

**YMCA Worcestershire:
Hewell Rainbow Project -Stage 2
Interim Evaluation Report**



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Hewell Rainbow Project



Introduction

This is the second report of three for the 2021 – 2023 Big Lottery funding of the Hewell Rainbow Project, delivered by YMCA's Children and Families Team and covers the period of September 2021 – August 2022.

Located at HMP Hewell (Category B), the team amalgamated with the Visits' Team (uniformed prison officers who are part of the operational staff at Hewell) in 2022 and now resides within the Offender Management Unit (OMU), which is responsible for ensuring prisoners complete their sentence plans. This is a shift from the Reducing Reoffending Department, where the team were located within the HMP Hewell organisational chart for the last report.

YMCA Worcestershire was established in 2013 when the YMCAs of Worcester and Redditch merged into a group structure. Providing many community-based, family and children's projects across the region, the Hewell Rainbow Project is the only prison program conducted by the organisation.

Under Governor Ralph Lubkowski, HMP Hewell continues to work towards becoming a gold standard family service. The YMCA Children and Families Team is an integral component of that plan as it supports the men of HMP Hewell to establish and maintain connections with their families and loved ones through various programmes and projects. Incarceration creates fear and isolation among prisoners who grieve the loss of their relationships, particularly those with their children, and is equally traumatic for all members of their families.

Present from a prisoner's arrival to exit from the prison, the YMCA team have supported the men and their families of HMP Hewell for over 16 years. Offering support to whoever requires it, the aim is to support prisoners to overcome the feeling of total powerlessness regarding any future contact with their children and families that many experience when they enter prison. Providing meaningful visits and activities that connect the men with their loved ones on the outside, such as sending a homemade card for a birthday, or sharing a meal, going for a walk, or playing a game together on a family day, are central to the rehabilitation process (Lord Farmer 2017). For a few short hours, the prisoners reconnect with their families, whether they are children, siblings, parents and/or partners. For others, it is extra painful as they let family members go due to a death in the family or the adoption of a child.

Working with the broader community allows the Children and Families Team to bring greater awareness to those who may be unknowingly working with the children of men in prison. Whether it is delivery of the Hidden Sentence program within and outside of the prison or community presentations, the team works hard to ensure all aspects of life that affect prisoners and their families are provided with some awareness within the prison and wider outside communities. Ongoing support is also given to professionals following the training.

Held in high esteem by the prisoners, families, HMP Hewell staff and local community groups, the Children and Families Team continue to have a positive effect and is acknowledged by all involved with HMP Hewell to be an essential feature of prison life that reflects the *golden thread* - the importance of the family and relational connections (Lord Farmer, 2017).

The team see our processes from a completely different viewpoint to us so their input into policy and always reminding us of how families feel enables us to work in a more inclusive way and reduce the impact of imprisonment on families.

Kelly Bassett, Head of Business Assurance, HMP Hewell

The team

At the time of this report, the Children and Families Team consists of:

- Nicki Harris - the Children and Families Team Manager
- Helen Smith - the Family Interventions Coordinator
- Ann Hopkins - Course Tutor: Card and Craft /StoryBook Dads Coordinator
- Karen Cullum- Course Tutor: Me and My Dad/Facilitator, Card, and Craft Workshops
- Play workers (4)
- Volunteers- there is one volunteer who splits their time between working with the team and in the Chapel.

HMP Hewell's COVID-19 response

Despite the difficulties of the past 12 months, the YMCA's Children and Families Team continues to provide the prisoners of HMP Hewell and their families with meaningful engagement at a time when maintaining relationships has been challenging yet even more critical. Provided through HMP Hewell's *COVID-19 - Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery. Children and Families*, which was updated in January 2021, the team has worked with other HMP Hewell departments to ensure positive engagement with the prisoners wherever possible, especially when physical visits into the prison were not an option.

From October 2021 – March 2022, Hewell prisoners, families and staff experienced a myriad of emotions as the prison maintained COVID-19 restrictions. Throughout the COVID pandemic, the main issue was how to protect the prisoners living in a closed community from an infection that would be catastrophic if allowed in. Prisoners remained in their cells for up to 23 hours each day; staff regularly took daily Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) and PCR tests, and temperatures were taken before entering the prison. Strict social distancing and wearing PPE when engaging with prisoners and one another also occurred.

Despite these precautions, COVID-19 returned to many House Blocks (HB) in October, subsided briefly and returned two weeks before the Christmas Family Days planned for December. Placing the HBs on 'lockdown', families were understandably upset as their children could not spend the long-awaited and overdue precious time together during the festive season. Prisoners were mortified as the glimmer of hope in an otherwise hopeless situation was taken away.

During this time, staff saw prisoners individually, offering support as best they could, including helping prisoners write letters and Christmas cards to their children. The team included photos presented in a Christmas bauble so he could 'be' with the family during Christmas. A present from Daddy and a special letter from Father Christmas were also sent to each child unable to attend the cancelled Family Days.

In March, the prison returned to Stage 1, and a new 'business as usual' was established. It was agreed that many of the initiatives instigated during the previous year were valuable and, as a result, have been amalgamated into the prison offerings to establish a new level of best practice. This included the new referral process, enabling the team to engage with harder-to-reach families through their prisoner family member.

Hewell Rainbow Project's Programmes and Offerings

The Children and Families Team continues to provide numerous vital services to the men of HMP Hewell and their families.

(They) support prisoners who have children with improving their parenting skills, help them to understand how to be involved in their children's lives despite being here, help prisoners to make contact and maintain links with families, support families whose (sic) loved one are here and help them navigate the process around visiting a loved one in prison.

Kelly Bassett, Head of Business Assurance, HMP Hewell

The adaptation of programmes delivered for many years over the last 12 months has allowed the team to continue providing programs and support during the various lockdowns of the prison due to COVID-19 measures. The prison returned to Stage 1, 'Business as usual' (a new normal), in March 2022.

Following is the list of the programmes the Children and Families Team provided and engaged with during the reporting period (September 2021 – August 2022) to ensure the prisoners of HMP Hewell, their families and local community groups were fully supported.

Referral Service

The creation of a dedicated visits team to each House Block (1-6) every week is a more cohesive approach to supporting prisoners and is aided by a more streamlined referral process. Working directly with the prisoners, the programme evolved from the response to COVID-19, when prisoners were locked in their rooms for 23 hours a day. The men now apply directly through the referral service for support and all programs on offer. Overseen by Nicki Harris, the Children and Families Team's Manager, once assessed, the referral is allocated to the best service provider or programme within the prison, proving to be very successful.

Unfortunately, this has been suspended at the time of writing due to the entire prison system being short-staffed. It is expected this will occur again when staffing returns to normal levels.

Social Visits

The provision of visits was not possible when the prison was in Stage 4 restrictions. Moving into Stage 3 and in line with the *Exceptional Regime and Service Delivery Government Guidelines*, detailed risk assessments ensured the safety of all concerned - visitors, prisoners, and staff facilitating the visits:

- Prison staff took visitors' and staff temperatures, booked visitors in at the Visitors' Reception Centre (VCR) and answered any questions regarding visits at Front Search and the Main Visits Room.
- Family Support Workers provided support to visitors in the VCR before and after each visit. They offered a telephone helpline, answering questions regarding a family's loved one and information about issues they may have with the residents.
- Play Workers issued pushchairs that were sanitised after each use.
- The Play Workers supported the children and their carers through a child-friendly approach.
- Information notices for families visiting with children were displayed in the VRC to ensure each visit ran smoothly.
- Visitors wear a face covering when moving from the VRC to visits and on their return and must wash their hands in the facilities provided before entering the prison.
- Sanitiser stations are located around the VRC.

Visits during the pandemic restrictions were reduced to one hour and involved up to three visitors at any one time:

- Two adults
- Two adults and one child
- One adult and two children if from the same household or 'bubble'.

With the introduction of Stage 1, the sessions returned to 2 hours in length, and the number of visitors increased from a maximum of 15 to 30 prisoners. The number of individual visitors increased to a maximum of three adults and four children. The welcome re-opening of the play areas sees children again attending the play areas in the VRC and Main Visits Hall once registered.

Children are supervised by a playworker, who also support visitors by informing and helping them access the lockers, toilets, and other facilities, and provide clear zip lock bags to store items such as baby food, nappies, and their locker key in. Stickers are offered to the children to encourage them to follow instructions, including sitting with their families etc., which was particularly important when there were no toys or activities available because the play area was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The return of visits became possible with the end of lockdown restrictions in May 2021, and the vaccinations rolled out. Restrictions only allowed those under 11 years of age to 'hug' their incarcerated loved one, which is heartbreaking for children aged 12 years old and adults – particularly adult children with learning difficulties. Returning to stage one in March of this year saw the welcome return of physical contact, and children were once again allowed to sit on dad's lap for some long-awaited and much-needed affection.

Visitors' Reception Centre

One of the supervised play areas available to children while families wait for visiting time in the prison to begin. Complete with lockers where items not allowed into the prison can be stored safely, the Children and Families Team also provide pushchairs that are permitted into the prison. The lateral flow booths have been removed, and play areas are back to their pre-COVID-19 size.

Play Areas – Social Visits

The team provides two play areas at HMP Hewell - one in the VRC and the other in the Main Visits Room. Play areas are stocked with various toys, games and colouring activities children can do independently or with family members at the visiting tables.

Both were closed during the first half of this reporting period to avoid cross-contamination between visiting children handling the toys, books, etc. The re-opening of the play areas saw children again visiting these spaces in both the Visitors' Reception Centre (VCR), and the Main Visits Hall once registered.

Prison Video Visits

Referred to as Purple Visits before April 2022, the importance of maintaining family connections during the lockdowns saw these introduced across the Justice system. A secure video calling platform that allows prisoners to see their families when not physically possible, these are booked by prison staff or families through an integrated booking system. Entitlement is one video visit per month for each prisoner.

Video visits have changed at Hewell from 'Purple Visits' to 'Prison Video' just follow the link <https://prisonfamilies.org/change-of-video-call-service>.

Twitter account message

Working in partnership with Samaritans, who work with trusted and trained prisoners providing a listening service to prisoners who need extra emotional support, the Children and Families Team provided storybooks for the prisoners to read to their children. An extension of the Storybook Dads programme (details follow), these books are sent home to the children so they can look at and read them whenever they want, which helps to strengthen Family Ties.

Prison Forums

Four Prison Forums have been held within the reporting period and continue to be a popular format for consulting with the prisoners and their families. Attended by prisoner representatives from each House Block and prison staff at the Governor level, the forums have provided additional information on how the team can support the prisoners and their families during incarceration. This has an enormous impact on a prisoner's mental health and wellbeing and contributes to a calmer environment within the prison walls.



An example of the forum's success was when the recorded message associated with the prison phone calls was changed nationally. Brought to the forum for discussion, it was noted this change had not been well received and had created confusion among prisoners and their families. HB representatives gathered information and signatures from the affected men, and the recording is being changed. Another change brought about by the Prison Forum was the reinstatement of the 2-hour visits, which were reduced to one-hour during the COVID response measures, and these were reinstated in July 2022.

Twitter

The Twitter accounts created in the previous reporting period continue to be a successful means of sharing information by HMP Hewell and the YMCA's Children and Families Team to prisoners' families and the wider community. Providing regular updates, this account was essential during the imposed pandemic measures for families and followers, as the Twitter accounts share crucial information, such as:

We have sought assurances that in the event that public health teams specifically direct individual prisons to start testing again, that families should not have to pay for them. We know families desperate for other visits restrictions to be lifted as in the community. 2 April 2022

Whether sharing how the prisoners are spending their days or families revealing how they are coping has allowed the team to quickly connect with families and offer additional one-to-one support when required. Messages of hope and encouragement are posted when the team notice a pattern of difficulties being expressed through the Twitter account.

So pleased we're well & truly back now we're in stage 1, 'business as usual' means family days are back! One family flew from Spain to visit, such commitment... read below for some Family Day comments.

There are a lot of very decent @hmpps staff on Twitter who are very helpful and approachable. They don't have to reach out like they do, and sometimes it's even frowned upon by their superiors. Such people deserve recognition.



8:33 pm May 21, 2022, Twitter from iPhone.



Looking forward to our 'Jubilee Celebration' Family Day on Tuesday. Final prep, Jelly to make, bunting to decorate #platinumjubilee. Helping to make some happy memories for the children and their families affected by imprisonment.

9:37 PM May 28, 2022, Twitter for iPhone

Phones in cells

One of the first initiatives provided by the prison administration in response to COVID, which has proven to be beneficial, was the installation of phones in every cell. The significance of prisoners and families/loved ones being able to have contact with each other whenever they wish is enormous and will continue.

Me and My Dad A four-week/12-hour bespoke parenting programme now delivered for over a decade covers the topics of building a relationship with your child while in prison, listening and attention skills, role models and behaviour and learning through play.

A significant increase in the number of prisoners participating in this programme has been the positive result of two formats of delivery:

- a) Face-to-face groups of 4 – 6 meet weekly; each prisoner must gain clearance to attend
- b) Distance Learning Course - each week of the original programme is a workbook prisoners complete in their cells and submit to the team for assessment and comments upon completion. With no clearance required because prisoners remain in their cell to complete the weekly workbooks, the main advantage of the new format is a rolling enrolment of 40 - 45 men participating at any one time.

Upon completion of the course, the prisoners receive a certificate and an extra visit – a purple or family time session - with their family.

The course is essential for prisoners involved with Children's Services and under Local Authority Care (LAC).

Creative Craft and Card Making workshops and packs

Continuing to be an enormous success, prisoners create cards, scrapbooks (shared activities between the prisoner and their child/ren) and memory boxes (fathers put together keepsake mementos for children being put up for adoption). Therapeutically alleviating anxiety, packs are created and delivered to vulnerable prisoners (e.g. prolific self-harmers, sufferers of severe anxiety, medical wing prisoners) who are unable to attend the workshops held in the Chapel area.

Distraction/Puzzle – Meditative Art Packs were added to the selection of activities packs and will continue to be offered as the prison operates under Stage 1 conditions. Each pack includes some meditative art therapy pictures to colour, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and other puzzles, along with some crayons and a pencil. Some prisoners have requested specific pictures to colour, which they then send to their children. Letter writing paper, diaries and notebooks are also available on request. All these resources have been funded through YMCA's Hewell Rainbow Project (National Lottery Community Fund). During Stage 4 restrictions, the team created hundreds of letter writing, craft and distraction packs distributed regularly across the prison and completed in the cells as an alternative activity to watching television or reading.



The feedback from residents is that it is often difficult to find the 'right card' which costs them their canteen money. Family members, especially children, appreciate receiving a handmade card that is more special and something to keep. Special celebration packs for Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter were very popular, especially after the craft clubs were suspended.

The second year of the Christmas card competition was judged anonymously by Governor Lubkowski, with the first, second and third winners receiving extra phone credit and a chocolate selection box from the Children and Families Team. The winning entry is printed as the Prison's official Christmas Card, and all entrants received a handwritten letter from Governor Lubkowski thanking them for their efforts. This programme was extended to include a Prisoner Christmas Card section in the YMCA Worcestershire competition, which was also very successful.

Storybook Dads Fathers record a story/poems/music/ songs/positive message for their children. The Children and Families Team then edit the final cut, adding sound effects and incidental music onto a CD, and send the finished product to the child/ren. Providing a reminder of daddy's voice was particularly important during Stage 4 restrictions at the prison when children could not see their fathers.





Becoming treasured possessions, the CDs are another way to help build on the absent parent/child bond. An unexpected outcome is that the mothers/partners can also hear their partner's voices.

Extension programmes for Storybook Dads created during the various lockdowns include the video visit books. Some prisoners wrote their own stories, which they read to their child/ren, and others read story books provided by the Children and Families team. The book is then sent home to the child, so they can continue to enjoy the book.

Memory Books

This is an extension for prisoners who complete either the *Me and My Dad* and *Storybook Dads* programmes. Prisoners choose from a variety of sheets that both they and their child/ren complete/colour/design, which once completed are collated and compiled into a book for both the child/ren and their relative to keep and enjoy looking at. An opportunity to support and enhance a positive relationship, these sheets can also be completed together during a session or visit.

Family Time

Held on Tuesday afternoons for prisoners who have attended parenting courses. These additional weekly family visits allow a family to sit together rather than be separated as other prisoners and visitors are. The Children and Families Team provides two-course tutors who offer games, toys and various activities (e.g. colouring, story books) as activities that can be done together or help overcome awkward silences when unsure what to say.

Baby Bonding

A course provided to any prisoner with a child born while in prison. Staff support the men to develop and build relationships with their newborns before they are released. When visits were not possible, prisoners were offered additional purple visits, specific card-making packs, and photos with notes to help make those crucial bonds.

Bumps 2 Babies

A bespoke programme developed during Stage 4 restrictions. The men choose and name a 'baby', which they will nurture and support throughout the programme. Proving to be very successful, the prisoners learn about changing nappies, feeding, baby massage etc.

*We're running a Bumps 2 Babies course for dads with new babies, which includes a special visit to family
#thegoldenthread*

4:39 AM May 29, 2022, Twitter iPhone

Initially, those who attended were given a raw egg to look after for the duration of the 4-week course, which they named, drew a face on and took back to their cells. The aim was to encourage them to take responsibility, to reinforce the importance of nurture. The incentive for those who managed to keep their egg intact was a prize of

some fried egg sweets and a mindfulness book called 'The Good Egg'. This was no mean feat as others tried their best to sabotage the exercise. The prisoners can now choose a baby doll for the exercise, thanks to a generous donation of seven dolls by Redditch Council.

One expectant father who completed the course and was released in July 2022, asked during the second session "Is it normal to feel emotional after these sessions 'cos I just need to talk about what I've learned, and I can't wait to come back for the next session and cuddle my baby?"

The program is so successful that the four weeks are often extended by 3-4 weeks, with the men creating memory books for their children.



Family Days

Held six times per year in normal circumstances, these 5-hour days see 25 families of men who have passed clearance invited to spend the day together doing various activities (e.g. drawing, biscuit decorating, games, walks, sport, and sharing a meal). This year included a Jubilee Day.

Unfortunately, the Christmas days planned for December 2021 were cancelled when the prison was returned to Stage 4 restrictions because of a COVID-19 outbreak in the prison two weeks before Christmas. Very successful family and sports days were held at the end of July 2022.

We're sorry we couldn't invite everyone. We're looking forward into holding more family days during school holidays, at the moment we have 25 places at each one.

4:39 AM May 29, 2022, Twitter iPhone



Platinum Jubilee Celebrations- making positive memories July 2022



Hidden Sentence

This programme explores the impact imprisonment has on children and their families and how available services can meet the support needs of those affected. Providing an insight into each family member's perspective of a prison sentence, this no-cost, one-day prison experience continues to be funded by the Mothers' Union and provided by the Children and Families Team. The programme is offered to local community members (e.g. teachers, social workers, lawyers, etc.) either on-site at HMP Hewell or offsite at a community location.

Held every two months when permitted, participants begin their day in the VRC, where the day's schedule is outlined to them. Everyone then experiences the same entry screening processes between the gate and the internal Visitors' Centre, (3) all visitors do when entering the prison. This includes the dog checks for drugs. Each stage of the process is explained by prison visits staff.

Participants then walk through the prison to the Chapel, where the Children and Families Team deliver the programme, which outlines their role in supporting the prisoners and their families. A small group of 5-6 prisoners openly speak about what life is like in prison for themselves, and their families and participants are encouraged to ask the prisoners questions before and during a provided lunch. A tour of one of the House Blocks allows participants to see the living conditions and get a feel of the site before a final question and answer session brings the day to a conclusion.

Those who have attended the Hidden Sentence training all speak of the invaluable insight the day provides them, both about life in prison and its impact and effect on the children they work with.

Really inspiring day – I'm really surprised (in a good way) how much participation and interaction there was with the prisoners and how much of the prison we were permitted to see/experience. Thankyou!

Hidden Sentence participant July 2022

Fantastic opportunity to see in practical terms, rather than another zoom course; knowledgeable staff. Not rushed.

Hidden Sentence participant July 2022

This training has changed my perspective in so many ways and all for the better. Time spent talking prisoners was invaluable.

Hidden Sentence participant July 2022

Ninety per cent of those who attended the July 2022 Hidden Sentence training rated the programme as excellent in all categories of the Learning Outcomes, and 100% said they would recommend it to their peers. Only one participant suggested an improvement to the programme, which was the addition of external professionals to talk about their place in supporting prisoners' families in the community.

An online Hidden Sentence training package was developed during the lockdown for professionals to engage with..

[Family engagement/1:1 support](#)

The YMCA's Children, and Families Team continue to offer one-to-one support on each of the six Houseblocks. Working closely with the Chaplaincy team when necessary, they also work on a practical level, often liaising and collaborating with various outside agencies, as required. Referrals come to the team through various means, including the prison staff by email, the previously discussed referral system, by other residents, or prisoners can self-refer.

Ongoing 1:1 support to every prisoner who requests it looks different. It might involve getting ready for court, establishing contact with a family, gaining visiting rights/access to children, or setting up and supporting 'goodbye visits', which allows social workers to bring 'looked after' children to see their estranged fathers before being placed for adoption.

The provision of phones in each cell provided the team with greater access to the prisoners and often cut the red tape previously associated with supporting prisoners. The result is a faster ability to assess a prisoner's situation and provide the best support possible, such as providing family members with information about their loved ones when access to the prison was impossible.

This vital work, the team, cannot be underestimated.

I'd struggle without the family team. They support us in so many ways. I would need too many pages, but crucially they are the people we go to for any family issues in the prison and we know they will help.

Prisoner A 2022

They offer support to keep prisoners in contact with their families while in jail and if you have any issues or worries they support you.

Prisoner E 2022

Contact room.

The team has negotiated for a new contact room where they can hold programmes such as *Bumps to Babies* and provide a quiet space for welfare and farewell (children being placed for adoption) visits. The Samaritans have provided funds to allow the team to purchase appropriate furniture for the room.

Project plans for the coming year

The team is aware that there is always more they could do for the prisoners and their families and have the following ideas for the forthcoming year. Their focus will be to provide the programmes listed above, improving them as best they can wherever possible. New programmes which have begun but are as yet to be completed include:

- *The Garden of Hope* is a garden space for prisoners and their families. It has begun with the acquisition of benches and plants. The team are waiting on the placement of fences around the area so that it can be finished and anticipate this will happen early in the next reporting period.
- *Journey into Prison* – a new initiative based on a woodland theme, the programme is designed to enhance visits, especially for children, so they are less daunting and more relaxed.
- A review of Family Time, Prison Forums, and Memory Books aligns with the team's expectation of continuous improvement.
- The reinstatement of *Hidden Sentence* into the induction training of all Prison Office Entry Level Trainees (POELTS) and OMIC vital workers. This was suspended while the prison was in Stage 2 restrictions and above.

Feedback from those involved/Programme impact/Building on people's strengths/What has been learnt?

In 2016, the Ofsted Report for HMP Hewell noted the prison had several issues that required addressing yet made special mention that the support provided to the prisoners and their families and singled out

(the) dedicated team(who) provided a wide range of innovative interventions to help prisoners maintain and re-establish contact with the children and families (Ofsted Report on HMP Hewell 22.8 – 9.9.2016:17,52).

The team are widely recognised by those also working with the prison for the huge role they have had at HMP Hewell around cultural change. The positive impact of the programmes provided cannot be overstated. The team's meaningful relationships with prisoners, their families, outside agencies (e.g. schools, lawyers, social workers, other service organisations, etc.) and the prison staff, with direct feedback through the programme evaluation forms (online and paper), continues to show the ongoing support the team has formed with those who engage in their programmes, either directly or indirectly.

They stay in contact, keep us updated and do everything they can to help ... Families need to be integral to rehabilitation. I love them and value them as people and as a service... and it would be a huge loss if they were to be removed from the prison offerings (Dr Sarah Lewis, PRS, 2022).

This was profoundly commented on by Kelly Bassett, Head of Business Assurance at HMP Hewell (2022), who stated that without the team's efforts

I worry that we would stop seeing dads, brothers and sons and risk reverting to only seeing prisoners which would be a huge backward move. We would also miss the opportunity to tap into the support families provide to prisoners for rehabilitation and resettlement back into our communities.

But the most important feedback comes from the prisoners themselves and attests to the strong relationships Nicki and her team build and the successes they win for those who go to them for support.

They have always been there ...and have a massive effect on me and my children. If they wasn't around as they have done so much, not just for me and my family but a lot of the lads and their families, making sure the lads get contact with their kids through social services and family visits/Storybook dads and card/craft club. It would be devastating if Family Team stopped working.

Prisoner B 2022

They bridge the gap of support, advice and understanding... Our younger children would be left out as normal visits don't allow playtime. The team stop our children from doing an emotional sentence!
Prisoner E 2022

A big impact due to me not having any idea how to have gone about me seeing my children while in here or in fact out. Both Nicki and Helen are fantastic at what they do, so I would just like to thank them both for giving 120% to everything they do and have done for all in here.

Prisoner H 2022

The team is aware of their impact thanks to the surveys and referrals they receive daily. The high regard those working within HMP Hewell have for the team is also very apparent.

Sometimes it is only the YMCA team that they (prisoners) can talk to about their family relationships...I have always been impressed by the dedication of the team to their work here at Hewell to both the prison and also the prisoners and their families.

Denise Bayliffe, Family Support Worker, Barnardo's, May 2022

The men would certainly suffer a detriment from not having all the great opportunities to maintain their relationships. Very dedicated team who put 100% effort into their work.

Mike Battle-Welch, PE Instructor, May 2022

They help by supporting families that may need it but also by helping them understand all the processes as sometimes they can be quite confusing. Again being the go-between as such. The families in theory are innocent in all of this and should be treated as such and with respect, which they get here from all of the team. Without the help they provide, it would be a very different story.

Will Maclean, OSG, May 2022

How people have been involved in developing and delivering the activities

All programmes provided by the Children and Families Team are done from a needs-led approach, ensuring that all programmes benefit the prisoners and their families.

Word of mouth has always been the most successful way to promote the team's work and programmes with prisoners who have completed any courses or received one-to-one support from the team. Actively encouraging other prisoners to connect with the team through the general application forms used throughout the prison or directly connects the team to those within the prison. When possible, many will 'pop' into the office to mention a concern about other prisoners in the hope that Nicki and her team can support those having a hard time.

Application forms are available within the Chapel where the team are located and on the HBs. Referrals boxes placed on each House Block have made applying for programmes and referrals easier, especially during lockdown restrictions. Information and referral forms are also in the VRC for families to self-refer.

The team work closely with all available prison departments, including the prisoner mentors who attend the induction of new prisoners. This group actively promotes the team's work and passes on the contact details of new prisoners to Nicki and Helen as prisoners enter HMP Hewell.

The value of the programmes is also confirmed by the prisoners wanting to engage in other programmes.

Beyond the prison, those who have completed the *Hidden Sentence* training spread the word about the programmes. Greater communication with the outside community is an area that will be investigated further in the coming months as the team liaise with local schools to train more teaching staff and peer champions.

How many people have benefited from the project?

The official statistics, taken between September 2021 and August 2022, when measured against the project's four outcomes, show that 21,923 supports have been provided across the prison in that time. Acknowledging that many of these are multiple interactions with the same people, the team estimates this becomes over 8,000 people, an impressive figure when considered against the challenges of the previous 12 months. However, an exact number cannot be determined as to how many prisoners have been individually supported benefitting from the programmes provided by the Children and Families Team in that time (Table 1).

On average, the team have successfully provided an average of two and half times more services in the past 12 months than those projected in the original submission. For example, *Learning Outcome 1: Children and their families have improved life chances and increased self-esteem* the aim is to have 4,000 happier children with greater self-esteem this reporting period.

Outcome 2: Local schools and communities will have an increased awareness of families affected by imprisonment and will increase their support for these families and reducing stigma is the only outcome that has not reached the same success as the other three outcomes. The ability to provide the *Hidden Sentence* and staff support training was not possible due to the pandemic restrictions discussed earlier in this report. The team anticipate that now 'business as usual' is the normal practice that the opportunity to engage with the community and prison staff to deliver this vital programme will see greater uptake in the final year of the funding allotment. Counter to this, offender involvement is 11 times higher than projected for the same reporting period, with 109 prisoners rather than the projected 10 positively engaged in this outcome.

The reasons for this can be clearly related back to the reworking of all of the Team's programmes, which were previously delivered to small groups of prisoners and is now available as workbooks the prisoners can do in their cells. As previously discussed, the importance of rewriting the material so it was available to everyone locked in their cells for up to 23 hours a day so as to reduce possible infection rates, has opened up the access to all prisoners. No longer are clearances necessary to partake in the various programmes on offer, as was the case prior to the pandemic. For *Outcome 3: There will be a reduction in re-offending by prisoners who have benefited from intervention by the project* the expected 100 fathers who would be impacted in this reporting period was actually 1074, more than ten times the anticipated number.

The final outcome, *Outcome 4: Male prisoners will feel more empowered as fathers and act as positive role models to their children after completing parenting courses and subsequent child-focused family times. Prisoners and children will benefit* saw an average of two and half times the expected impact during the reporting period for each indicator. Whether this was families self-referring or more confident fathers, there was a steady interaction with all involved throughout the 12-months, despite the various imposed lockdowns and other restrictions. April was the exception and low numbers are recorded for this month for this outcome, but no reason can be given as to why that is.

Overall, the Children and Families Team has achieved incredible outcomes over a period of time when it would be expected not to be the case. Their ability to quickly adapt to the given circumstances has seen the reworking of all of their programmes which has led to increased engagement with the prisoners of HMP Hewell and their families.

Successes and other wins in the past year

The team continues to provide an excellent service to the prisoners of HMP Hewell and their families, despite the ever-changing world of COVID-19. The team were asked by YSS Ltd (Bromwich and Redditch) to meet with Princess Anne, the Patron of Prisons, when she visited the area in July 2022. Feeling extremely honoured, Nicki Harris and Helen Smith were part of a small group representing HMP Hewell, speaking directly with the Royal Princess about their essential work.

The support and respect the team have across the prison are clear, as evidenced in the comments included in the surveys returned by prison staff for this report.

Thank you to the team. Your family support work is a chink of light in a somewhat bleak environment.

Volunteer Chaplain. April 2022

The family team are technically the go between in some instances between the men and the prison and they can help support them by finding out information for them and making their time here a bit easier, especially when they are new to the whole system. Their role is pivotal in the smooth running of the visits and family support networks.

OSG, May 2022

The men would certainly suffer a detriment from not having all the great opportunities to maintain their relationships... Very dedicated team who put 100% effort into their work.

PE Instructor April 2022

Engaging with diverse groups of people

All measures listed below ensure the inclusion and involvement of as many diverse families as possible, allowing the team to work with as many prisoners and their families as possible. This includes, but is not limited to (in alphabetical order):

- Assessing the needs of an offender's family to provide support/signposting to relevant agencies.
- Continuously developing innovative ways of learning through play in a prison setting.
- Coordinating the *Hidden Sentence* training with prison staff and local community agencies/school staff.
- Coordinating the Prisoner Forums
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of developments in the Children and Families' department and encouraging them to share in the planning processes for children visiting the prison.
- Evaluations for *Me and My Dad* and *Storybook Dads* were completed throughout the year.
- Following all child protection requirements in relation to children visiting the prison and maintaining all records as required.
- Following prison policies and procedures and undertaking necessary training as required.
- Ongoing liaison with the Families Intervention Coordinator, VRC Manager, and Visits Senior Officers concerning children visiting HMP Hewell.
- Planning and coordinating all family events and Family Times/visits across HMP Hewell.
- Planning, organising, and overseeing parenting and pre-visiting courses.
- Providing child-centred leaflets and referral forms to support children/families of prisoners when liaising with other agencies.
- Recruiting suitable Play Workers, Volunteers and Course Tutors who receive the relevant training for staff and volunteers concerning children's work.
- Undertaking and collating user surveys to evaluate each project's programme and implementing the needs identified by families and their children Monitoring the outcomes for families and prisoners.

Those involved/ Partnerships

Many groups are involved in the Hewell Rainbow Project: the Children and Families Team, YMCA Worcestershire, the prison staff (Chaplains, Prison Officers, Administration, etc.), community volunteers, and community agencies, including the Mothers' Union and The Samaritans. Each is an integral component that allows Nicki and her team to achieve their results. The trust of the prisoners and their families is an essential aspect of their work because there would be no project without them.

This includes several partners, some of whom contribute to the project through in-kind support and others through direct funding.

- a) The Mothers' Union (MU) pays for two trainers to deliver the *Hidden Sentence* training and for everyone who attends, including the prisoners. They also provide Christmas presents and Easter eggs for the children each year
- b) The Samaritans provide the Listener Scheme within the prison. Working closely with the Children and Families Team, they have provided support at the Family Days, funded the furniture for the new Contact Room, and provided the books read by fathers to their child/ren during the video visits. The Samaritans have also provided art supplies for craft and card-making packs
- c) In 2020, YSS began working with a small number of families who have been affected by prison in some way and live in the Worcestershire area and the Children and Families Team refer families in Worcestershire to them. Their programme *Families First* was created after attending a *Hidden Sentence* training day. YSS are also conducting some research with Open University - a survey appeal for parents with a partner or ex-partner in prison. The YMCA team were interviewed by Open University at the start of the research prior to launching the survey. began their project and
- d) HMP Hewell continues to provide funding for a play worker each year and provides line management support and facilities at no cost.
- e) The local Family and Parenting Support Service contributes in-kind support for workers of families in schools and communities.
- f) Various support agencies through the local community, including local schools and churches in-house sponsored Christmas Elf to run involving prisoners and staff, which raised £170 for prisoners' families.

Volunteers

Identifying suitable volunteers to work with prisoners and their families involves a set and complicated process. Applicants must pass the necessary security checks associated with working in prison and, once successful, undertake the relevant induction and training before they work alongside the paid workers. This process can take many months and often sees the applicant no longer available due to the time lag.

Currently, one volunteer works with the Children and Families and Chaplains' teams.

What support is needed now?

Support for the next 12 months will shift as life within the prison returns to the 'new norm' of Stage 1. The threat that restrictions could be imposed again is ever presented and produces increased levels of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression about being further isolated from loved ones. Increased mental health supports for prisoners and staff would help to alleviate these potential concerns and issues.

Still, the team continues to work with what is available, when and wherever possible, to ensure that prison life is as much of a positive experience for all involved as can be. Feeling supported by those they work with helps them feel confident they can continue to support the prisoners and their families in the coming month of the final report.

Conclusion: How the work has contributed to the National Lottery Community Fund's key goals of early action, shared and sustainable spaces and places, and stronger relationships

As this second report shows, the Children and Families Team continues to meet the National Lottery Community Fund's key goals of early action, shared and sustainable space and places, and stronger relationships. Despite the

fluctuating difficulties of the past 12 months, the benefits of the pandemic have resulted in updated programmes that provide more significant support to the prisoners and their families. The team continues to be an integral component of HMP Hewell's care system.

In location now for more than 16 years, the consensus across the prison and the wider community is that if the team were to disappear, the very fabric of the prison would be broken irretrievably.

Aware of the amount of work there is to do, the team continues to do what they do best - support the prisoners and families of HMP Hewell to achieve some level of contact in difficult times, much to the gratitude of the prisoners and their families.

It made me think about how much I love my daughter and how much I need to be there for her. It made me think about my actions what has put me in here, won't be coming back to jail.

6:57 AM May 3, 2022, Twitter for iPhone

	Target 2022	End of project	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	To 10 Aug	Total
Outcome 1: Children and their families have improved life chances and increased self-esteem.															
Family ties (Family Days)	75		0	10	8	0 **cancelled	0	0	0	28	24	0	23	0 **cancelled	93
Children visiting (video visits throughout COVID-19 and to date average)			671	805	845	915	772	812	830	835	937	925	921	237	2,924 (social visits) 6,581 – (*video visits) 9,505
Children Happier/ Children Self Esteem	4,000	12,000	699	843	862	935	798	822	853	883	983	939	993	252	9,862
Outcome 2: Local schools and communities will have an increased awareness of families affected by imprisonment and will increase their support for these families and reducing stigma.															
Hidden Sentence Training	100		0	0	0 ***cancelled	0	0	0	0	0	0 ***cancelled	0	1	0	1
Staff supported	200		2	3	3	5	2	1	4	1	3	3	10	3	40
Offender involvement	10	30	6	7	7	7	12	7	10	7	12	11	13	10	109
Outcome 3: There will be a reduction in re-offending by prisoners who have benefited from intervention by the project.															
Fathers' actions	100		85	86	96	91	92	102	87	85	93	93	94	70	1,074
Families trust	150		25	53	30	57	32	30	54	74	75	52	89	43	614
Released prisoners		30	3	2	3	9	1	3	5	3	2	2	1	1	35
Outcome 4: Male prisoners will feel more empowered as fathers and act as positive role models to their children after completing parenting courses and subsequent child-focused family times. Prisoners and children will benefit.															
Families self-refer	100		53	23	30	55	44	16	10	3	15	11	6	9	275
Fathers confident	100		14	15	19	26	21	31	16	14	22	20	23	19	240
LAC		20	3	4	3	1	2	8	7	7	11	12	9	8	75
Totals	4835	12,080	1561	1851	1906	2101	1776	1832	1876	1940	2177	2068	2183	652	21923

Table 1: Learning Outcomes 1 – 4 results for the reporting period of September 2021 – August 2022.

