

Introduction and purpose:

Family Support workers work within the prison and in the prison visitor centres and the community. The project offers support to families where a family member or loved one is in custody. NEPACS has family support workers across four prisons in the North East. The project offers support, information and advice to families who may have multiple needs and particularly around making and maintaining contact. The project also supports and works with prisoners who have identified certain family issues that they would like support with. The setting is different in each prison so this outline reflects a general description which will be tailored to suit each context and after discussion with each prospective volunteer.

General overview of role:

Volunteers in this role will offer 1:1 support, information and guidance to families of prisoners, and this may develop to offering support to prisoners. The volunteer will be offering a listening ear and emotional support as well as signposting people to other agencies, and offering some practical support.

Each shift will be approximately 4 hours, although this may vary according to location. Volunteers are asked to commit weekly or fortnightly though we would hope that some volunteers would have some flexibility so that the project is able to respond to the needs of the service users.

Please note: Family Support Volunteers will be required to have volunteered in a Visitor Centre role for some time prior to commencing their Family Support Training work, or be able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge or experience.

Job Description:

Main tasks will include:

- To listen to prisoners, visitors, either face to face or on the phone
- To provide human support and to ensure that children and families of prisoners are treated with respect, dignity and care
- To offer non judgemental support
- To help visitors understand the visits process and any other relevant prison processes
- To research information about local support services for families
- To offer practical support in accessing visits
- To follow any prison protocols, rules and policies
- To ensure that concerns raised about a child's welfare and safety are dealt with in accordance with NEPACS safeguarding policy
- To offer administrative support to the family support worker

Person Specification:

- Friendly
- Reliable
- Non judgemental
- Well developed communication skills

- Understanding of confidentiality
- Understanding of professional boundaries
- Ability to write up brief but clear case notes
- Empathy with prisoners families serving the 'unseen sentence'
- Ability to listen actively and to empathise
- Calm and positive in their approach
- Approachable on the phone
- Some understanding of the visits process at the prison
- Ability to work individually but also contribute to the team
- Some experience of work (paid or unpaid) in a support role in the community

Training

- Volunteers will be asked to attend a generic Induction training to NEPACS
- Volunteers will be asked to attend project specific induction and on-going training. There will be regular support meetings for the volunteers on the project.
- NEPACS offers a training day for all volunteers, annually
- Volunteers will be eligible to attend some prison organised training

Location:

In visitors' centres at HMP&YOI Low Newton in Durham, HMP Holme House in Stockton, and HMYOI Deerbolt in Barnard Castle. This opportunity is also available within HMP Kirklevington Grange in Yarm.

Expenses:

Public transport costs or mileage up to 22 mile radius at 40p per mile.

Commitment:

NEPACS asks volunteers:

- To commit to the project and give notice of absence as soon as possible
- To adhere to the purpose of the project
- To sign a confidentiality statement and a statement explaining the boundaries of the project
- To undertake the training and the induction
- To agree to a DBS check and prison clearance (this will require a form of photo ID)

Volunteers can expect:

- Support and informal supervision from the relevant family support worker
- Training opportunities and the chance to develop in the role
- Some social time to get to know other volunteers
- Recognition of their work
- Valuable work experience

To apply:

Please download an application form from our website www.nepacs.co.uk/info/volunteering or contact: volunteering@nepacs.co.uk , tel 0191 3757278.