well as visits. However, families did appreciate being offered the opportunity to take part or to give comments if they were unable to attend. They also reported that they were sent notes after meetings about what had been discussed.

NB. During the course of this consultation, checks were made with APVU and confirmation was obtained that attendance at Sentence Reviews *and* 'Family Days' may, if authorised by the Governor, be classed as 'Additional Visits' and be eligible for assistance from APVU (*Assisted Prison Visits Scheme: Customer Service Guide 2004 - section 5.2*).

Trainees felt frustrated that, even if their families could come to reviews,

You see them, but you can't talk to them. Then they have to go, they can't come in your cell or sit down for five minutes.

Staff were sympathetic to these issues but felt it was logistically impossible to cope any other way with around 180 trainees and up to eight reviews a day, each lasting up to an hour.

3.7 Family liaison officers

Two prison officers at Warren Hill share the role of Family Liaison Officer (FLO) for a total of 26 hours a week. Their role includes:

- a) **Support to families**, for example:
 - In the case of a family bereavement, the FLOs liaise with unit staff, chaplains, the self-harm team, etc to support the trainee and will keep in touch with the family to let them know how their son is coping.
 - Supporting separated parents who may have a difficult relationship but have to visit together and find this very difficult and emotionally exhausting.
 - Parents experiencing their son's first sentence may feel particularly shocked, isolated and overwhelmed.
 - Giving information to families who may know nothing about the prison system.
- b) **Support to the trainees** when they are having family problems.
- c) **Support to personal officers**, for example in preparing trainees for release, by building up relationships with outside agencies and with families.
- d) Involvement in anti-bullying initiatives, victim awareness, etc. as part of the Intervention Team.

FLOs take referrals from the visits team, First Night Team, Intervention and Probation. They work predominantly in Warren Hill, as personal officers in Carlford Unit are able to take on more of a family liaison role with their trainees in the much smaller unit.

The FLOs hours are fully utilised and are not ring-fenced if other operational priorities demand their attention. The key issues for them are a need for more hours for the work and a dedicated telephone line on which families could contact them.

Given more resources, FLOs would like to expand their work by, for example, setting up parent support groups who could meet at the beginning or end of visits, perhaps in the Visitors Centre, and possibly bringing outside agencies in. The FLO reported that they already employ a civilian to set up community projects in conjunction with the education department. These may involve, for example, exercises to raise self-esteem and they would very much like to be able to involve parents as well as trainees in these.

Families who had been in contact with the FLOs said they had found them extremely helpful and appreciated being kept informed when there were difficult issues to deal with. One mother said she had received lots of support from the FLOs - *"Can't praise them enough!"*

3.8 Other sources of family support

Trainees in Warren Hill and Carlford Unit and their families were asked if they felt there was anyone else they could turn to in the prison if they needed help or support about family issues.

Carlford Unit trainees appeared to have a stronger culture of talking about problems with staff, whereas amongst other trainees in Warren Hill a more typical attitude seemed to be:

There are people here, but you wouldn't want to talk to them...I'd rather just hold it all in...

If you have a problem you have to keep it to yourself...the governors aren't there to listen, they don't care anyway.

However all groups reported very mixed feelings about support from staff. Several trainees in different units said they had very good personal officers; one said:

My personal officer is helpful - there's a lot of boundaries I've overstepped and he's put me back in my boundaries and hasn't written down complaints against me.

Others commented:

Depends who it is. They don't want to have conversations with social workers or YOT workers, people like that, they only want to do the easy things for you.

There are two or three decent members of staff who will listen to you and respect you properly. Some just say shut up and walk off.

A number of Carlford trainees referred to helpful contact with the chaplain or other people that came into the unit from outside - though they were unable or unwilling to specify who these were.

Families' comments about the help or support they experienced from staff ranged from neutral, e.g. *"it's ok, it's not a holiday camp"*, to the enthusiastic - *"Very helpful, couldn't ask for better"*. The latter was from a mother who said she had once phoned Carlford Unit at 2.30am because she was lost. Many parents of trainees in all parts of Warren Hill and Carlford Unit described staff as nice, friendly, or helpful. They felt able to telephone staff for information or reassurance about their sons at any time, especially on Carlford Unit.

3.9 Parenting/ relationship courses

Carlford staff run a multi-disciplinary Sex and Relationships course, comprising weekly three hour sessions over 10 weeks. An outside organisation has run a 'Students exploring marriage' course (DfES funded), and a number of other groups and activities focus on relationships and life-skills. Staff generally would welcome additional input for the trainees on learning around parenting, though there was some concern about fitting this into an already busy curriculum. One suggestion was made that this might be run as an evening course. There are no parenting, or preparation for parenting, courses run in the rest of Warren Hill but again staff would like to see these in place if time and resources allowed.

Views amongst the trainees about parenting courses were mixed. One group (Gipping Unit) were quite enthusiastic about the idea (*"that'd be good for loads of people coming in the prison"*) but others were at best dubious. Those who weren't fathers

were, unsurprisingly, fairly indifferent, whilst several of those who were fathers reacted with suspicion to any suggestion that they might need any guidance in the role, e.g.:

I'm a good dad, I got my boy under control, he listens to me!

My kid'll never get in trouble, I'll teach him not to, from a young age.

Another felt that having enough money was the key factor in successfully bringing up a family and keeping children out of trouble:

If you have kids and you provide for them and you meet all their needs, then you're alright.

A couple of trainees had a taste of parenting via the mechanical 'babies' in Carlford Unit and were anxious not to repeat the experience -

You had to take it in your cell and take care of it - it screamed all night - did my head in!

4.0 Areas for possible development

A large number of different suggestions and possibilities for strengthening family ties arose out of this consultation. These are divided into two groups: the first (4.1 - 4.5) require a major input of resources - either capital funding, staffing or both; the second group (4.6) depend more on internal organisational strategies within Warren Hill or Carlford Unit. New partnership possibilities with organisations already engaged in Warren Hill are also raised. The following points are *not* listed in priority order.

4.1 Upgrade the Warren Hill Visitors Centre

Option 1: At minimal cost the environment could be improved, e.g. by the provision of a vending machine for drinks and snacks, some children's toys and books, a less formal arrangement of furniture and better cleaning. It is recognised however that while the building is generally left open for visitors' use, it is currently staffed only immediately prior to visiting times for booking in visitors. This leaves any unsupervised equipment vulnerable to loss or damage.

Option 2: The building could be run as a fully equipped and staffed Visitors Centre, according to the Good Practice Guidelines set out in the 1998 HM Prison Service document. The latter sets out different options for managing and funding a Visitors Centre (e.g. contracted out, grant-aided or directly managed) as well as the core and optimum facilities which a Visitors Centre should incorporate. This would include some provision for refreshments and children's play and an opportunity for families to receive information and emotional support.

Such a facility could provide a good base for the Family Liaison staff, especially if office and telephone facilities were included. Other therapeutic staff have also indicated that this could provide a useful venue for their work with families.

Currently visitors to Carlford Unit (a mile away) do not have their own Visitors Centre and do not use the Warren Hill Visitors Centre (they may not even be aware of it). If the Visitors Centre was upgraded, consideration should be given to the feasibility of offering Carlford Unit visitors the opportunity to make use of it too. If booking-in arrangements could be made, this should present few problems for those arriving by car, but transport from the

Visitors Centre to Carlford Unit for those arriving by taxi from the station would need to be considered.

4.2 New All-day Family Visits/ Family therapy building, Carlford Unit

A high level of support and involvement of families is crucial to the well-being and successful resettlement of juvenile offenders. Carlford Unit staff are extremely keen to encourage greater family contact by providing a suitable environment to enable monthly all day family visits to take place. A proposal has been developed for a portacabin in the grounds fitted with comfortable seating, TV, a kitchen where boys could prepare and eat meals with their families and a crèche area (details are outlined in appendix 1).

The current visiting area can accommodate five 'normal' visits at a time seated at round dining tables, but with very little space to create facilities for a relaxing, homely environment and no space for young children to play. There is only very limited scope for enlarging this area and no other viable sites within Carlford Unit's existing accommodation.

There is however one small room near the main office which is comfortably furnished with settees and is used for one-to-one or very small group discussions or therapy work.

The proposal for a new facility is supported by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, an organisation contracted by the Youth Justice Board to undertake an assessment and intervention service for young people convicted of sex offences at Carlford Unit. The therapeutic importance of family involvement in this work, and the particular need for support for the families of these trainees, is very great. This is explained in more detail in appendix 2 and also referred to in section 4.4.

Improved facilities for babies and young children would also create a better environment for visits for young fathers and their children. This would help the bonding process and give the trainees greater understanding of the needs of their children. At present there are no visits run specifically for this group such as the 'Children's Visits' run in other establishments by Ormiston Children and Families Trust.

A new visits facility could also be used at other times for family-related courses, Sentence Planning Boards which families attend and as an additional facility for family days.

4.3 Play area, Warren Hill visits room

The need for an improved play area in the visits room is very great, but space in the existing visits room is already at a premium. Some extra space could be made by removing one of the private rooms used for legal visits, but otherwise it is difficult to know how to upgrade this much-needed facility without a major reorganisation of current accommodation.

4.4 Family support workers

The current role of the two Family Liaison Officers in supporting families and trainees at Warren Hill is outlined in section 3.7. These prison officers share 26 hours a week for this work, but feel there is scope to do much more if resources permitted. They need more hours, a dedicated telephone line and greater administrative support.

Prison staff at Warren Hill feel there are advantages to having uniformed staff fulfilling this role, for example by promoting a positive image of officers to families. There are however models elsewhere of this work being undertaken by other agencies, such as the family liaison work carried out by Ormiston staff at HMP Edmunds Hill. Under such arrangements workers may be able to bring different skills and experience to the work and have links with other support networks in the community. Staff from within and outside the prison service working together could combine the advantages of both systems.

While Warren Hill's location is remote, it is reasonably accessible to Ipswich and potentially to the range of family support services provided by Ormiston's community projects there.

A further proposal is for a family support worker to work in partnership with workers from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF), the latter providing the specialist therapeutic input with families, supported for example by Ormiston's knowledge and resources in the local community (see appendix 2). This work would focus specifically on adolescent sex offenders and their families.

In summary, a range of services could potentially be provided by employing additional family support staff, i.e.:

- Managing a fully equipped Visitors Centre at Warren Hill
- Supporting the work of the FLOs
- Working in partnership with LFF workers
- Running parenting programmes for young fathers
- Running Children's Visits for young fathers and their children
- Accompanying trainees on ROTLs (Release on Temporary Licence) to meetings, etc which would support their resettlement into family life.

4.5 Overnight accommodation for visiting families

In order to facilitate both visits and work with families who live a long distance away, Carlford Unit and Lucy Faithfull Foundation would like to be able to provide overnight accommodation for family use. One proposal is to convert an unused and rather run-down pair of semi-detached houses in the grounds of Warren Hill for this purpose. Funding for this project was unsuccessfully sought from ESF and Rainer Foundation.

4.6 Proposals to promote family ties through internal organisational changes

4.61 Warren Hill visits room: Greater use of the private rooms currently used for legal visits only would facilitate more large-family group visits; facilitate more privacy for families needing to discuss sensitive issues; and free up a little more space in the main visits area.

4.62 Domestic visits: Consideration could be given to extending the length of domestic visits, particularly for Carlford Unit whose catchment area is the whole of the UK and whose visitors therefore have longer journeys.

4.63 Family Days and Children's Visits: Consideration could be given to increasing the frequency of Family Days, perhaps to monthly instead of quarterly; also to initiating Children's Visits specifically to encourage bonding between young fathers and their children where appropriate.

4.64 Sentence Planning Reviews: Consideration could be given to enabling families attending Sentence Planning Reviews to have a social visit on the same day (possibly combining the visiting arrangements with remand or legal visits on weekdays). This would encourage and enable more families to participate fully in the planning process, which is acknowledged as being of great importance in the successful resettlement of trainees.

4.65 Induction: New trainees in Warren Hill's induction unit appeared to be poorly informed about procedures for visits, Sentence Planning reviews and Family Days and the role of personal officers. Some important information appeared to be given out via leaflets rather than verbally, or not given at all. There would seem to be room for improving this vital aspect of maintaining family ties.

4.66 Telephones: Some units had telephones situated in noisy, public areas allowing no privacy. Consideration should be given to either moving these telephones to quieter areas and/or installing acoustic hoods to improve sound-proofing.

5.0 Conclusion

The response from the staff at Warren Hill and Carlford Unit to this consultation exercise has been extremely positive and enthusiastic throughout. This confirms the comments made in the most recent Inspection report about Warren Hill's recognition of the importance of the family in the lives of the children and young people.

This report identifies several different areas where an input of resources would significantly help in maintaining family ties and contribute to successful resettlement. The different proposals each have considerable merit and are difficult to prioritise. The commitment and level of cooperation shown during the consultation by all concerned indicate that the Partnership could work very well to enhance family ties in HMYOI Warren Hill.

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Appendix 1: Proposal for all day visits building – Carlford Unit

Carlford is one of two specialist national units that hold young people who have received long-term sentences for serious crimes. It opened in February 2000 and has a capacity for 29 young people between the ages of 15 - 18. Carlford has been designed as a stepping-stone between Local Authority Secure Units and the Young Offender Estate.

Although Carlford is a specialized unit it was not purpose built. It was converted from a Hospital wing into a residential unit. Due to this we are continually reviewing room space trying to optimize their use.

Multi - disciplinary team working is the key to the success of the unit. Staff on Carlford have made an effort to communicate and break down barriers with the children. Considerable work has been carried out to build trust and foster a "community ethos".

A barrier to the continued progress of the trainee's personal development and the community is our current family visit provision. We are only able to offer visits at weekends from 14.00hrs - 16.00hrs. Gold regime trainees receive four visits per month; Silver/Bronze regime trainees receive them fortnightly. It has been proven statistically those juveniles who have family support throughout their sentence and upon release are less likely to re-offend. Adolescent's change, and parents do matter to juveniles, as they need care.

The Juveniles referred to Carlford come from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. We accept boys from as far apart as Northumberland to Devon & Cornwall. This presents quite a problem for the families to visit and support their children whilst on the unit.

A semi - permanent portacabin used as an all day family visit center could offer some solutions to parents keeping in contact with their siblings. The facility would include: -

- All day family visits facility from 09.00 - 16.00 (stay in unit over lunch). Trainees would be allowed one of these per month. This type of facility would encourage the family to make the effort to see their siblings.
- There would be no limit on visitors as long as they are approved.
- The family visit unit will have baby changing facilities and a small crèche. This will be particularly valuable for Juveniles that are fathers. It will help maintain bonds and promote the father child relationship.
- There will be a small kitchen so the young people can cook for their families. This will be linked through education; boys will practice menu and Health & Hygiene.
- Unit will be linked to CCTV. Staff & drug dog will search Families/Juvenile before visit. The family visit will take place without staff presence. Occasional visits will be made to observe and offer advice if needed.
- This facility will encourage good behavior in the young people. And promote the "Carlford community ethos".
- With this facility it will allow more visits to take place on the unit at anyone time. Currently we have space for 5 visits, the provision of the Family unit would allow another 20% more visits to take place. Also visiting length would go from 2 hours to 7, an increase of 350%.
- Unit will be fitted out with carpet, soft lighting (table lamps), pictures on wall, 2x 3 seater settees, 2 x armchairs, dining table chairs, television, DVD player,

crèche area with toys, fire exit (alarmed) & internal phone. The idea would be to create an environment where everyone felt relaxed and at home.

- There will be a toilet with disabled access facility.
- Lucy faithful would use the facility to engage with the children and their families in therapy work. This they currently undertake by driving all over the country to the Childs family home. The unit would save LFF staff resource, and get the children/parents working together in therapy.
- The unit would also be utilized for: -
 - 1. **Sex & relationship course, (looks at how families function).**
 2. Sentence Planning Boards all families attend.
 3. Students exploring marriage course.
 4. A place to relax on family days.

Mr JD Wright
Principal Officer
Carlford Unit
HMP & YOI Warren Hill

16 December 2004

Appendix 2: Lucy Faithfull Foundation: Working with families

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is contracted by the Youth Justice board to provide an assessment and intervention service for young people with convictions for sexual offences placed at the Carlford Unit. This service is provided on an individual basis and is tailored to the needs of the young person. Wherever possible, work with families is integrated into the assessment and intervention process however this is dependent upon the family's geographical location and resources available within the project. We aim to maximise contact with families during their visits to the Unit and would welcome the development of a resource designed to extend the facilities currently available.

Research into this population shows that the risk of sexually offending is frequently related to traumatic experiences or attachment disorders originating in the family. Parents (or carers) have a vital role to play and can contribute by providing support for the young person and by cooperating with those professionals who are involved in the assessment and intervention process. Parents (or carers) have a unique knowledge of the young person, which helps to provide the basis for planning treatment towards a non-abusing future.

Parents (or carers) will need the opportunity to discuss and deal with their own feelings as well as trying to understand why the young person acted in a sexually abusive way. It is important that the parents and carers do not excuse, deny or minimise the young person's abuse, as this will make it easier for the young person to also avoid accepting responsibility for their actions. It is by working in partnership with the professionals involved in assessment, intervention and treatment of the young person that parents are empowered and are able to play an active part in the decision making process. This level of cooperation also demonstrates to the young person that there is a united 'team' working together to help them address their abusive behaviour.

The impact of the young person's offending on the family can be considerable and many families face being ostracised within the extended family and the local community. The associated stigma can have a profound effect upon family functioning and families often need considerable help in dealing with these difficulties.

Where the young person's sexual offending is not related to family issues, the improvements made by young people on our programme still need to be recognised and understood by the family, carers and/or significant others in order for progress to be maintained upon release.

It is important to add that in some cases it may not be appropriate for the families to be part of the intervention process because of high levels of inter-generational abuse and the associated family culture. Before undertaking any work with families, therapists from LFF assess the suitability of the family to participate in the intervention process and ensure that any child protection issues are highlighted and dealt with appropriately.

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Gill Pugh
Action Researcher
Ormiston Children and Families Trust
51 Cambridge Road, Milton
Cambridge CB4 6AW
01223 426148

Registered Charity No: 1015716

