



Building bridges for prisoners, their families and the community

Family Support Worker HMP YOI Low Newton

Job Description

Context

Founded in 1882, NEPACS has a long tradition of building bridges for prisoners, their families and the community. In recent times, this has included four main activities:-

- a) Provision of prison visitors' centres, tea bars and supervised play areas for children during visits.
- b) A small grant scheme for prisoners and their families
- c) Free caravan holidays for prisoners' families.
- d) Providing awareness raising events and conferences on criminal justice issues

NEPACS is led by a Chief Executive and governed by a Board of Trustees. It is a Charitable Limited Company and encourages volunteers to work alongside paid staff to provide the highest standards of service to prisoners and their families, and to promote values such as respect and integrity.

The Family Support Worker post at HMP YOI Low Newton is a new position which has been funded by the LankellyChase Foundation, the Pilgrim Trust and NOMS north east for a three year period. It will build on the work of the NEPACS visitor centre and link closely with prison and a range of other support agencies. The post will have particular importance as a pilot for NEPACS, and there will be scope for the postholder to contribute significantly to the development of the project.

NEPACS' Aims

Our main aims are:

- To support and assist families and friends of prisoners in their visits to the prison.
- To ensure that children visiting relatives in prison will feel welcome and find the experience as pleasant as possible.
- To relieve hardship due to poverty of some of the offenders and their families.

NEPACS Family Support Worker Role

The postholder will work in close collaboration with HMP YOI Low Newton and Low Newton Visitors' Centre to facilitate family ties with serving prisoners and support them in resettlement, in accordance with the values and aims of the Society.

Duties

Initial tasks:

1. To develop referral procedures (for example via the induction wing) and recruit initial case load of prisoners' families via the Visitors' Centres and prison.
2. To work closely with the Visitors' Centre to provide advice and support to families to minimise barriers to visiting and to develop appropriate interventions to bridge gaps between prisoners and their families. (This may involve assisting in establishing / maintaining bond with prisoner; mediating a reconciliation with a family member if appropriate; advising on practical issues such as transport, childcare; informal emotional support).
3. To research available support on a range of relevant issues (e.g. debt, housing, parenting, health issues, counselling, sexual abuse, alcohol, substance misuse etc.) in order to provide appropriate referrals to specialist support in a family's home area.
4. To ensure that where concerns are raised about a child's welfare and safety, appropriate action is taken to support vulnerable children and young people in conjunction with Children's Services in the family's home area and NEPACS' Safeguarding Children policy.
5. To liaise closely with NEPACS' staff and HMP YOI Low Newton on promoting positive family contact e.g. via mother-child visits, play days, family days and other family learning opportunities.
6. To convene a project steering group and provide monthly monitoring reports on the delivery of the project's outputs, which will feed into the NEPACS' board and quarterly Children and Family Pathway meetings at the prison.

Second phase:

7. To liaise closely with the prison and potential training providers on establishing relationship courses and parenting courses within the prison and ensure that this provision links closely with family needs.
8. To liaise closely with offender supervisors and a range of voluntary sector organisations based at the prison to enable families to contribute towards successful rehabilitation and resettlement.
9. To explore training and support needs of women and their families towards the end of a sentence (prior to release) and ensure this is factored in to resettlement plans.
10. To establish self-help support groups at local women's centres where appropriate.

Personnel commitments:

11. To attend regular supervision and undertake training as required.
12. To work as part of a team and to further the aims of NEPACS.

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Essential criteria:

- An understanding of the needs of children and families and/or an understanding of the impact of imprisonment on children and families
- At least 2 years relevant experience in an advice / support role
- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Strong interpersonal and diplomacy skills.
- An understanding of monitoring and ability to write reports
- Commitment to promoting diversity and equality.
- Good IT skills i.e. ability to use Microsoft applications
- Commitment to working with a team together with ability to take initiative
- Availability to work flexible hours including weekend working.
- Ability to travel to attend meetings and events.

Desirable

- Experience of interagency working, building partnerships and promoting positive relationships between different agencies
- Familiarity with the developing policy context to this work
- Experience of working with volunteers

Accountability

The postholder will be accountable to the NEPACS' CEO on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Location

The post will be based at the Visitors' Centre, HMP YOI Low Newton and within the prison (Durham DH1 5SD). Travel will be required occasionally to attend meetings.

Hours of Work:

37.5 hours per week. Flexible working hours and week-end working will be required.

Salary

£24,000pa paid monthly to the postholder's bank or building society account. The salary will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Pension

A group personal pension scheme is offered.

Holidays

Leave entitlement is 5 weeks per annum (pro rata) plus Bank and statutory holidays; to be taken at times agreed.

Travel Allowances

Any necessary travel during working hours will be assisted. Public transport costs will be reimbursed. If the postholder uses his/her own car, then mileage will be paid at the NEPACS approved rate (currently 40p per mile).

Probationary Period

This post is subject to a 6 month probationary period after which, subject to satisfactory performance, the postholder will be confirmed in post.

Please note: The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) order 1975 does not apply to this post. This appointment will be subject to security and police checks.