

NEPACS

building bridges for prisoners, their families and the community.



ANNUAL REVIEW



2012 - 2013

Building bridges for prisoners,
their families and the community



NEPACS is a long-standing charity in the north east of England which runs prison visitors' centres and tea bars, facilitates play sessions for prisoners' children, provides free caravan holidays for families, administers hardship grants and provides integrated family support. We recognise that families of offenders, and especially children, may become hidden victims of crime when a relative is imprisoned. Our staff and volunteers provide friendship and support during this difficult time.

The aims of the Society are to:

- Support and assist prisoners, families and friends of prisoners in their visits to the prison and in their life outside the prison.
- Ensure that children visiting relatives in prison feel welcome and find the experience as pleasant as possible.
- Relieve hardship due to the poverty of some offenders and their families.
- Support the education and training of offenders and other processes which may assist their rehabilitation.
- Raise public awareness through the collection and publication of information relating to criminal justice matters and to the prevention of crime.

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Achievements in 2012/13

- NEPACS has welcomed over 136,500 visitors through its doors
- NEPACS has helped facilitate 27,375 visits including 1,975 special visits for children to North East prisons
- NEPACS has provided a holiday break for 37 families (including 86 children) at our caravans
- NEPACS has awarded £42,535 in grants to 589 individuals
- NEPACS has awarded 5 Awards for best practice in resettlement

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Chairman's Report

Once again I commend this years annual review. It remains difficult to plan with any certainty as public sector expenditure continues to be cut; prisons within the North East are restructuring and a wholesale re-organisation of the Probation Service is in the pipeline.



Despite this NEPACS continues to thrive and grow. This review demonstrates that with leadership and the determination and commitment of staff and volunteers, we deliver a first rate service throughout the North East.

All of this is made possible only with the support and cooperation of the voluntary and public sector organisations with whom we work. I record our thanks to them and our appreciation to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to our funding and without whom we could not have continued to grow and develop.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'James Black'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

James Black
Chairman

“Darren and Holly have a great relationship, and it has been maintained as best as possible through visits, but this was the first chance all three of us had to spend time together, doing things instead of sat around talking. It helped us all to bond that little bit more, and made us even more excited for town / home leaves when we get to build on those bonds and make our family unit even stronger, and help towards us all living together as a family.”

Family member, Kirklevington Grange Family Day

CEO'S Report

Investing in support for family ties provides a 'win, win' for prisoners, their families and communities.

The criminal justice system is going through a period of rapid change with services facing greatly reduced resources. Many of the people supported by NEPACS are experiencing increased hardship and numbers of visits to prison have been hit by increased travel costs and cuts in public transport services.

In this context, NEPACS continues to provide vital services to support family ties and work towards crime free futures for those children and young people visiting regional prisons. We offer a friendly welcome at our visitors' centres and have been encouraged by the north east prisons' continued support, which this year has included the refurbishment and equipping of a new Visitors Centre at HMP Durham. Our Integrated Family Support Service is going from strength to strength, thanks to the Big Lottery Fund.

And we have also been able to establish new projects, such as the Support at Courts project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. We know that charities such as NEPACS can play a vital part in reducing re-offending and supporting resettlement.

evidence many situations where family members have provided crucial support for prisoners and have been essential to transforming rehabilitation prospects. NEPACS has joined with sister agencies, pact, POPS and Jigsaw, to form the Prison Family Support Alliance to promote this work. Together we hope to support each other to sustain support for family ties.



Helen Attewell
Chief Executive Officer



Support at Courts

This year, a new project has taken NEPACS support and advice into the courts at Teesside. This pioneering project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, aims to reassure friends and families at the time at which a loved one may be sent into custody, and give them the help and information they need to sustain those relationships through a prison sentence.

Volunteers have been recruited and trained up to deliver the service. Once fully functioning in Teesside, we hope to extend the service to other courts in the region and offer ongoing telephone support to those who are finding it difficult to come to terms with their new situation.

For further details please contact Claire Moore at cmoore@nepacs.co.uk

“You helped me understand I could share what was going on with family and friends and my fears wouldn’t be realised . They are still my friends and are now there for me to help me deal with this.” *(family coping with realisation that the press were going to release details of trial and making the decision to tell those close to them)*

“I can’t thank you enough for what you have done. I wouldn’t have known anything – I would not have coped.” *(a mother whose son was remanded for the first time)*

“I was in bits but because you had arranged a volunteer to meet me she got me through it.” *(a mother visiting prison for the first time on her own)*



Much valued volunteers

Volunteers are the heart and soul of NEPACS' services – they provide that friendly welcome at our centres and visits halls, the opportunity of a reassuring chat or listening support, a much needed cup of tea, wonderful ideas for crafts and games to make children's visits very special, or back office number crunching so we can provide evidence of our effectiveness. We greatly appreciate all they do, and were able to celebrate their contribution at a wonderful sunny evening at Brancepeth Castle during National Volunteers Week. We were particularly delighted to learn that Mrs Sylvia Cape, a longstanding Tea Bar volunteer at HMP Northumberland featured in the Queens birthday honours list, and has been awarded the B.E.M. for services to prisoners and their families.



Volunteering for NEPACS can be a life-changing experience. We can offer people the chance to do something useful and rewarding in their spare time and be part of a friendly team. If you are interested in volunteering and would like further information, please ring 0191 3757278 or email info@nepacs.co.uk

Children and Young People

Children of prisoners are innocent of any crimes, but often suffer greatly when a parent is in custody. NEPACS works hard to create opportunities for children of all ages to spend quality time with their imprisoned parents through our programme of special visits – from regular weekly ‘mother child’ sessions at Low Newton, ‘father childs’ for first time fathers at Deerbolt, to fantastic family days in the school holidays at every north east establishment. Regular domestic visits also have play workers on hand to ensure visiting a prison is as pleasant an experience as possible.

Our centres have great facilities for children, and we continue to improve our youth room or youth zone facilities, with support from BBC Children in Need, to ensure older kids don't feel excluded.



"We have attended a number of these special (father child) visits now and since having the opportunity to do this I have seen a big change in my daughter Lori. These visits are overwhelmingly beneficial to us as a family and Lori seems a much happier little girl."

"I feel very excited to see my dad" (Lori aged 7).

HMP Durham

A play worker's story

I have been helping support a family of three children whose parents are both in prison for a related offence. They have been visiting for about three years now.

The youngest is aged four and is maybe too young to remember much about the arrest. She seems to cope very well with the situation. The middle child has his moments and the odd tantrum, which is often between him and his older brother. Apart from this he enjoys his visits, especially the special child parent and playdays, which they all attend each and every time. These visits are so important, especially to families like this where long sentences are involved. Unlike normal domestic visits, Mums are allowed to walk freely around the visits room, playing with their children, getting involved in art and craft or cake decorating.

The oldest son has felt the impact of his parents' situation the most. As an older boy (11), he has got really involved in the Youth Project, playing a big role in redesigning the youth room and taking part in youth outreach activities with other young people in the same situation. This has meant that he can make new friends to share problems with, and feels comfortable knowing that they are in the same position.

NEPACS has been in contact with the schools to keep everyone involved and informed, and recently we had a school visit so we could sit down with teachers and educate them on the impact of imprisonment on children.

Susan Robson
Low Newton play worker

"The initial reception visit by me and my daughter was terrifying as neither of us had experienced a prison visit before.....you put us both at ease as the tears flowed and never once hurried us, you showed nothing but respect for us.....all your staff at Low Newton do a wonderful dedicated job."

HMP Low Newton

Adventures Outdoors

For older children, some of the perceived shame and stigma of visiting prison can be particularly damaging. Whereas babies and younger children adapt quickly or are oblivious of their surroundings, young people may be all too aware of the possibility of ‘guilt by association’ and of taunts and bullying at school. We know from research that this can have an impact on mental health, and that there may be lifelong negative consequences. NEPACS’ youth project aims to bring together young people to support each other through new friendships and getting involved in challenging and creative outreach activities.

We have developed a summer programme of outreach activities in partnership with Mobex to enable young people to get out into the great outdoors, and have also partnered with agencies such as Durham’s Lumiere project to involve young people in arts activities. In October half term, we took a group of young people away for a ‘residential’ in the Lake District. This involved yet more adventures outdoors as well as Hallowe’en arts and crafts. Thanks to all the many and diverse funders who have made these life changing opportunities possible, and continue to sponsor special visits.



Coping with custody



Jenny Chapman MP, Shadow Prisons Minister and MP for Darlington, spoke at NEPACS' Coping with Custody conference in July, which showcased the evaluation findings from the Integrated Family Support Project. She said 'I have been delighted to hear of the success of NEPACS' Family Support Project. Family ties are a vital component in reducing reoffending when a prisoner is released. As well as providing a home to go to and practical support, families, and in particular children, can be a massive motivator for people to stop committing crime. Once your identity is 'responsible parent' rather than 'offender' then your outlook on life is going to change. This work has to be a sound investment for crime reduction.'

Family support at Low Newton

"I have worked quite closely over the last few months with a first time prisoner. She has an 18 month old daughter and is pregnant with her second child. Just before coming to prison, social services became involved and the prisoner's grandmother took on temporary care of the toddler. I liaised with the social worker and helped the prisoner appoint a family solicitor. The prisoner was given a chance to work with various agencies to ensure the children remained in her care. I

arranged special child parent visits, and spoke a couple of times with her family to provide emotional support. The social worker visited regularly and I also liaised with a family group conferencing facilitator, who visited the prison and put things in place for her release. The prisoner was released early on Home Detention Curfew, which gave her time to re-establish a bond with her daughter and prepare for the birth of her son."

Gill Ismail, Family Support Worker,

"I really appreciate the time you have taken to come and speak to me. I know you might not be able to solve my problem but at least I will have tried."

Prisoner

"I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't had you to talk to. I wouldn't have known what to do next."

Visitor

"I think it's good that you are here because we don't have the time or knowledge to deal directly with some of these issues and so they never used to be resolved. At least now the prisoners know they can contact you."

Offender Supervisor

HMYOI Deerbolt

Andrew had been in regular contact with his daughter Alicia before coming to prison, but had difficulties organising visits because Social services had become involved. He was very anxious as nobody was keeping him updated with what was going on.

I contacted his daughter's social worker on his behalf. She explained that she was preparing reports for a court hearing. I was able to organise for the social worker to visit Andrew in prison to gain his views, and also ensured that Andrew was enrolled on the 'Dads at Deerbolt' course to build his confidence in his parenting skills.

I was able to arrange for Alicia to attend special 'Father Child' visits and they have a fantastic bond. It's a real joy to see them together and Alicia could hardly contain her excitement to see her dad at the recent family day. She made a 'I love my dad' card with a great big sparkly love heart and she had drawn the both of them looking very happy.

Karen Johnson, Family Support Worker

"Your job has made a big difference to me. We need you here."

Visitor

"I really appreciate all of your help and for helping my family. I feel a bit more positive about my release now that I know there is support available and you can help us all."

Prisoner due for release

"I have wanted to contact my family for ages but just didn't know where to start. My Offender Supervisor said that you would be able to help me with this sort of thing and so I was over the moon that I might finally get somewhere."

Prisoner

"I would just like to say a big thank you for all of the help and support that you have given me over the last year. It's a very difficult time when your child comes to prison, as massive worry, but your kindness and non judgement is a huge help."

"I hope you continue to support other families in the future and in the nicest way possible. I hope I never have to see you all again i.e. no more prison visits for me."

Visitor, HMYOI Deerbolt

NEPACS Awards

The 2013 Awards Ceremony was held on 8 May 2013 at Lumley Castle. Ron Hogg, Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham and Darlington handed out 2013 NEPACS awards to men and women who help to keep offenders from turning back to crime.

Jim Black, Chairman of NEPACS, said: "At a time when the country is looking closely at the effectiveness of prisons in cutting levels of re-offending, NEPACS is keen to give out awards for activities that help offenders build up links with their families, the workplace and the wider community that stop them getting back into crime."

Mr Hogg said: "The work of NEPACS is based on volunteers who dedicate themselves to providing support for prisoners' families. Their work is vital in maintaining family links through the difficult period of a prisoners' sentence. It is shown that such efforts ease a prisoner's return to the community and reduces the likelihood of reoffending. I am pleased to be associated with NEPACS."

Three of the 2013 winners work in the region's prisons and two are from the Durham Tees Valley Probation Service. They are:

Tom Batty- for work in various roles as Industry Manager, Learning & Skills Manager and Gymnasium Manager at HMP Durham

Lindy Madgin-Ellison & Valerie Docherty - probation officers with Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust, for community supervision in Durham City, Consett and Chester-le-Street

Leanne Robinson- senior pharmacy technician at HMP Holme House, Stockton, for work with offenders on Drug & Alcohol Recovery programmes

Rebecca Young- a pathway leader, HMP Low Newton, for raising awareness of issues relating to sex workers and supporting preparations for their release



Caravans

The sun has got his hat on - Hip hip hip hooray!! The caravan season started cold and snowy at Easter, but as the weather improved many families have made the most of the sun, sea and sand this year. Referred by the Probation Services and the Visitors' Centres, thirty seven families including eighty six children have holidayed at our two caravans at Amble Links.

This year we have purchased a smart new 6 berth caravan and fully refurbished the older caravan by putting in new carpets, equipment and bedding. Thank you to ALL our fundraisers and to our small but stalwart band of caravan volunteers. Without our volunteers meeting, greeting and cleaning each week, the holidays could not happen.

Here are some of the comments from this year's evaluation forms.

- Enjoyed the peace and quiet and the lovely beaches
- A chance to relax and have fun with my daughters. We enjoyed being so close to the seaside
- The children had a marvellous time and swam in the sea every day
- Wonderful time - enjoyed everything. Gave me time to think and spend time with my daughter. Had a boat trip and saw some lovely places. A big thank you for everything you have done for my family.

Let's hope the sun keeps his hat on again for next year and we can continue this worthwhile holiday project!!

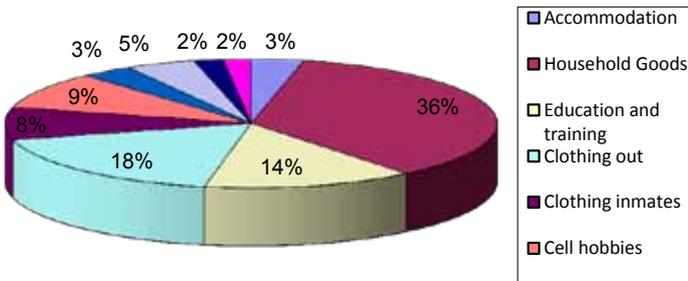


Grants

As in every other aspect of NEPACS work, the effects of ‘austerity Britain’ have been felt very strongly in regard to our grants. The ending of the Government Community Grant and Crisis Loans earlier this year has strongly impacted on us, and an unprecedented number of requests for items which most people would take for granted – a change of clothing, basic furnishings, essential kitchen items, equipment like safety boots to enable an individual to take up an offer of work – has meant the Grants Committee having to limit the number and scope of grants. Every month we find ourselves having to judge between, for example, the merits of a reconditioned fridge for a family with nowhere to store food safely, a set of clothes for a middle-aged man being released to a hostel with only the clothes on his back, a small hobby set for a life-prisoner with no outside support, crockery for a young man setting up in a flat with no possessions, a bed for someone sleeping on his gran’s floor, or a site safety certificate to enable a man to start a job on release.

We applaud the hard-pressed probation officers whose applications for help need to be increasingly well-argued and detailed, and in particular give enormous thanks to those whose donations enable NEPACS to make a small and positive difference to the lives of some individuals, and thereby to society, in what is an increasingly vital service.

Grants from April 2012 to April 2013



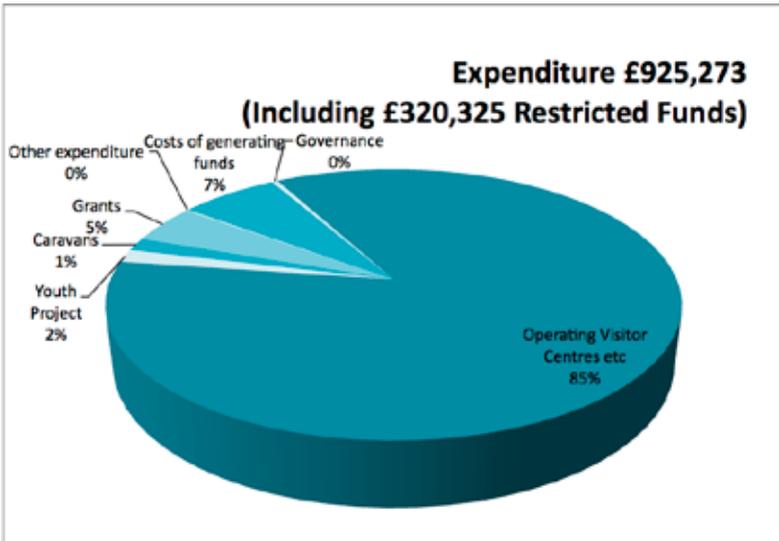
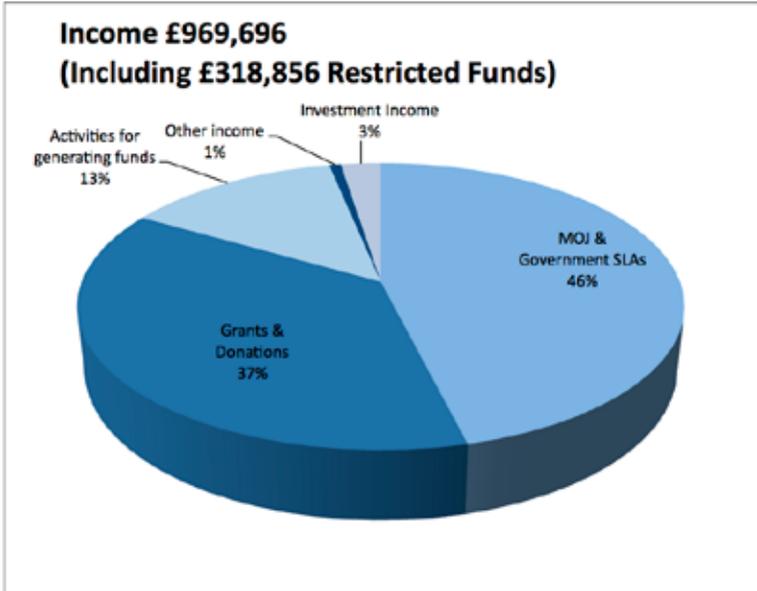
“With the money given, I was able to purchase suitable clothing for my Grandmother’s funeral and acquire home essentials such as bedding, toaster and microwave. I have been given a boost of confidence and responsibility from gaining my home essentials and this will help kick start my new lifestyle.”

NEPACS acknowledges with thanks the contributions of many Trusts, Companies, Churches and individuals in support of its work

1772 Charity (Debtors Relief Funds Charity)
The 1989 Willan Trust
The Autumn Fair 2012
The Barbour Foundation
BBC Children in Need
Belmont Parish Council
Blyth United Reformed Church
Mrs J A Brinkman
Brother Jonathan Trust for Children's Holidays
The Caritas Ensemble Concert
Carr-Ellison Charitable Trust Fund
Ms Joyce M Clark
Coast Congregational Church, Whitley Bay
The Coutts Charitable Trust
County Durham Community Foundation
Mr J Dean
Department for Education
Dream Toys
DUCK (Durham University Charities Committee)
Durham Cathedral Matins for the Courts
Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust
Eaglescliffe Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist
Revd Tom Ellison
Evening Gazette Wish Campaign
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Felton United Reformed Church
The Fitton Trust
Gift Aid 2012
The Go-Ahead Group plc
The Allison Greenlees Continuation Fund
The Hadrian Trust
Mr J & Rev J Hirst
Holme House Visitors' Centre Society
The Albert Hunt Trust
Mrs Kathleen Hunt
Ingleton WI

The Joicey Trust
The Sir James Knott Trust
Llankelly Chase Foundation
The Leigh Trust
R W Mann Trust
Meadowfield/Langley Moor over 60s' Association
National Council for Social Concern
Mr J Nicholson
NOMS
Northern Rock Foundation
The Parish Church of St Mary, Barnard Castle
Parochial Church Council of Whitburn
Mr L A Peacock
Pilgrim Trust
The Rothley Trust
Sabic UK Petrochemicals Limited
Mr & Mrs P Scrope
Shepherd Building Group Limited
Shincliffe Parish Council
Stockton DAAT
St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Monkseaton
St Chad's Church, Sunderland
St Giles Church, Durham
St John's Church, Durham City
St Lawrence The Martyr Church, Horsley Hill
St Mary's Home Charity
St Mary Magdalene Church, Trimdon
St Thomas Heathery Cleugh Church
Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust
The Tudor Trust
Tynemouth Trefoil Guild
United Reformed Church, Low Fell
Mrs M Watson
The William Webster Trust

Finances



Finances

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | 2013 Total Funds £ | 2012 Total Funds £ |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Grants and Donations | 41,988 | 318,856 | 360,844 | 372,938 |
| Activities for Generating Funds | 130,287 | - | 130,287 | 490,203 |
| Investment income | 24,353 | - | 24,353 | 24,959 |
| Service Level Agreements | 447,127 | - | 447,127 | 370,878 |
| Other Income | 7,085 | - | 7,085 | - |
| Total | 650,840 | 318,856 | 969,696 | 1,258,978 |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Fundraising trading costs | 60,856 | - | 60,856 | 389,963 |
| Operating Visitors Centres, Play Areas, Family Support Work, Listening Support, Youth Project Co-ordinator etc. | 504,414 | 283,433 | 787,847 | 646,039 |
| Youth Projects | - | 14,742 | 14,742 | 7,964 |
| Caravan | - | 13,986 | 13,986 | 12,287 |
| Grants to Prisoners Families | 35,535 | 7,000 | 42,535 | 41,305 |
| Governance | 3,750 | - | 3,750 | 3,925 |
| Other expenditure | 393 | 1,164 | 1,557 | 6,706 |
| Total | 604,948 | 320,235 | 925,273 | 1,108,189 |



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