**Family induction booklet**

For many families, they will have limited information about what it is like for a loved one serving a custodial sentence. Much of their understanding will be based on what the prisoner has told them, what they have read in the paper or seen on television. This can create anxiety, confusion and mistrust. By helping families to understand more about the prison system – what the regime is like, what services and interventions are available and who is supporting their loved one – they may be more able to support their family member throughout their sentence and feel more confident in engaging with the prison.

Just like prisoners receive induction packs or booklets on arrival into custody, families also need information when a loved one arrives in a new establishment – a family induction booklet is one way that prisons can achieve this.

**Issues to consider**

* How will you make it available to families? Could it be emailed to families prior to their first visit?
* How can an electronic version of the booklet be available to families who are not using the visit centre? Could you list the booklet on the NICCO website linked to your establishment? ([www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-services](http://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-services))
* Is the booklet written in a way that is accessible to everyone? Does a separate version need to be created for children? Can you include photographs and images to make it more user friendly?
* Who is responsible for updating your family induction booklet to ensure that the information is accurate?
* Can prisoners and prison staff be involved in developing the booklet so that it reflects their lived experiences of the establishment?
* Can families be involved in reviewing the booklet so that it provides the information they say they need?

**Suggested content**

* A welcome to the establishment and statement demonstrating prison commitment to working with families and significant others.
* Information about the day to day regime inside the prisone.g. a timetable of a typical day, including: mealtimes, work time, socialisation time etc.
* Information about the prison environment: what a cell looks like, what facilities are available inside the prison etc.
* Information about the Incentives and Earned Privileges system and what basic, standard and enhanced means for prisoners and how they can move through the system.
* Education, training and employment programmes available for prisoners.
* Support for prisoners’ emotional wellbeing/mental health and who they can talk to, including: listeners, chaplaincy, mentors and mental health workers.
* Support for prisoners’ physical health.
* Prisoner finances: how much money a prisoner is allowed to spend, how they earn money and what they can spend their money on.
* Resettlement information: resettlement planning, when it happens and what it includes.
* How to stay in touch with prisoners: visits (and details of the booking, visit process and Assisted Prison Visit Scheme), family visits, email, phone etc.
* How to share information or immediate concerns with the prison.
* Opportunities for families to engage with the prison, such as through Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork reviews and assessments, celebration events and family forums.
* Information about key people working in the prison such as the governor, key workers, substance misuse workers, the chaplain and resettlement workers. This could be written as a ‘day in the life…’ and include quotes from prisoners about the role that those workers play in providing support.
* Jargon busting: list of commonly used acronyms and terms and their definitions.
* Useful contact numbers inside the prison: Safer Custody, general switchboard, visit centre, booking line, multi-faith team and supplementary property office.
* Useful external contact detail, such as: Assisted Prison Visits Scheme helpline, Prisoners Families helpline, Samaritans, Domestic Violence Support, Drugs and Alcohol Support, Citizens Advice Bureau.