

# Press release: Landmark review places family ties at the heart of prison reform

- New study by Lord Michael Farmer calls family relationships “the golden thread” to help reduce reoffending.
- Research shows prisoners who receive visits from a family member are 39 per cent less likely to reoffend.

Research has shown close ties between prisoners and key family members can significantly reduce the risk of reoffending – which costs society £15 billion every year.

In a landmark review, [‘Importance of strengthening prisoners’ family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime’](#) published today (10 August 2017) Lord Farmer has identified family as the “golden thread” running through the reforms across the prison estate.

In September 2016 Lord Farmer, in partnership with the membership charity Clinks, was commissioned by the government to investigate how connecting prisoners with their families can improve offender wellbeing, assist in keeping the public safe and reduce reoffending.

Lord Farmer said:

My report is not sentimental about prisoners’ families, as if they can, simply by their presence, alchemise a disposition to commit crime into one that is law abiding.

However, I do want to hammer home a very simple principle of reform that needs to be a golden thread running through the prison system and the agencies that surround it. That principle is that relationships are fundamentally important if people are to change.

The Ministry of Justice has already started developing a strategy which will take forward recommendations from the review.

Progress is being made on a number of the recommendations, including giving governors the budget and flexibility to spend their resources appropriately to help prisoners keep important family ties.

Alongside this the government has started piloting significant relationship performance measures which will provide crucial guidance to deliver more consistent services in areas such as visitations across the entire prisons estate.

The recommendations have been welcomed by Justice Secretary David Lidington

who has set out his commitment to creating calm and ordered prison environments to deliver more effective rehabilitation.

Speaking today, he echoed Lord Farmer's view that family relationships are essential to reducing reoffending.

Justice Secretary David Lidington said:

Families can play a significant role in supporting an offender and I am grateful to Lord Farmer for his dedication and research on this important issue.

We are committed to transforming prisons into places of safety and reform and we recognise the need to provide those in our care with stable environments, and opportunities to change their behaviour.

There are numerous examples of good practice in this area, and we will continue work on a strategy to best support offender needs. That has to start with the numbers of prison officers available to support offenders which is why we are increasing staffing number by 2,500.

Lord Farmer's review reflects on progress that has been made in this area over recent years, with many prisons already having defined programmes which puts family relationships at the centre.

Innovative schemes and partnerships with local organisations are also vital vehicles for preparing men for release, and there are already proven partnerships in this area such as Storybook Dads, who help fathers keep in contact with their children, and Partners of Prisoners, who work with prisons to deliver more welcoming visitor environments.

Clinks CEO & Deputy Chair of the Farmer Review, Anne Fox said:

The Farmer Review listened to over 1,000 men in prison and their families, voluntary organisations across the UK, prison staff and academics.

The review concludes that quality family services will help people turn away from crime and it will support families to cope. Voluntary organisations have pioneered best practice for decades and now is the time to spread it far and wide.

The government has secured an additional £100 million a year investment for an extra 2,500 prison officers. With the increasing numbers of prison officers there will be more time available to directly supervise offenders, provide one-to-one support and increase the number of visits.

This, alongside the creation of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service,

will put offender management at the centre of our reform agenda and create a necessary cultural change, bringing with it stability and security – and ultimately reducing the risk of reoffending.

### Notes to editors:

- Ministry of Justice research shows that prisoners who receive visits from a family member are 39% less likely to reoffend.
- [The Prisons Reform White Paper](#) outlined that family members may encourage offenders to take responsibility for their offending, and the impact it has on their lives and the lives of those around them. If a prisoner receives visits by a partner or family member (one measure of family ties) the odds of reoffending are 39% lower than for prisoners who had not received such visits.
- Clinks supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary sector working with offenders. Clinks aims to ensure the sector and all those with whom they work are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders and their communities. Contact details for Clinks, Ben Watson Communications Manager, 07809 332084, Ben.Watson@clinks.org
- Storybook Dads is a national charity that operates in 90 prisons nationwide, including women's prisons and Young Offenders establishments. It helps to maintain family ties by enabling imprisoned parents to read personalised bedtime stories to their children. The recordings are enhanced by and adding sound effects and music and are sent to the children, so that the children can listen to their parents' voice whenever they need to. Storybook Dads helps approximately 5,000 families annually to keep in touch in this unique and meaningful way.

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## [News story: DVSA aims to stop violence against its staff](#)

Between April 2016 and March 2017, more than 300 driving examiners, vehicle testers and roadside enforcement staff suffered physical or verbal abuse while doing their jobs. This was an increase of more than 50% on the previous year.

Attacks on staffs have included:

- verbal abuse and death threats
- damaging staff cars and offices
- serious physical assaults
- lorry drivers trying to run DVSA enforcement cars off the road
- failed driving test candidates driving off with their examiner still in the car against their will

DVSA's campaign aims to put a stop to this completely unacceptable abuse

against its staff.

## **Don't take it out on our staff**

Around 4,600 people work for DVSA. They help you to stay safe on Great Britain's roads by:

- testing learners to make sure they can drive safely
- helping keep vehicles safe through MOTs and annual tests
- taking unsafe drivers and vehicles off the roads

They all have a right to come to work without being abused, threatened or assaulted.

The campaign will:

- warn people what will happen if they do abuse, threaten or assault staff
- show how being assaulted at work affects members of staff
- encourage staff to report any instance of abuse so offenders can be dealt with

Posters warning about the consequences of assaulting staff will be displayed at DVSA sites across Great Britain

### **At driving test centres**

Learner drivers who swear at or verbally abuse staff will be forced to:

- use a different test centre the next time they take a test
- take future tests with an extra supervisor present

Anyone who threatens or assault examiners, drives off with an examiner still in the car, or damages DVSA property will:

- be reported to the police
- face the strongest possible penalties

Although it's extremely rare, driving instructors sometimes try to influence the results of a driving test by harassing or threatening examiners. They face being:

- banned from specific driving test centres
- removed from the approved driving instructor register

### **At the roadside, at operator sites or authorised testing centres**

DVSA will:

- record any abuse from commercial drivers and vehicle operators as evidence for any investigation by the traffic commissioners – they have the power to suspend or take away driving licences and operator licences
- report serious incidents to the police

In some busy sites, enforcement staff are starting to trial body-worn cameras to capture evidence of abuse.

Body-worn cameras will be trialled by DVSA

## **Abuse will not be tolerated**

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

Our staff work incredibly hard to help you stay safe on Britain's roads. We do not tolerate anyone abusing, threatening or assaulting them.

Our message is clear – whatever has happened, don't take it out on our staff. If you do, we'll press for the strongest possible penalties.

The Traffic Commissioner for Wales, Nick Jones, said:

My fellow traffic commissioners and I welcome the agency's campaign to tackle the unacceptable abuse which staff may face whilst carrying out their professional duties.

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## **[News story: Vasquez report published](#)**

MAIB's report on the investigation of the of the fatal carbon monoxide poisoning on the small motor cruiser Vasquez on 12 November 2016, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and the subsequent actions taken:

PDF, 1.52MB, 12 pages

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## Press enquiries

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

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## [News story: UK Government invests £3.5m in Ayrshire](#)

The UK Government is set to invest £3.5 million in an ambitious regeneration programme in Kilmarnock. The HALO project in the former Diageo bottling plant will strengthen Ayrshire's economic prospects, create nearly a thousand new jobs and benefit local businesses and residents.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

This £3.5 million investment, part of the UK Government's industrial strategy, will help create an innovation hub at the heart of this ambitious regeneration project. The scheme has huge potential to transform the Ayrshire economy, drive businesses innovation and attract new talent to the region.

The new innovation hub will foster the next generation of entrepreneurs, with a strong focus on innovation, digital skills, and cyber security.

The wider project will see the first commercial deep geothermal heat pump installed in the UK in nearly thirty years, providing green energy at below-market prices to nearby homes and businesses. It will also create new office space and retail areas which will attract dynamic businesses into Kilmarnock, as well as affordable homes.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy is helping industry succeed and supporting the private sector in achieving ambitious projects which can have a transformative impact in their local economies. Coming on top of around £1 billion invested in UK City Deals in Scotland, the support for the HALO project demonstrates the commitment of the UK Government to help support the Scottish economy and deliver for people in Scotland.

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# Press release: UKEF helps GE and Enka UK secure contract to support Iraq's energy security

Rt Hon. Greg Hands MP, Minister for International Trade, welcomed the news, saying:

The Department for International Trade through UK Export Finance is delighted to be supporting these power projects, which will significantly enhance the energy sector in Iraq. Construction of the projects also presents huge – and hugely exciting – opportunities for UK exporters, and clearly demonstrates the UK's leadership in the energy sector.

UKEF has provided a guarantee to support the government of Iraq in its contract with the GE-led consortium.

This support will finance the early stages of construction of two GE-powered 750-megawatt gas-fired power plants at Dhi Qar and Samawa in southern Iraq. Once complete, the power plants will help to alleviate severe energy shortages in Iraq, supporting the country's infrastructure development and energy security. Further financing may follow to support additional UK procurement.

UKEF and the Department for International Trade teams in Iraq and Turkey are working closely with Enka UK and GE to source at least US\$250 million worth of goods and services from the UK to deliver the projects in coming months. A supplier fair was held in March, in partnership with energy sector bodies NOF Energy and the Energy Industry Council, to connect companies in the UK supply chain with the projects.

The move demonstrates GE's commitment to developing its UK supply chain following the agreement between GE and UKEF signed in 2015. GE is the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor for the projects, which were announced in January, and Enka UK is the main subcontractor.

This support follows an [agreement between the governments of the UK and Iraq](#), signed in March, reaffirming the UK's commitment to supporting Iraq's continued economic development.

Yavuz Akturk, Director at Enka UK, said:

We are very pleased to see UK Export Finance, the leading ECA active in Iraq, supporting these projects. It would not have been possible for us to enter into these projects with GE without their support. These projects will help the people in the country by

increasing the electrification rate while providing great opportunities for UK exporters of goods and services to participate in these transformational projects in Iraq.

Guto Davies, Head of ECA Financing, Global Capital Advisory, GE Energy Financial Services, said:

The closing of this facility supports the construction of these two new power plants and GE's commitment in Iraq. UK Export Finance and the Department for International Trade in Iraq have been instrumental in helping us achieve this critical milestone.

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a [regional network of 24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
  - Bond insurance policy
  - Bond support scheme
  - Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
  - Direct lending facility
  - Export insurance policy
  - Export refinancing facility
  - Export working capital scheme
  - Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Image credit: Department for International Trade