

# [Press release: Strengthening prisoners' family ties: the 'golden thread' to reducing reoffending](#)

Strengthening family ties can play a crucial role in helping offenders to turn their lives around beyond the prison gates, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said today following a visit to HM Prison and YOI Parc in Bridgend.

The visit to HMP Parc – which is the only privately-run prison in Wales – comes in the year following the publication of a UK Government-commissioned report, which identified family relationships as the “golden thread” running through the reforms across the prison estate.

Mr Cairns met with Parc prison director, Janet Wallsgrove and prison staff to see first-hand how incorporating family members into the prison’s innovative rehabilitation schemes is having a significant impact on preventing prisoners from reoffending after release.

In September 2016, [Lord Michael Farmer](#), in partnership with the membership charity Clinks, was commissioned by the UK Government to investigate how connecting prisoners with their families can improve offender wellbeing, assist in keeping the public safe and reduce reoffending.

During the visit to HMP Parc, the Secretary of State met Corin Morgan-Armstrong, head of family interventions for G4S Central Government Services in the UK, who highlighted how the success of the prison’s ‘Invisible Walls Wales’ project has helped to inform the Farmer Review, and outlined the tangible results the scheme is having on the rehabilitation of offenders.

## **Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said:**

Safe and secure prison environments are just the foundation for successful rehabilitation. But as Lord Farmer’s review outlined last year, building and nurturing family relationships is also fundamentally important if people are to change.

It has been inspiring to meet the passionate staff at HMP Parc and to experience how they are pursuing trailblazing initiatives like ‘Invisible Walls Wales’. It’s also been an experience to listen to prisoners who have taken up the opportunities available, using their own drive and determination to change as they look towards life beyond the prison gates.

Backed by Big Lottery Fund investment and working in partnership with Barnardo’s Cymru, the Invisible Walls Wales scheme helps prisoners to strengthen family ties and maintain healthy family relationships as well as

providing them with advice on issues such as debt, housing, training and moving towards employment.

**Janet Wallsgrove, Director of HMP & YOI Parc said:**

Initiatives such as Invisible Walls Wales, and the wide range of educational and training programmes which are offered at HMP Parc, all play a key part in supporting prisoner rehabilitation. Our aim is to reduce reoffending after release by providing prisoners with the right skills and support during their sentence, and by strengthening their ties with the community.

Today's visit was a great success, and we'd like to thank the Secretary of State for taking the time to meet our staff, and allowing them to demonstrate how outstanding results can be achieved through innovation, service excellence and teamwork.

**Notes to editors**

- For further information about HMP Parc contact the G4S media team on 020 7963 3333.
- For information on the prison estate and reforms, contact the Ministry of Justice newsdesk on 020 3334 3536.
- HMP Parc is a category B men's prison and young offenders institution near Bridgend, and is the only privately-run prison in Wales. It is managed by G4S and is one of the largest prisons in the UK, with over 1,700 prisoners and 800 members of staff.
- To read Lord Farmer's review on the 'Importance of strengthening prisoners' family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime' click [here](#)