



FACULTY OF HEALTH

# **An Evaluation of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre**

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## Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

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## **Background**

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre based at HMP Leeds is a healthy living centre set up in 2004 to work with prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community. The Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Metropolitan University was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the Centre's work and the services they provide. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had achieved its main objectives.

## **Methodology**

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to gather data for this evaluation. Data was generated using interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with a range of user groups and partners. Additionally, documentary evidence from annual reports, project bids and promotional material was also collected.

## **Key Findings**

### ***Support and maintaining family ties***

Prisoners' families recognised the support they had been given at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Four different types of support emerged: these were bureaucratic support, functional support, stress reducing support and visitor support plus additional service provision. The type of support families received was dependant upon their circumstances and their previous experiences of prisons and the criminal justice system. The majority of visitors interviewed judged that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had a crucial role in the maintenance of family ties. Being less anxious, stressed or frustrated by the process of visiting meant that the quality of the visit with their partner/son/friend had improved. Parents reported that the prison was sometimes a difficult environment to bring young children into. However, the facilities at the Centre alleviated some of those difficulties and in some instances children enjoyed coming to the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

Most prisoners recognised the importance of family ties both for their own mental well-being and also in terms of having a supportive framework available for when they complete their sentence. Young fathers commented on the importance of keeping links with their children and described how visits and special family visits

organised by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were important ways of maintaining their role as a father.

### ***Awareness of Jigsaw Visitors Centre provision***

Prisoners appreciated the work the Centre did with their families and friends. However, many of the prisoners were unaware of the services provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre for themselves as prisoners e.g. Citizens Advice, counselling and the alcohol awareness courses. It was felt that the courses and services that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were providing for prisoners were not being communicated to the majority of those on the wings. Prisoners who had attended courses organised by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre commented positively on the delivery and content. Having sessions delivered by external facilitators was considered important when discussing sensitive issues such as alcohol dependency and drug taking. Being treated as a person as opposed to a prisoner was important in making the prisoner feel 'normal'.

Within the local community there was a lack of awareness about the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and the services it provides for local people. Those that were aware of the Centre did comment upon the health fun days they had attended. Interestingly, it seemed to be children and young people who had used or recognised the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Many participants did not provide a particular reason why they did not use the Centre. However, those that did answer suggested that they were unaware that the Centre existed for local people. Those community members who had used services at the Centre felt that as well as being a welcoming and comfortable place to visit it gave them a unique perspective on prison life and acted as a bridge between the community and the prison.

### ***Creating a supportive environment for prison staff***

Prison staff suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre absorbs visiting requests and queries from prisoners' families, taking direct pressure away from uniformed staff. Prison staff suggested that at times weekend visits were less positive for families and prisoners, with one member of staff reporting that this was directly associated to the Centre not being open. Some staff felt that the Centre had influenced a change of culture within the prison with their holistic, values driven, non-threatening approach counter-balancing traditional prison working practices. Some staff enjoyed using the Centre and its facilities to relax and unwind during breaks and lunchtimes. Having an environment which gave respite from the

prison means that staff can feel relaxed in a non-threatening environment. Many staff also reported using services at the Centre such as Citizens Advice and massage sessions.

### ***Contribution to policy agendas***

Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and partners suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was making valuable contributions in a number of different strategic areas. The contribution the Centre has on the health and well-being of prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the community was a strong theme which emerged throughout data collection with this group. There was a firm view that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was contributing to reducing health inequalities in a vulnerable group such as prisoners and their families. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was felt to be in a unique position to address health and well-being with prisoners' families who are a particularly hard to reach group. The Centre's holistic approach to health, taking into consideration issues such as debt, relationships, housing and the stress associated with visiting was highlighted. As well as this the Centre's contribution to the prison system and the reducing re-offending agenda was discussed. It was perceived that the Centre was contributing towards the National Offender Management Services' (NOMS) policy agenda. The Centre's work in addressing the pathways to re-offending and its role in increasing confidence and perception of the criminal justice system were themes which emerged from the data.

### **Conclusions and Issues for Consideration**

The evaluation suggests that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is achieving its main objectives and doing so in an approach which is both innovative and effective. The Centre's contribution to various policy agendas has been highlighted in the report, especially around reducing health inequalities in 'hard to reach' populations and the Centre's work in reducing re-offending. However, a number of issues for consideration have arisen in view of the findings from this evaluation. These issues include 'raising the profile' of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre with prisoners and the local community and opening the Centre seven days a week.

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# 1. Introduction

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## **Prison Visitors' Centre – a Healthy Living Centre approach**

The facilities and provision available for prison visitors vary considerably across the prison estate (Prison Reform Trust, 2005). There is currently no prison service standard for the conditions and facilities for conducting visits (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002) and as a result, visitors' centres vary in their structure, staffing and funding (Loucks, 2002a). Despite the increasing rise in the prison population, the number of prison visits has declined by 30% in the past five years (Setkova and Sandford, 2005). However, prison visitors' centres are a valuable way of improving the experience of visiting a prison and can provide valuable support for prisoners' families, who have often been described as the forgotten victims of imprisonment (Codd, 1998). They can also be a point of contact for the range of individuals and groups who form part of the wider prison 'community' (prisoners, prison staff and the local community as well as prisoners' families). These centres are consistent with the 'settings approach' as they have the potential to positively influence the health and well-being of those who come into contact with them. This reasoning formed the basis of the development of Armley Prison Visitors Centre as a Healthy Living Centre – the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

Healthy Living Centres provide an opportunity to improve health and reduce inequalities in health through local community action (Health Service Circular, 1999). These Centres, funded through National Lottery money are based on the recognition that determinants of poor health in deprived areas include economic, social and environmental factors which are outside the influence of conventional health services (Salisbury, 1999). There are 7 Healthy Living Centres in Leeds, each distinct in its approach and focus. The 'uniqueness' of the approach at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is that its focus of work is on 4 community groups: prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community.

## **The Jigsaw Visitors Centre**

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre is located next to Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Leeds. HMP Leeds is a large and overcrowded category B local prison, taking both remand and sentenced male prisoners. At the time of the prison's last inspection the total number of prisoners held was 1,227. Nationally, most prisoners are young white males aged less than 30 years (Lester, Hamilton-Kirkwood and

Jones, 2003). This is reflected in the population at HMP Leeds where 80% of prisoners are white and 50% under the age of 30 years (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005). Approximately one-third of sentenced prisoners in HMP Leeds are serving 2-4 years, with around 4% serving a life sentence (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005).

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre is a charitable organisation largely funded by the New Opportunities Fund. The refurbished Centre was set up in the Spring of 2004 and works with prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community. Previous to the refurbishment and New Opportunities funding, the Centre was providing services to prisoners' families and other groups, but this was constrained by funding. In the recent inspection of HMP Leeds the work of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was highlighted as a current area of good practice within the prison (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005).

The main objectives of the Centre are:

- To improve health and well being, including physical, mental, family and financial health;
- To improve access to health information;
- To provide a safe and friendly building with welcoming facilities;
- To act as a bridge between the local community and the prison;
- To build local capacity, develop partnerships and raise awareness of the issues surrounding prison life.

The objectives of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre complement a social view of health and well-being. A model proposed by Ronald Labonte (Figure 1) suggests that three elements need to be in place to experience health and well-being: physical capability, mental health and a social connection to family and others in the community. The objectives of the Centre fit with the model in their aim to improve the health and well-being of prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community.

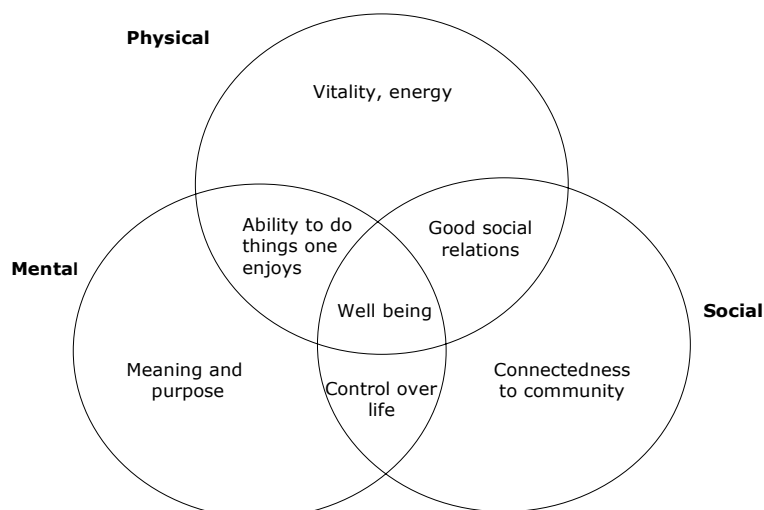


Figure 1. Labonte's model (1998, cited in Orme et al. 2003 page 287)

The Centre is open Monday to Friday and offers a range of services including Citizens Advice, counselling, health information, family liaison and support, and internet access (for a full list of services at the Centre see Appendix 1). As well as this, the Centre has a large community room, two spacious interview rooms, a sensory room for private space and time out, a play area for children, toilets, baby change area, lockers and a café serving hot and cold food (Barnes, 2004).

During 2004-2005 there were 20,438<sup>1</sup> users of the services and activities available at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. The majority of these users were aged between 16 to 64 years (84.2%) although 2,836 users (13.9%) were under the age of 15 years. Of the total number of users:

- 16,052 (78.5%) were prisoners' families;
- 1,530 (7.5%) were prison staff;
- 1,511 (7.4%) were from the local community;
- 1,345 (6.6%) were prisoners.

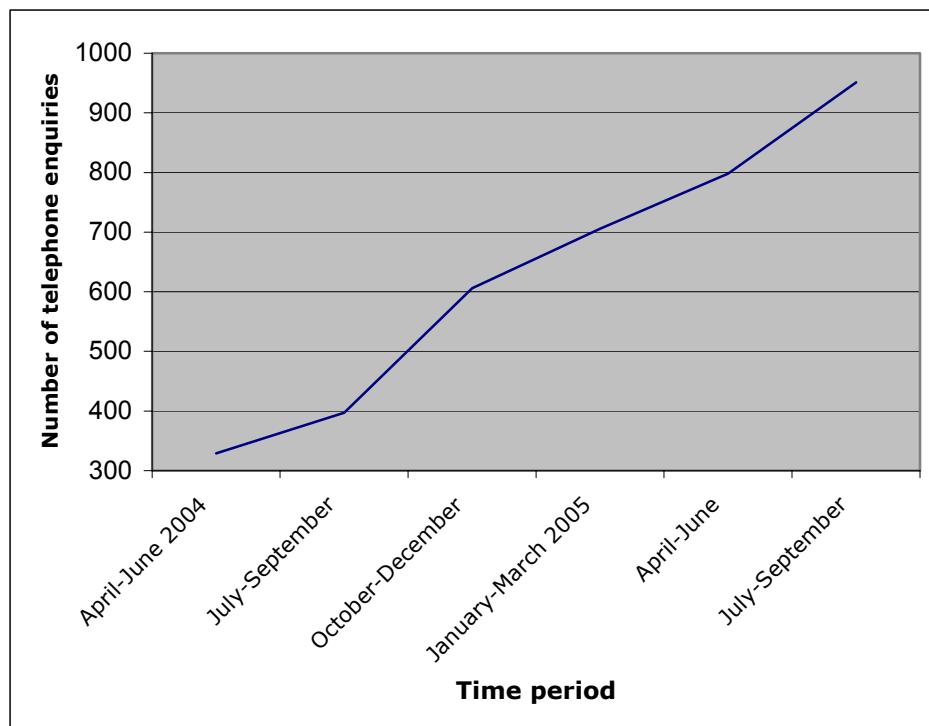
The extent and number of people that use the facilities and services available at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre should not be understated. There is a high demand on services from both inside and outside the prison gates. As one example, the number of children that are supervised in the prison visits room by Jigsaw staff every month is approximately 890. Similarly, high demands are placed on services such as Citizen's Advice, counselling and the complementary therapies. Room bookings are another indicator of the number of people accessing the Centre. The number of organisations that have booked the community room at

<sup>1</sup> The Centre is unable to specify how many of these are new and how many are repeat users.

the Centre has varied on a month to month basis but in 2004-2005, 135 organisations hired the room, which attracted 1,316 people to the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

As well as people coming into the Centre, the number of telephone enquiries having to be dealt with by Jigsaw Visitors Centre staff is increasing (this is shown in Figure 2). The Jigsaw Visitors Centre provides this enquiry service predominantly for families of prisoners. This work may lead to prisoner liaison work, ringing prison landings and wings on behalf of families or simply dealing with enquiries around the visit system.

Figure 2. Volume of telephone enquiries at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre



(All data taken from the Jigsaw Healthy Living Project annual monitoring report 2004-2005).

The organisational structure of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre which is in place is shown in Figure 3, with role descriptions outlined in Table 1.

Figure 3.  
Jigsaw Visitors Centre: Organisational  
structure

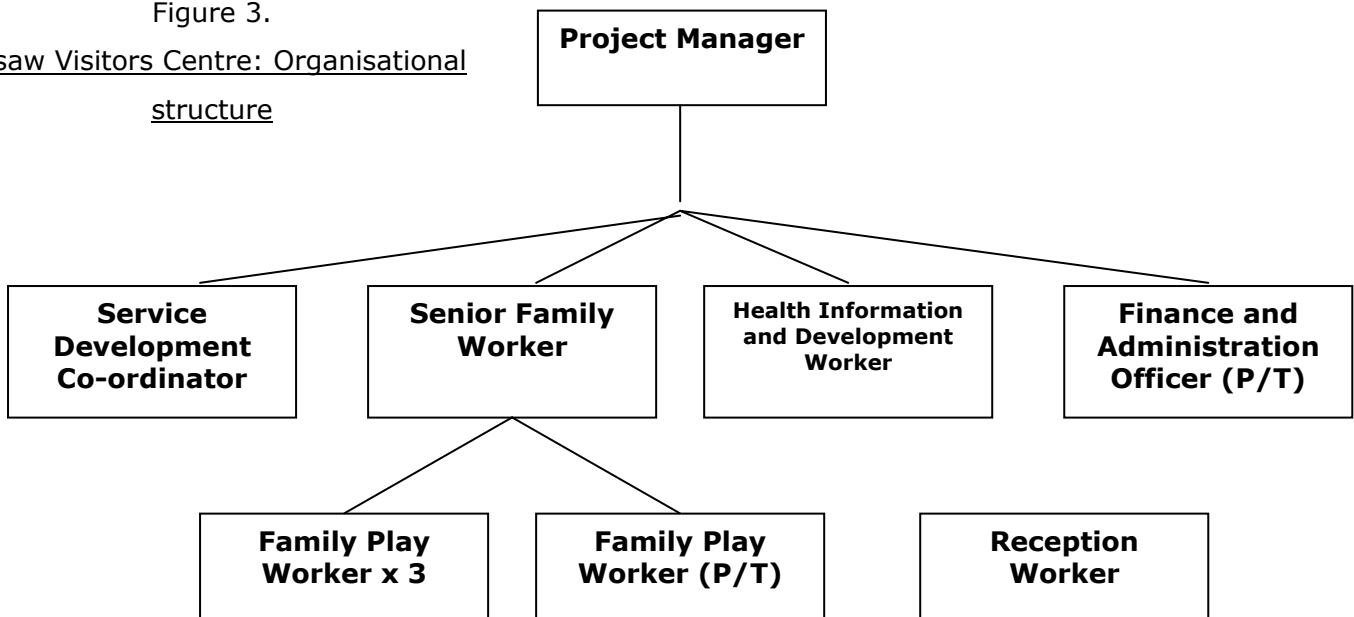


Table 1. Jigsaw Visitors Centre staff roles and role descriptions

Role	Role Description
<b>Project Manager</b>	To provide strategic management of the Visitors Centre. To develop staff management and training, and to ensure that all appropriate systems, policies and procedures are in place for the effective delivery of services and activities.
<b>Service Development Co-ordinator</b>	To work with families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community to promote and develop the range of Visitors Centre services. To develop training programmes to raise awareness of the issues faced by the prison community.
<b>Senior Family Worker</b>	To manage the front line work with families of prisoners visiting HMP Leeds.
<b>Health Information and Development Worker</b>	To work with newly released prisoners, prisoners' families, prison staff and people from the local community to increase awareness and access to healthy living activities, information and services
<b>Finance and Administration Officer</b>	To work as part of a team to provide financial and administrative support to the Project Manager, staff and Management Committee.
<b>Family Play Workers</b>	To work as a team of Play Workers, providing a range of play opportunities for children of prisoners in the play areas inside the visits room at HMP Leeds.
<b>Reception Worker</b>	To offer warm and welcoming reception for all visitors to the Visitors Centre. To work alongside other Visitors Centre staff to provide information and support to families visiting HMP Leeds and to offer assistance to the administration and finance worker as and when required.

**The Evaluation**

The Centre for Health Promotion Research based at Leeds Metropolitan University was commissioned in September 2005 by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre to carry out an evaluation of their work and the services they provide.

Specifically, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had achieved its main objectives listed on page 2.

This report is divided into 5 sections. Section 2 provides the evaluation methodology including the process of data collection and analysis. The findings are reported in section 3 which are then discussed in section 4. Finally, section 5 provides some conclusions and issues for consideration.

## 2. Evaluation Methodology

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### **Core principles**

Given that the refurbished Jigsaw Visitors Centre has only been in operation since May 2004 the potential for demonstrating achievements of major outcomes was limited. The focus was on identifying any short term gains and demonstrating how they might lead to longer term changes. At the start of the evaluation it was therefore necessary to focus on identifying the Visitor Centre team's rationale for their approach and the anticipated change pathway towards the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's objectives and wider local and national policy priorities. It was recognised at the outset that this was a potentially complex process, as the Centre involves a range of activities targeted at different groups.

The basis of this initial exercise was to uncover the Centre's 'Theory of Change' and to understand how the intervention and processes of working contributes to longer term outcomes (see Green and South, forthcoming, for a fuller explanation). This information also provided a focus for the evaluation and informed the design of future interview schedules, focus group schedules and questionnaires with other groups.

In addition to 'Theory of Change' the evaluation also drew on the principles of realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) which emphasises the importance of understanding the mechanisms of change with regard to the context in which they operate. As well as identifying short term gains and indicating how they might lead to the achievement of longer term outcomes, the evaluation also focussed on processes.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of qualitative approaches to evaluation. This evaluation drew principally on qualitative data supplemented where appropriate with quantitative data. Further, the use of triangulation has been proposed as a means of achieving validity in evaluation (Green and Tones, 1999) and is particularly relevant to relatively small scale evaluations. Triangulation was achieved by comparing the findings derived from the use of different methods and from different stakeholder groups.

## **Methods**

A number of different methods combining qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to gather data for this evaluation. Approval for the evaluation was obtained from the Faculty of Health Research Ethics Sub-Committee at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Data was generated using a combination of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with a range of user groups. These groups included prisoners' families (including children), prisoners, prison staff and the local community. Data was also gathered from a range of other key stakeholders from the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Action for Prisoners' Families, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's Management Committee. As well as this, documentary evidence was also collected from the Centre.

## **Documentary evidence**

Documentary data was collected from the Jigsaw Visitor Centre's annual reports, project proposals, previous evaluation reports and promotional material including newsletters and newspaper articles.

## **Prisoners' Families**

As well as analysing the comments book in the Jigsaw Visitors Centre, 20 semi-structured interviews with prisoners' families were carried out. Prisoners' families were asked to take part in a short interview as they arrived in the Centre prior to visiting. The interviews focussed broadly on:

- Their experience of using the Centre;
- Benefits of the Centre, both for them personally, their children and the person they are visiting;
- Access to information and services;
- Views about what is working well/not well in the Centre;
- Recommendations for the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

The researchers took an 'informal approach' to recruiting prisoners' families in that they were politely asked for a few minutes of their time. A fundamental concern was ensuring that potential participants were able to give informed consent free from any pressure or perceived pressure. It was explained prior to interview that the researchers were independent of the prison and the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. The aims of the research were explained as were issues of

confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the interview at any point. Some visitors refused to take part in interviews either through lack of time or reluctance to disclose views. Like other studies (Richards et al. 1994 and King, 2002 cited in Pugh 2004) the researchers found it particularly difficult to recruit and interview children. The researchers ensured that they approached the child's parent/carer prior to speaking to the children, but, many parents refused access. In total 3 interviews were completed with children.

Where permission was granted, interviews with prisoners' families (including children) were tape recorded. A number of families refused to be recorded and in this instance field notes were taken both during and after interview.

### **Prisoners**

Acknowledgement was given to the fact that institutionalised individuals, especially those in a prison environment, may feel under some pressure to participate in research activities (Polit and Hungler, 1993). To avoid this and ensure that individuals were able to make decisions about whether or not to participate freely it was emphasised that participation or refusal to participate carried no reward or disadvantage. Two focus groups were carried out in which a total of 17 prisoners participated. One focus group was conducted with prisoners who were on an alcohol awareness course (specifically for Muslim prisoners organised by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre); the second group consisted of prisoners who were invited to attend a Jigsaw Visitors Centre Management meeting. The research participants may not be fully representative of prisoners within HMP Leeds, however they are all individuals who have come into contact with the work of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

At the beginning of the focus groups the aims of the research were made clear. It was reiterated to participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to provide a reason. It was reinforced to attendees that their identity would be kept anonymous. Detailed field notes were taken during and after the focus groups as recording equipment was not permitted. No prison staff or Jigsaw staff were involved or could hear comments from the focus groups. This ensured that prisoners were able to comment on the service openly.

**Prison staff**

Questionnaires were the main means of collecting data with prison staff. A total of 31 questionnaires were completed by a range of staff from Administration workers, Operational Support Grade staff, Prison Officers and Senior Officers. The questionnaires were self completed by staff and all responses were anonymous. Staff were recruited for completing the questionnaire opportunistically at specific events at the Centre, including the annual Christmas Fair and staff training days. Staff were also recruited on a more ad-hoc basis i.e. during tea and lunch breaks. To complement questionnaire data, interviews were carried out with key prison staff and members of the prison's senior management.

**The local community**

An on the street survey was conducted in the main shopping area closest to the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. The questionnaire used was designed to gather information regarding people's awareness of the services that are available for local people at the Centre. The questions were read to respondents and responses entered by the researchers. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

The evaluation team worked with a community researcher on this aspect of the study. The community researcher contributed both to the design of the questionnaire and also to data collection. Responses from 46 members of the community were obtained.

Questionnaires were also distributed for self completion to a local community group which regularly uses the Centre. These questionnaires were filled in by the respondents themselves and a total of 20 were returned. Some brief focus groups were also held with this group. Additionally, a telephone interview was conducted with a local school co-ordinator who had a remit for engaging her school with the local community.

**Jigsaw Centre staff**

A workshop was carried out with operational staff from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. This basis for this exercise was to explore the processes and the ways of working within the Centre and the contribution that this may have to longer term outcomes or policy.

**Other key stakeholders**

The views of key partners associated with the Centre and other stakeholders were sought using a range of methods:

- Two semi-structured interviews with representatives from the local Primary Care Trust;
- An interview with a representative from the national umbrella organisation for prisoners' families (Action for Prisoners' Families);
- An interview with two representatives from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS);
- A focus group with the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's Management Committee.

All those who participated were informed of the aims of the research and were ensured confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 2 provides a full summary of the data collection methods used in this evaluation.

Table 2. A summary of data collection activity

Group	Data collection activity
All	Gathering documentary data including annual reports, project bids and promotional material.
Prisoners' Families (adults)	Short semi-structured interviews
	Evidence from the Centre's comments book
Prisoners' Families (children)	Short semi-structured interviews
Prisoners	2 x Focus groups
Prison Staff	Questionnaires
	2 x In-depth interviews with Prison Management
	Unstructured interview (Operational Support Grade Staff)
Local Community	Opinion poll style questionnaires
	Questionnaires with local community group
	5 small Focus Groups with local community group
	Telephone interview (local school teacher)
Other partners	1 x Focus group with Jigsaw Management Committee
	2 x Semi-structured interviews with local Primary Care Trust representatives
	Telephone interview with Action for Prisoners' Families Manager
	Semi-structured interview with 2 Regional Offender Manager representatives
Jigsaw Visitors Centre staff	Staff workshop
	2 x In depth interviews (Key Visitor Centre staff)
	Short semi-structured interview (Volunteer)
	2 x Semi-structured interviews (Jigsaw Visitors Centre's service providers)

**Data collection and analysis**

Data collection took place over a three month period, between October 2005 and January 2006.

***Interviews and focus groups***

Where it was agreed, all interviews and focus groups were tape recorded and later transcribed. Where participants did not consent to be recorded field notes were taken and used for analysis. The data was analysed using the framework approach as outlined by Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000). Two researchers coded and analysed the emerging themes.

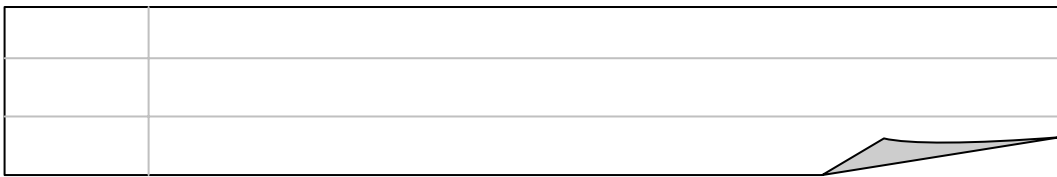
***Questionnaires***

Where open ended questions were used, responses were analysed using the framework approach. Responses to closed questions were coded on a spreadsheet and analysed using SPSS.

### 3. Findings

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This section will present the main evaluation findings in six sub-sections (3.1-3.6). Each sub-section is organised in accordance with themes emerging from analysis. The sections are organised into various headings and where it is appropriate direct quotations from participants have been used. These quotations have been left anonymous to protect participants. Written responses (that have been provided through questionnaires or the Centre's comments book) are identifiable by the symbol below and have also been left anonymous.



## 3.1 Ways of Working

This section briefly summarises an initial workshop carried out with operational members of staff from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. This exercise explored the processes and the ways of working within the Centre and the contribution that this may have to longer term outcomes or policy.

The staff at the Centre discussed their ways of working which underpinned their approach to working with prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community. The key features of their working were felt to be:

- a holistic approach;
- partnership working
- flexibility

### **Holistic approach**

Staff suggested that their holistic approach to issues such as health, resettlement and community participation were important in achieving the Centre's primary objectives.

### **Partnership working**

Partnership working was felt to be a key part of the Centre's work, having strong partnerships both in the community and within the prison helped to deliver a range of services which directly impact on the health and well-being of individuals, as well as helping prisoners reintegrate back in to the community. The distinct mural at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is an excellent example of partnership working in the community and involving local young people. Working with Christchurch Youth Project and Interplay Theatre, the project provided additional provision for young people in Armley and New Wortley.

Having a strong relationship with prison staff was reported to have taken time to develop but is now an integral part of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's working. It was felt that there are now a firm network of prison staff dedicated to the work of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and promoting this around the prison.

### **Flexibility**

The staff discussed their commitment and enthusiasm to their work which was felt to be a key determinant in the delivery of services. All staff felt that their teamwork, flexibility, knowledge and drive were important in creating a positive atmosphere within the Centre. Not being strategically directed by the prison or

other large organisations meant that the Visitors Centre could be responsive to the needs of their community. Also, being from the voluntary sector was important for establishing links with the community and breaking down people's perceptions of prisons and Visitor Centres.

Resources were an issue which would constantly affect the Centre and some staff discussed how being a small team can sometimes cause problems around staff sickness and holiday.

### **Outcomes and achievements**

The staff that were involved in the workshop were aware of the achievements the Centre had made towards a range of issues, including health, resettlement and community participation. Positive outcomes were suggested to be around the work of improving the well-being of children and families of prisoners. Having a welcoming, comfortable environment where families can visit with children was one example which was felt contributes to the maintenance and consolidation of family ties.

The staff also recognised the services which they provide that promote health. Annual health fairs, health information provision and training courses were all felt to benefit those who use the Centre. Citizens Advice and counselling were particular services which were reported to directly address health, financial health and well-being. The staff highlighted the contribution the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was making to the local community, having a building where a range of people can come was felt to be an effective community resource and a way of raising the profile of the Centre and the prison in the local area.

### **Vision and goals**

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre team subscribed to a clear, shared view the Centre and the goals for the future. These included:

- To offer more courses and services to their client groups;
- To strive to be the best Centre in the country;
- To have more volunteers working in the Centre;
- To increase the amount of funding for sustainability.

Only a small number of staff were able to articulate the mechanism by which the Centre would lead to longer term outcomes. Very few members of staff discussed

how their services and activities would contribute to local or national policy agendas.

## 3.2 Prisoners' Families

This section presents the findings from prisoners' families. These findings are based on a number of interviews and analysis of the Centre's comments book.

### The context of visiting

Visiting a son, partner, husband, father or friend in prison was described as a daunting and stressful experience. For all of those interviewed, visiting prison caused some form of strain and many mentioned the physical and financial implications of keeping in touch with a prisoner. Some individuals described how they would visit the prison numerous times a week and would travel for up to an hour and a half for a single visit. For the majority, visiting was an emotional and mentally stressful experience:

*"There can be a lot of tension having to come up here...every time I've come to visit he's just cancelled it, he can't face it somehow".*

Many families commented on how stressful the process of organising a visit was. The telephone booking system for visits caused particular aggravation for families. Being constantly engaged or put on hold was frustrating as well as financially draining.

### A supportive environment

Prisoners' families recognised the support they had been given at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Interviewees identified different types of support they had received during their time at the Centre and this seemed to be dependant upon their circumstances and their previous experiences of prisons and the criminal justice system. From the interviews with prisoners' families and from documentary evidence, there seems to be four types of support available:

#### *i. Bureaucratic supports*

A minority of families who come into the Centre use the facility only out of necessity to collect the relevant documents to enable them to go into the prison to visit. Their interaction with staff and other families was limited and their knowledge of service provision in the centre was poor or non-existent:

*"It's not a place that you really want come and pay that much attention. You just want to get in, out, and visit your partner really."*

### **ii. Functional support**

Many viewed the Centre as being there for more functional purposes, to provide warmth, shelter, food and drink. The families viewed the Centre as a place to prepare themselves before going into the visiting room. Many were required to leave home early for a visit and suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was an ideal opportunity to get a drink and something to eat:

*"I travel a long way and I can manage to get breakfast when I get here."*

Families who used the Centre for this purpose seemed to have acquired more knowledge of the services and facilities available within the Centre by reading the leaflets and posters. Although the majority of these families had not accessed services, most had an idea of what the Jigsaw Visitors Centre provided.

### **iii. Stress reducing support**

The majority of those interviewed perceived the Centre not only as a place to collect visiting documents or as a place to come for more functional purposes, but as an environment which would reduce the emotional stress associated with visiting. From the interviews, it was apparent that four different types of stress reducing mechanisms were in place for families. These have also been summarised in Table 3:

#### **a. Leaflets and written information**

Access to a range of written information was readily available within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Most interviewees commented how useful the leaflets were to them. The information was described by one individual as "clear and direct" and very helpful.

#### **b. Individual support from Jigsaw staff**

The benefits of being able to talk freely with staff were commented upon by the majority of interviewees. The approach of the staff was seen as professional but easy going and this was a characteristic that most found helpful. Having staff that visitors could see on a regular basis was important for communication and consistency of service:

*"If you're down and you have a chat to someone about it here, then it's not in your system and you're not going home brooding on it. Just get it out of your head."*

One visitor described how the Jigsaw Visitors Centre staff were a particular important part of her life, as discussing her partner's imprisonment with her

family and friends was a taboo subject. This was reiterated by other interviewees:

*"On the outside I'm close to my family, but I don't like talking about my partner being in here."*

The Jigsaw Visitor Centre team were described as knowledgeable, helpful and supportive. Their approach in taking time to go through issues in a non-judgemental way was valued by families:

	As first timers the staff in the Visitors Centre were very friendly and helpful, they didn't make us feel like criminals.

#### c. Peer support

The value of having positive relationships with other visitors was a powerful support mechanism for families. Talking to others in similar situations helped families to feel that they were not alone in a sometimes daunting and isolating environment:

*"When you're sat here on your own, you wonder what you're going to do, but people will just come up and chat. Then you start seeing them every visit."*

Peer support also had more practical benefits for those who had to travel to visits regularly:

*"I've met people from my home town and I've ended up giving them a lift."*

#### d. A combination of support structures

Combining the support mechanisms available in the Jigsaw Visitors Centre proved a successful way of managing the stresses associated with visiting.

*"They've always got leaflets out and that helps as well. Whatever you read you can go up to them and say 'can you give me some more information'."*

### **iv. Visitor support plus additional service provision**

There were a number of interviewees who used the Centre not only for support during visiting time, but also for the additional services provided by the Centre. Documentary data from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre suggests that a considerable number of prisoners' families are accessing services in addition to visiting. In 2004-2005 for example, the Citizens Advice service dealt with 62 visitors, and 47 visitors used the massage service (Jigsaw Healthy Living Project annual monitoring report 2004-2005).

Table 3. A summary of the stress reducing mechanisms available for prisoners' families within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre

Stress reducing mechanism	Description
a) Leaflets and written information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to written information which is readily available within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.</li> </ul>
b) Individual Jigsaw staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefits of being able to talk freely with Jigsaw Visitor Centre staff.</li> <li>• The professional but easy going approach of staff.</li> <li>• Staff that visitors could see on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Staff being knowledgeable, helpful and non-judgemental.</li> </ul>
c) Peer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of having positive relationships with other visitors is a powerful support mechanism for families.</li> </ul>
d) A combination of support structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combining the support mechanisms available in the Jigsaw Visitors Centre proves a successful way of managing the stresses associated with visiting.</li> </ul>

### **The maintenance of family ties**

The majority of visitors interviewed judged that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had a crucial role in the maintenance of family ties. Being less anxious, stressed or frustrated by the process of visiting meant that the quality of the visit had improved.

*"If you're comfortable here (the Jigsaw Visitors Centre) it makes you more relaxed, so you're more relaxed when you go up there (the prison visits room)...because if I'm happy I'm going to be more talkative and stuff."*

Being more relaxed meant that for some the likelihood of arguments was reduced:

*"This (the Jigsaw Visitors Centre) makes you more relaxed so you're more relaxed when you're up there (the prison visits room), so you don't argue and stuff like that."*

The visitors who were bringing children into the prison to visit their father emphasised the need to keep family links:

*"You need to keep that contact, they need to know what's going on especially when you have children you've got to keep close contact."*

Interviewees (adults) reported that it was sometimes a difficult environment to bring children into, but the facilities at the Centre alleviated some of those difficulties. Having a play area where children could run around or play with the toys before a visit meant that in some instances children enjoyed coming to the Jigsaw Visitors Centre, as illustrated by these comments:

*"Well it's not like coming to a prison...It makes them think that he's not in a bad place."*

Parent : It's just not a nice place to bring children.

Child: Well it is in here.

Interviewer: You like it here?

Child: Yeah.

However, weekend visits were more difficult as the play facilities at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were closed:

*"She (the child) doesn't like coming on a weekend because she can't come in here."*

Letting children play prior to going into the prison to see their father, meant that the children were relaxed and more likely to engage with the visit:

*"When you come here you can relax. The kids can go into the play areas, then when you're ready, you can get them and go over. You're not carrying on, they're relaxed before they go over."*

Children themselves also commented positively about the Centre. They enjoyed the toys and games that were available both in the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and in the visit room. Numerous comments were also made by mothers and fathers about the effect the staff had had on their children:

	I would like to thank the property officers and Visitor Centre staff for all their help in the last couple of months they have all been very helpful and have made my children and I feel at ease during the visits.
--	--

Families were asked hypothetically what it would mean for them if the Centre did not exist. All interviewees felt it would be a disadvantage to the prison and would make their lives more difficult. Many would not know who to contact for

information, and most people suggested that they would not feel as welcomed by uniform staff. Some families reported in the Centre's comments book a number of negative experiences with prison officers, including incidents of rudeness and experiencing disrespect. This at times overshadowed some of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's work:

	I think the people at the Visitors Centre are nice but the screws in the other building are not nice and have attitude problems.
--	--

Some felt that if the Centre did not exist it would increase stress levels especially when bringing children:

*"I think it would give me stress when I bring the kids because they'd be carrying on. Say you come here at quarter past nine, the visit doesn't start until ten o'clock you're in the waiting room, kids would run riot because there is nothing for them to do."*

Other families thought that they would be less likely to visit, or in some instances not visit at all:

*Interviewer: What affect would it have on you if the Visitors Centre wasn't here?*

*Visitor: I don't think I would come really. It's made my visit more pleasant.*

### **Box 1. Summary of key findings with prisoners' families**

- Visits can be emotionally and mentally stressful for families;
- There are four types of Visitor Centre support for families:
  - Bureaucratic support,
  - Functional support,
  - Stress reducing support, including
    - Leaflets and written information,
    - Individual support from Jigsaw staff,
    - Peer support,
    - A combination of support structures,
  - Visitor support plus additional service provision;
- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was a contributory factor in maintaining family ties, although the attitude of some prison staff may undo the good work of the Centre;
- Having play facilities in the Centre helps children and parents to relax prior to visits. Difficulty arose at weekends when these facilities were not available.

### 3.3 Prisoners

The perspectives of prisoners were gathered through two focus groups, in total 17 prisoners participated in the sessions.

#### Visits

All prisoners unanimously felt that visits were an important part of prison life. Having contact with family and friends was an important buffer for prison based stressors, such as solitary confinement. The majority of prisoners appreciated that the experience of visiting was difficult for their families both emotionally, physically and financially. Some prisoners discussed the difficulty of families travelling from different parts of the country for very short visits, while others discussed the financial implications of visiting. However, some prisoners were not sensitive to the demands placed on their families for visiting.

Most prisoners recognised the importance of family ties both for their own mental well-being and also in terms of having a supportive framework available for when they complete their sentence. Young fathers particularly commented on the importance of keeping links with their children and described how visits and special family visits organised by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were important ways of maintaining their role as a father. In 2004-2005 there were 4 special family visits (Jigsaw Healthy Living Project, 2005).

Prisoners discussed the attitudes and approaches of some uniformed staff during visits. Prison staff were criticised for being unsympathetic and intrusive which potentially undid the positive work of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

#### Service provision for prisoners

Prisoners appreciated the work the Jigsaw Visitors Centre did with their families and friends, for example making them feel relaxed and providing information before visits. However, many of the prisoners (except for those who had some involvement in the management committee) were unaware of the services provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre for themselves as prisoners. Many felt that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was there only for the families or as a place to 'pop in' after they have been released:

	Just got out this morning after serving two years came into Visitors Centre
	and I must say the coffee was nice.

It was felt that the courses and services that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were providing were not being communicated to the majority of prisoners. Many prisoners were unaware of the range of services available to them provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Most contact with the courses was reliant on committed wing staff or prisoners themselves looking for the information. It was agreed by one of the focus groups that more should be done to communicate with prisoners, especially those who had recently arrived into prison. It was felt that prisoners may be missing out on important services such as Citizens Advice, although the data from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre suggests that 618 prisoners accessed or enquired about the Citizens Advice service in 2004-2005 (Jigsaw Healthy Living Project, 2005).

Those prisoners who had attended courses made positive comments with regard to the content and style of the sessions (see Case Study 1), however few prisoners were aware that the courses were organised by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Most prisoners believed that the sessions were in fact part of the prison regime. Having sessions delivered by external facilitators was considered important when discussing sensitive issues such as alcohol dependency and drug taking. Being treated as a person as opposed to a prisoner was important in making the prisoner feel 'normal'.

### **Case Study 1: Alcohol Awareness course for Muslim Prisoners**

In evaluating the Visitors Centre, it was important to gauge the views of the people working at the heart of the organisation. Focus group discussion with Visitors Centre staff highlighted many issues including their perceptions of the Centre's strengths and weaknesses. One of the strengths mentioned by staff was the courses they provide for the prisoners, with some staff claiming that the courses had "changed lives". To ensure that this was the case, it was important to cross check this perceived strength held by staff with the prisoners themselves. A focus group was carried out with those prisoners who had attended the Alcohol Awareness course for Muslim prisoners. In total 10 prisoners took part in the focus group.

#### **Strengths of the course**

The prisoners in the focus group discussion suggested that the course was delivered sensitively and empathetically, taking into account their cultural backgrounds. The prisoners in the focus group felt that this consideration for their religious and cultural backgrounds would not be fully taken into account on a more generic alcohol awareness course with non-Muslims. The majority of prisoners commented positively about the overall quality and value of attending the course. The prisoners felt safe and secure as everyone within the group (including the facilitators and prison staff member) had a mutual understanding of the issues and the difficulties of being a Muslim prisoner on an alcohol awareness course. This mutual understanding made the prisoners more likely to contribute to group discussions and share personal experiences.

For those prisoners who had difficulty with language and articulating viewpoints, bilingual support was available, making the course atmosphere very inclusive for all the participants. Most viewed the course as forming part of their rehabilitation, with many perceiving the course as a "stepping stone" for resettling back into family and community life. Prisoners were convinced that reducing their alcohol intake would not be easy, but the course would help them in understanding their actions.

#### **Limitations of the course**

The prisoners identified very few limitations of participating on the course and it was agreed that the overall experience had been very positive. However, many prisoners thought that the course had seemed condensed and at times the content seemed rushed. Prisoners subsequently made recommendations for the course to be extended to allow more in-depth discussion.

There was also a feeling that positive work done on the course may be lost once prisoners were sent back onto the wings. They believed that some prison officers did not understand the cultural implications of being a Muslim with alcohol issues. There was concern that the supportive environment that was created on the course would not be there when the prisoners returned onto the landings.

#### **Issues for consideration**

From this small focus group there were issues for consideration which may inform future course delivery and practice:

- The course to be extended from 3 to 5 days, to ensure all aspects of the content are covered thoroughly.
- More training for prison staff to understand and become more empathetic to Muslim prisoners with an alcohol issue.
- Learning developed by specific courses should not be undermined by the environment on the wings.
- Future consideration to be given to similar courses specifically designed for Muslim prisoners, especially around domestic violence and drugs.

**Box 2. Summary of key findings with prisoners**

- Visits are an important part of prison life contributing to:
  - Maintaining family ties,
  - Helping fathers keep in touch with their children.
- Maintaining these links contributed to the prisoners mental well-being and established a supportive network for their release;
- The awareness of services provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre for prisoners was low;
- Awareness of services and courses was reliant on committed wing staff or prisoners themselves seeking the information;
- Most contact with Jigsaw run courses was reliant on committed wing staff to point prisoners in the right direction, or through motivated prisoners looking for the information themselves;
- Jigsaw Visitors Centre provision (for example the alcohol awareness course) was well received by those who had come in contact with it;
- The positive effects of Jigsaw Visitors Centre provision could be undermined when prisoners returned to the wings.

## 3.4 Prison Staff

Questionnaire responses and interviews with prison staff were analysed and have been presented in this section.

### Professional benefits

#### *i. Relieving pressure*

Many prison staff suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre absorbs requests and queries from prisoners' families which would otherwise have to be dealt with by specific prison departments. One prison manager felt that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had taken direct pressure away from the front line of the prison:

*"A lot of the questions that are asked here (Jigsaw Visitors Centre) if they didn't come here they would go to the departments inside, you would automatically up the work load of the departments...it's like general visit questions, what times, what can I bring, it just takes a lot of pressure off the front end of our organisation."*

This general feeling was supported by a number of questionnaire responses from staff, as well as some comments that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had controlled the "flow of visitors" into the prison.

Prison staff felt that the work the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was doing with prisoners' families i.e. providing information, solving problems and reducing stress had created a positive atmosphere during visits:

*"It improves the atmosphere on visits because previously people may have travelled a long way, so it's an environment where people can come before a visit. If they have any immediate problems then it gives time for that to be sorted out before they go up onto the visits. The visitors aren't stressed out when they go up to visits, which then rubs off onto prisoners...it's transferable it is, it does actually happen because there is a lot of information that comes out of the Visitors Centre which puts people's minds at rest...it transfers right through the system."*

Comment was made that in some instances weekend visits were less positive for families and prisoners and one member of staff thought that this was directly associated to the Centre not being open.

Some prison staff felt that when visitors only used the Centre to obtain visiting documents and did not take full advantage of other services, there was more likelihood of misunderstandings about procedures. This could lead to tension and

delays and the impact of this on the quality of the visit also continued to affect the prisoners afterwards causing problems for wing and landing staff:

*"If there are problems with people coming in, the member of staff may say they can't come in, the visitor gets more stressed out...that stress translates into the person they are visiting who then goes back onto the wing and he's agitated, so he's having a go at the wing staff saying 'why was my visitor late, why did I only get half an hour'."*

## ii. **The advantages of voluntary sector service delivery**

The independence of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and its management through the voluntary sector were seen to be of benefit. It acted as a bridge not only between families and the prison (e.g. through family forums with the prison Governor) but also the local community. Having the Centre run by non-uniformed staff was felt to be an advantage in breaking down the barriers people may have with prison:

	I think the prison would retain its austere image to the public, being
	hidden away behind walls. The Visitors Centre goes some way to break
	down barriers and maligned opinions that the public may have, owing to
	constant negative publicity that the prison receives in the press.

However, prison staff still felt that there are some tensions between prisoners' families and uniformed staff:

*"There's a control thing about it. They see me as the white shirt who at the end of the visit is going to take their dad or their partner and put him behind that door (the cell), they see me as having that control."*

This was reflected in a point of view in the Centre's comments book:

	I have been visiting at Armley for a number of months now and would like
	to comment on how disgusting the attitudes of the screws are. They
	treat us like we're the ones in prison, it's the power thing that has
	seriously gone to their heads.

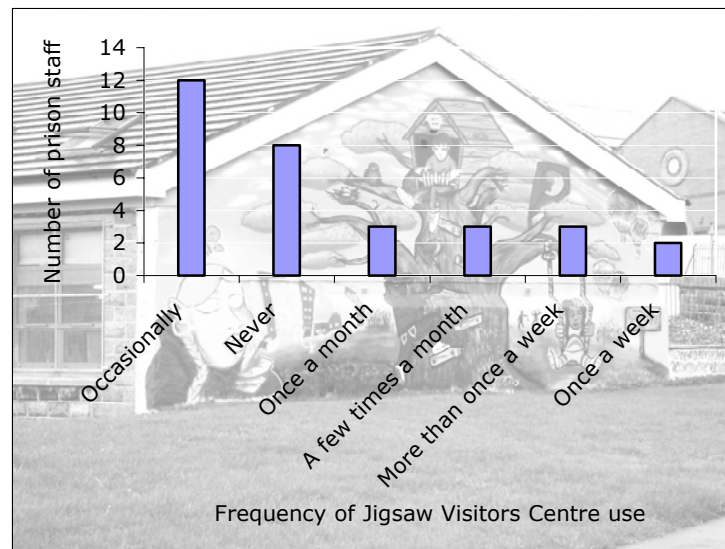
Prison staff commented that having prison staff running the Centre would be difficult as their way of working had to prioritise security, control and strict organisation. Using staff that are separate from the prison service was felt to provide more independence, compassion and empathy for prisoners and prisoners' families. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre has been proactive in formally

attempting to bridge the two 'cultures' by providing family support training courses for prison staff. Staff who had attended felt that being able to understand visitors' perspectives was one of the key messages they had taken from the course.

### **iii. A healthy environment**

The frequency with which prison staff used the facilities and services at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre varied. Results from the small scale questionnaire survey with prison staff (31 respondents), showed that 20 of the total number of respondents used the Centre occasionally or never. This is shown further in Figure 4.

Figure 4. How frequently do prison staff use the facilities and services at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre?



Those staff who were more familiar with the Jigsaw Visitors Centre enjoyed using the Centre and its facilities to relax and unwind during breaks and lunchtimes. Having an environment which provides respite from the prison without the constant 'prisoner-staff' or 'staff-staff banter' means that staff can feel relaxed in a non-threatening environment:

*"I just enjoy the environment it's a cracking place to come down. I often just come down to chill out for five or ten minutes, you can get a bit wound up in there (the prison)."*

Many prison staff suggested other ways that they had benefited from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Numerous staff commented about accessing the services available to staff including the Citizens Advice and counselling, in 2004-2005, 110

members of staff accessed these particular services (Jigsaw Healthy Living Project annual monitoring report 2004-2005). Those staff interviewed that had accessed these services were reluctant to discuss their experiences further. Some staff reported using the complementary therapies at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre, the massage sessions were particularly popular with 85 staff utilising the service in 2004-2005 (Jigsaw Healthy Living Project annual monitoring report 2004-2005). The advantages of these services for staff were that it is both cheap and convenient. Other staff that completed questionnaires had attended healthy eating courses and accessed information leaflets distributed during health fairs organised by the Centre.

### **Encouraging new ways of working**

A number of staff commented that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had contributed to a change of culture within the prison. The Centre's holistic, values driven, non-threatening approach counter-balanced traditional prison working practices. Treating people equally, with decency and listening to their point of view were important skills that prison staff believed Jigsaw staff use when working with prisoners. A member of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre agreed:

*"The independence of actually treating people like human beings, it's like a cultural shift more than anything else but that has an impact on people. If you treat everyone like a number on a conveyor belt then you are missing opportunities to make a difference...treat people with respect and that goes miles towards moving them forward."*

Prison managers suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had also provided a catalyst for forging community partnerships and accessing services which would otherwise be difficult to make links with:

*"With the prison service it's all about a change in culture and that's what we're doing, we're changing the hard and fast culture that has been there for years. It'll take time but it will happen and that is what the Visitors Centre is giving us it's giving us the opportunity to access the services to be able to do that."*

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was felt to have a more planned and structured approach to partnership development in the community as opposed to the more opportunistic methods adopted by the prison itself.

### **Perceived benefits for other groups**

Those prison staff who were interviewed or completed questionnaires suggested a number of benefits of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre for other stakeholder groups.

#### ***i. Prisoners' families***

Prison staff perceived that one of the primary ways the Jigsaw Visitors Centre benefited prisoners' families was through providing relevant information and advice in an environment which was separate from the prison. Some staff reported that having friendly and approachable staff reduced the stress associated with visits and made the visit process smooth and efficient.

#### ***ii. Prisoners***

It was felt that the work the Jigsaw Visitors Centre did with families reassured prisoners that they were being dealt with appropriately. It was also perceived as a link between families and prisoners. Very few members of staff commented upon the courses the Centre provides for prisoners and a number of staff did not believe that the Centre had any direct benefits for prisoners.

#### ***iii. The local community***

Many prison staff did not recognise the benefits that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre provided for the local community. A minority of respondents commented on the services on offer, but most staff seemed to be unaware that services were even provided for the community.

### **Box 3. Summary of key findings with prison staff**

- Staff felt the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had a positive impact on their workload by:
  - Absorbing requests from visitors which they would otherwise have to deal with,
  - Improving the quality of visits which resulted in less tension on the wings following visits.
- Prison staff felt that the Centre's independence from the prison was a key strength in helping families. However, very few members of staff were aware of the courses or services that are provided for prisoners;
- Many prison staff reported using the services and facilities at the Centre. Most enjoyed using the building to get respite from the prison and being able to relax in a non-threatening environment.

## 3.5 The Community

### Introduction

This section reports the findings from questionnaires conducted with the local community. This questionnaire was designed to gather information regarding people's awareness of the services that were available to them at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Data collection was conducted by two researchers over a period of 2 days. One of these data collectors was a locally trained community researcher. In total 46 questionnaires were completed.

### Interviews 'on the street'

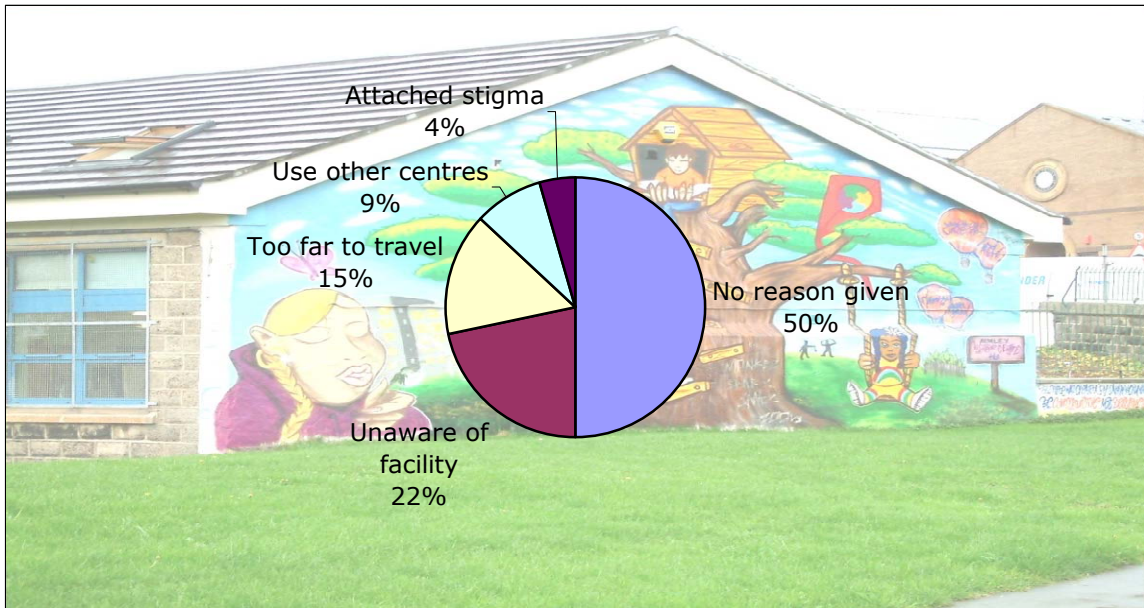
There was a general lack of awareness within the community regarding the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and the services it provides for local people. 76% (35/46) of local residents did not recognise the distinctive mural on the side of the building, with only 15% (7/46) of those interviewed being aware that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was actually open to the local community. Those that were aware of the Centre commented upon the health fun days they had attended. Interestingly, it seemed to be children and young people who had used or recognised the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Some had been part of the youth work project which designed the Centre's mural or knew someone who had taken part in the project.

However, more positively, once the activities on offer were listed and described to participants, an encouraging 54% (25/46) said that they would consider using the Centre and its services in the future. The access to Citizens Advice, massages and the internet access were of particular interest with those who completed questionnaires.

Many people did not provide a particular reason for why they did not use the Centre. However, those that did answer provided the following reasons. These are illustrated further in Figure 5:

- Unaware that the facility existed for local people;
- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was too far to travel;
- Individuals would prefer to use other local community centres;
- The stigma of using a community facility attached to a prison;

Figure 5. Reasons given by the community for not using the Jigsaw Visitors Centre



**Community users**

Those members of the community who had used the Centre were asked to complete questionnaires and asked to take part in small focus groups.

The majority of community users were impressed by the atmosphere and services provided:

	The centre appears clean and bright. Offers plenty of information and facilities. Staff friendly.

One local school co-ordinator, involved in making community links, discussed the benefits to the Centre on the parents at the local school. Some of these parents had used the room booking service at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre for community meetings and groups. One parent had successfully accessed the Citizens Advice service to help with immigration paper work. Citizens Advice proved popular with other parents due to the flexible appointment times and efficiency of service:

*"What did turn out to be very good was the Citizens Advice Bureau it seems that we have local ones and drop in centres, but there seems to be quite a long waiting list, whereas if they go through the Jigsaw project things can be speeded up."*

Some individuals felt that coming to the Visitors Centre gave them a perspective on prison life and acted as a bridge between the community and the prison:

*"It gives you an insight to what's available to prisoners to help them... It's nice to know there is something there to help them when they come out something positive for them. I'm amazed at the facilities and things they have accessible to help them."*

However, many of the community users were sceptical about the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. There seemed to be a stigma attached to using a facility which was so close to the prison.

#### **Box 4. Summary of key findings with the local community**

- There was a lack of awareness in the community about the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. Very few people realised that the Centre was open to the local community;
- Younger people had more recognition and understanding of the Centre than adults;
- Reasons for the local community not using the Jigsaw Visitors Centre included: a lack of awareness the centre existed, travel issues and the stigma involved in using a community centre based next to a prison;
- Those community members who had used the Centre were impressed by the atmosphere and services provided;
- Many community users commented on gaining a valuable perspective of prison life, whilst others still attached a certain social stigma to the services.

## 3.6 Key Stakeholders

As well as gathering data from prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community, interviews and focus groups were also carried out with other key stakeholders and professionals. These include:

- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre Management Committee – comprising of a diverse range of committee members, including prison staff, prisoners, community members, Jigsaw Visitor Centre staff, youth workers and other professionals with various expertise;
- A selection of Jigsaw Visitor Centre service providers;
- Representatives from the local PCT;
- A representative from Action for Prisoners' Families (APF), and;
- Representatives from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

These stakeholders fall into two broad groups, those who are clearly involved with the work of the Centre e.g. members of the Management Committee and those who are aware of the work of the Centre but have less direct involvement.

Although the views of these two groups could potentially differ, analysis of the transcripts revealed no major differences. The findings will therefore be presented for the whole group.

### **Health and well-being**

There was a consensus that the innovative work the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is doing is having a tremendous impact across a broad range of issues. The contribution the Centre makes to PCT objectives and the health and well-being of prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the community was a theme which emerged throughout data collection with this group.

#### ***i. Prisoners' families***

There was a firm view that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was contributing to reducing health inequalities in a vulnerable group such as prisoners and their families. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was felt to be in a unique position to address health and well-being with prisoners' families who are a particularly hard to reach group. The Centre's holistic approach to health, taking into consideration issues such as debt, relationships, housing and the stress associated with visiting was highlighted.

The work that is being done with prisoners' families was felt to be positive for those families who wanted to get involved. It was accepted that families who

come in contact with the Centre want to engage with the service at various levels:

*"The Visitors Centre may be the only place where families can talk openly, because when they are at home maybe not all the family know what's going on...it's a place where you can engage at a level that you feel comfortable with, whether that's a chat at the tea bar, or picking up the leaflets or going to the different workshops or classes."*

Just having the facility there was seen as being important for stress reduction:

*"I think just by having the centre, in terms of stress reduction moving people from a crisis point to a more manageable state makes a huge impact for families."*

Especially for first time visitors:

*"I think especially with first time visitors the building reduces the stigma and fear, it does just feel like another community centre, whereas other prisons feel very different, they feel extremely intimidating where there's no information up, no welcome signs. It's all about intimidation."*

Having a comfortable, friendly environment with a low staff turnover was felt to be an important building block for working on deeper health and social issues with prisoners' families.

Access to information and services such as the Citizens Advice within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was recognised as having "direct and tangible" impacts on health inequalities. It was suggested that other aspects of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre work were difficult to measure. For example, special family visits were seen to be ideal opportunities for maintaining close ties but measuring the impact on families was difficult:

*"Through doing things like the family visits the kids get so much from it. It's something special for them in that they get some contact time with their dad, stuff that is really difficult to measure in terms of mental health and well-being but they go away smiling, they go away happy and talking positively, it's that bonding."*

Dealing with parental rights issues (through Citizens Advice services) was felt to be another area of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre work which directly affected the safety and well-being of children.

## **ii. Prisoners**

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was reported to be the bridge between prisoners their families and reintegration into the community. One interviewee felt that prisoners benefit from the Centre in that there is a clear, visible link for families to engage with the prison which allows relationships to be maintained.

The health and offending related courses which are run for prisoners by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were seen to be important and to be meeting a specific need, especially addressing alcohol issues. It was felt that continual work within the prison was required:

*"What I know about Jigsaw is stuff around the alcohol work which clearly is having an astounding affect. So I think from an alcohol perspective they have found a gap which needed addressing."*

There were some limitations regarding the delivery of such courses and these mainly surrounded the organisational culture within the prison. First, prisoners do not always have the opportunity to complete courses as they get transferred to other prisons or get released. Second, prisoner attendance on health courses is largely dependant upon the support from prison staff who publicise the sessions on the wings. Finally, due to sporadic funding it was perceived that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre tended to run courses on a short-term, ad-hoc basis which meant that only limited places were available for prisoners:

*"In terms of what they do with prisoners I think they get very little to address and improve their health and I think the Jigsaw with the little money they have seem to be making a big impact."*

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre deals directly with the determinants of re-offending and issues that affect the health of prisoners. Accessing holistic services like the Citizens Advice means that issues such as housing and debt are addressed during imprisonment, easing the process of reintegrating back into the community on release.

## **iii. Prison staff**

It was reported by interviewees that a number of prison staff had used the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and its services. Getting away from the prison environment for brief periods during the working day was felt to provide relief from underlying stress. One interviewee suggested that it is difficult to attract prison staff to the Centre because health and well-being issues are not a priority issue for the group

as a whole. It was felt that this may be an issue which would need to be addressed.

#### **iv. The local community**

It was felt that engaging with the local community represented the most challenging aspect of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre's work. Accessing information, attending health awareness events and utilising services within the Centre, was felt to be underused by the community. This was attributed to the close attachment to the prison and the negative association which may go with it. However, it was felt that the community links and extended partnerships which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre has made with various agencies would eventually produce a "breakthrough" with the local community. Positive comment was made about the Centre's youth project engaging young people in the local area.

#### **Benefits to the prison system**

Reporting similar views to the prison staff, interviewees suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had made a valuable contribution to the prison system. It was reported that the Centre handles enquiries and complaints from visitors (i.e. visiting times, property queries) which would otherwise be handled by the prison switchboard and then re-directed to prison staff and personal officers. It was felt that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was sheltering the prison from a number of enquiries and at the same time dealing with the problems in a professional and expert manner:

*"The Visitors Centre will deal with lots and lots of enquiries, some of them very basic enquiries, like what time are visits. If the Visitors Centre wasn't handling those enquiries they would be going to the prison, probably through the main switchboard and undoubtedly put on to wings, put through to personal officers, put through to duty Governors. The Visitors Centre is dealing with an awful lot of enquiries and is also able to deal with them with an expertise which an average prison member of staff does not have. This is a huge benefit to the prison to have that there, particularly experienced staff that have been in the job for a long time and know the procedures."*

Interestingly, one member of the management committee felt that there was a different atmosphere when the Centre is closed, with families having to deal with their problems in the prison and visits room.

## **The NOMS agenda**

It was perceived that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was contributing towards the National Offender Management Services' (NOMS) agenda to reduce re-offending. Both in discussion with representatives from NOMS, and other strategic partners, it was felt that the Centre was contributing to NOMS in three key areas:

### ***i. 'Pathways' to resettlement***

It was suggested that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre contributes towards some of the 'pathways' outlined in regional and national strategy documents for reducing re-offending. It was felt that a Visitors Centre may not 'have all the answers' to reducing re-offending but it may contribute to some of the 'pathways' around 'Children and Families of Offenders', but also more indirectly in terms of the pathways relating to drugs and alcohol:

*"We know that some partners are placed under pressure to bring drugs into prison so in a sense the Centre may have a role in actually helping people avoid being pressurised to do that."*

It was perceived that if the NOMS agenda for reducing re-offending is going to work then not only should it be concerned with the prisoner but also how it engages with the family and the wider community. The Visitors Centre was described as a prime setting for addressing this:

*"The idea of a Visitors Centre which is helping to assist the family through the journey with the offender I think is a really exciting one and really important one for the NOMS agenda in terms of reducing re-offending."*

### ***ii. Increasing public confidence and perceptions in the criminal justice system***

Some of the broader aims of NOMS were also felt to be addressed by the Centre. Increasing public confidence in the criminal justice system was one area to which the Centre was felt to contribute. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre engages with members of the general community and gives a positive image of work being done with prisoners and prisoners' families:

*"Now if you go to visit a prison and you go through a Visitors Centre then a lot of your impression of the criminal justice system will be based on that interaction. Improving public confidence in the criminal justice system in its honesty, integrity and its reliability is all about improving engagement with law abiding society."*

It was suggested that experiencing the prison environment through the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was breaking down negative perceptions held by community members.

***iii. Engaging with the voluntary and community sector***

The voluntary and community sector was described as an important partner for delivering the NOMS agenda. It was felt that the Visitors Centre engages with prisoners, prisoners' families and other small voluntary and community providers in a way which would be difficult for large public sector organisations such as NOMS and the Prison Service to do:

*"Structures like the Visitors Centre with these networks allow the myriad of providers to engage and get on with business in a practical way without it having to coming through structures which would make it so bureaucratic it would be overwhelming."*

**Ways of working**

The ways in which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre operates was a theme which ran throughout the interviews. The staff at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were described as dedicated, flexible, visionary, imaginative and having expertise. Treating prisoners decently, respectfully and "seeing things through to an end" was seen as a core part of the Jigsaw Visitor Centre's work. It was suggested that this style of working went towards moving prisoners forward and reintegrating them back into the community. The partnership development work was also highlighted by a number of individuals who perceived that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre had been able to make extended links with outside agencies to deliver a high quality holistic service to the individuals they serve.

*"What (the Jigsaw Visitors Centre) is able to do is bring in the outside agencies and act as a bridge between other services and the prison itself."*

**Box 5. Summary of key findings with the key stakeholders**

- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre was felt to be contributing towards reducing health inequalities;
- The Centre is in a unique position for addressing health and well being with a number of different groups. Their holistic view on the determinants of health was felt to be a particular strength;
- Services such as the Citizens Advice were felt to have direct and tangible impacts on reducing inequalities;
- The Centre provides benefits for the prison system, for example relieving pressure from prison staff;
- Organisations like the Jigsaw Visitors Centre have an important role to play in the National Offender Management Service;
- The Jigsaw staff were an asset to the Centre and were described as dedicated, flexible, visionary and imaginative. "Seeing things through to an end" was seen as a core part of the Jigsaw Visitor Centre's work;
- The extended partnerships and networks which had been made helped to deliver a high quality service.

## 4. Discussion of the Findings

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### **Creating a supportive environment**

The evaluation suggests that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is contributing towards the maintenance of family ties. However, as with similar reports (McEvoy et al. 1999; Cunningham, 2001; Loucks, 2004) this evaluation would suggest that families visiting prisons need to be able to overcome many barriers in terms of physical, financial and emotional strains. It is clear that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre recognises the barriers for families and has put provision in place to address these. This is discussed further in this section.

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre has recently been recognised as one of five areas of good practice at HMP Leeds (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005) and the quality with which the Centre provides information and services to prisoners' families, prisoners and staff goes beyond the norms found in other Visitor Centres (see Loucks, 2002a for a review of provision in UK and Ireland Visitor Centres and Hartworth and Hartworth, 2005 for a review of Visitor Centres in North East England). This evaluation found that there are four different types of support in place at the Centre which help families cope with visiting. These types of support provide assistance to a range of visitors, from those who are visiting for the first time, to those who have visited regularly, to those who want very little to do with the prison and visits system. The range of support provided means the visitors can access the level of support which suits their immediate needs.

There was strong evidence that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre improved the quality of visits. Other studies have also suggested that well run, co-ordinated visits which provide advice and support for families help to reduce anxiety and stress and in turn improve the mental well-being of family members (Hairston, 1991; Setkova and Sandford, 2005). However, there was some evidence to suggest that good practice in one part of the prison's visiting arrangements could be undone by poor practice elsewhere, as families commented on experiencing disrespect and intrusion during visits from prison staff. It was felt that this may undermine any positive work being carried out by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre had helped children both prior to going into visits and also during visiting time through the facilitated play areas run by experienced and qualified staff. McEvoy et al. (1999) suggests that children can be restless,

troublesome and bored during visits; the play resources provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre were reported by families to reduce these effects. The children also did not appear to experience fear or distress at visiting time as noted by Richards et al. (1994). The importance attached to children and young people within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre was seen throughout the period of this evaluation. It was clear through talking to prisoners' families and children that the Jigsaw staff have a "common language and understanding" of children's needs (Department for Education and Skills, 2003 page 92), staff have also been trained in child protection issues (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005). This close working with and understanding of children may also contribute to reducing the risks of anti-social outcomes for children which parental imprisonment has been reported to cause (Murray and Farrington, 2005).

A positive family atmosphere has been reported by prisoners, families and prison staff during visits, enhancing a positive prison culture. As in other research (Wedge, 1995 in Boswell, 2002), special family visits were emphasised as being important for children and prisoners, giving the prisoner an opportunity to re-establish his role as a father. The continuation of these family visits should be encouraged, as it has been found that prisoners worry about not seeing their family and relationships breaking down (Lester, Hamilton-Kirkwood and Jones, 2003). Without special visits prisoners may also find it difficult to re-establish their parental role on release (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002) and children may begin to experience their father as a stranger. Situations like this can lead to permanent rather than temporary severance of family bonds, and cause feelings of stress and anxiety for the prisoner and child (Hairston, 1998).

An emerging theme with prison staff as with the prisoners' families, was the supportive environment which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre has created. A recent inspection report (HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005) suggested that staff-prisoner relations at HMP Leeds were less than positive. However, staff working closely with prisoners reported less confrontation after visits due to prisoners being more relaxed and less anxious. This was felt to be as a direct result of the work being done with families at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. This may have an impact on the stress experienced within the workplace as the Prison Service is faced with higher sickness rates among staff than other public services (Prison Reform Trust, 2005). This reduction in confrontation between prisoners and staff may also make the prison easier to run and able to operate more positive regimes (Light, 1993).

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre also contributed to reducing the workload of prison staff, as the Centre deals with family enquiries on a daily basis and handles issues with a level of independence, experience and expertise that would be difficult to match by prison staff.

The ability to provide a service to prisoners, prisoners' families, prison staff and the local community in this particular setting has been recognised previously to be a challenge (Armley Prison Visitors Centre, 2005). The evaluation has shown that there is poor awareness in the community of the Centre, with few recognising the services on offer. The stigma of the Centre being close to a prison was only a minor reason why members of the community did not use the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. More commonly, individuals preferred to use more established community facilities which were geographically closer to their homes.

More positively, those community members that had used the Centre recognised the importance of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre being a bridge between the community and the prison. This has the potential to de-mystify any preconceived ideas that individuals may have regarding prisons and prisoners. The bridge role that the Centre plays may also have fundamental importance for resettling local prisoners back into the community and meeting priorities set out by NOMS to increase public confidence in the work of the criminal justice system (Home Office, 2005a).

Figure 6 brings together the reported outcomes for prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community (represented in the white boxes) and locates them within the findings of other research. Conversely, Figure 7 shows the possible implications of the Centre not existing and the repercussions it may have for prisoners' families, the prisoners and prison staff.

Figure 6. Evaluation outcomes linked with findings from previous research

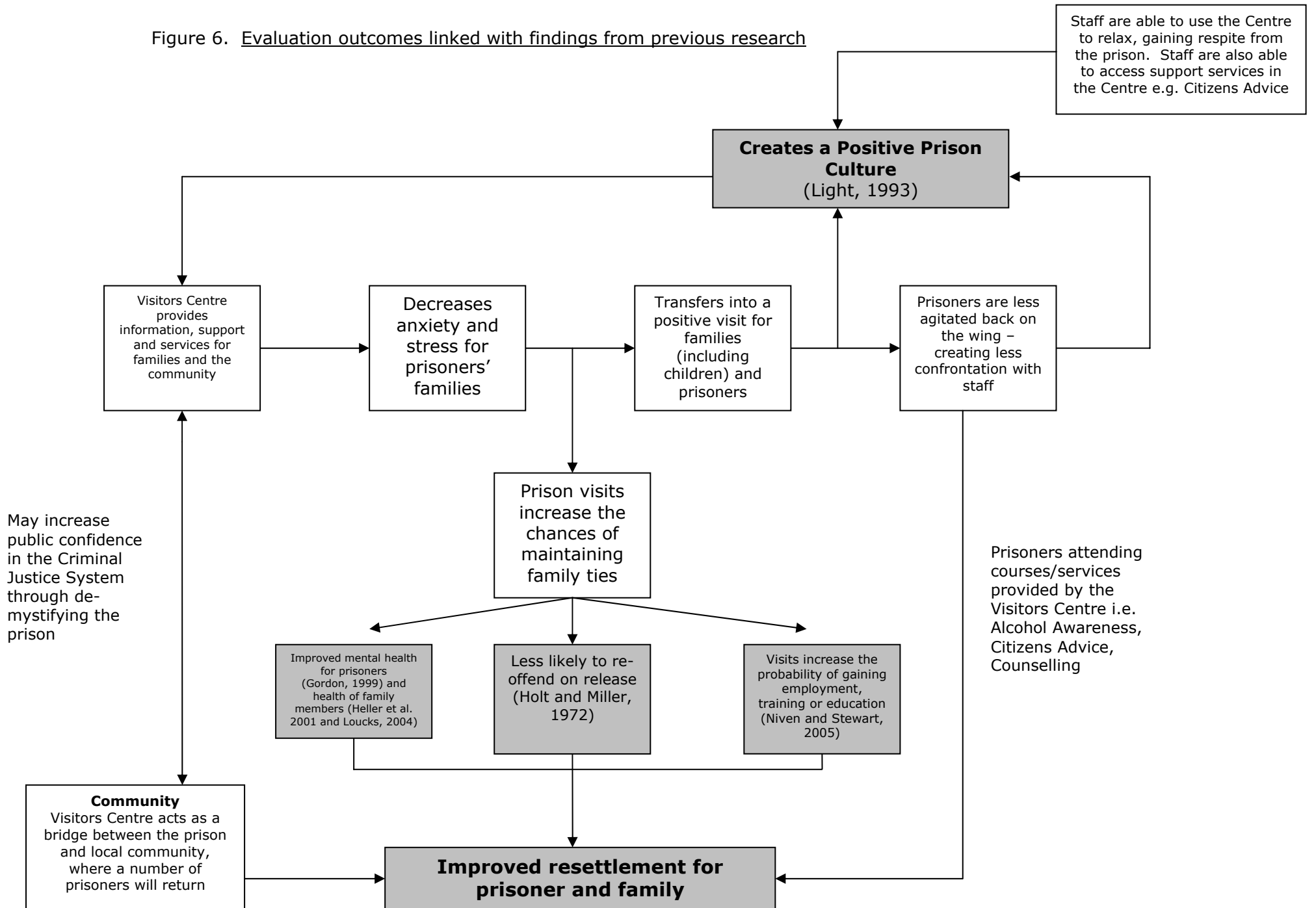
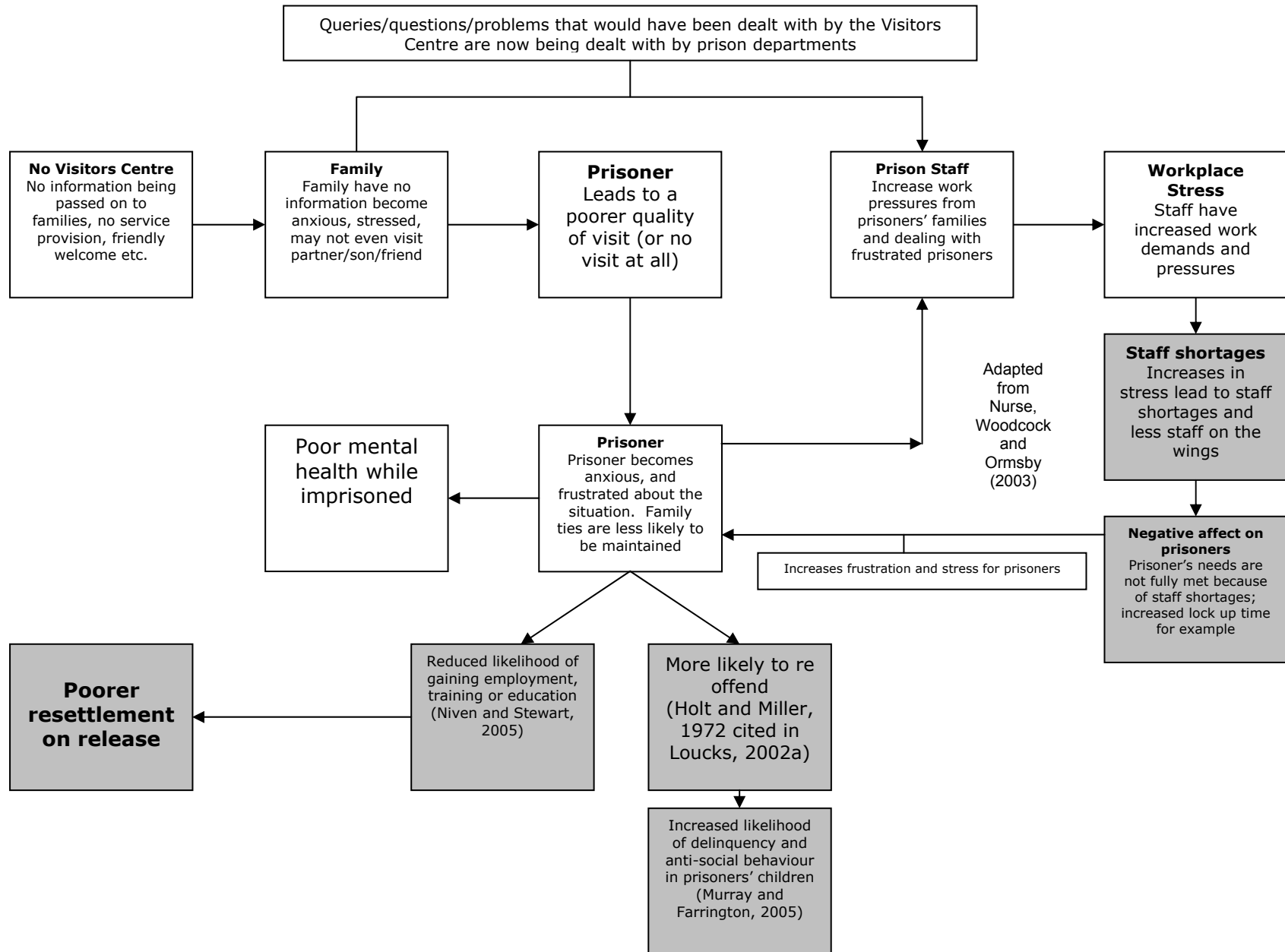


Figure 7.  
Implications of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre not existing: the issues for prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community



### **Impact on health and well-being**

The government report 'Choosing Health' suggests that prison populations reveal strong evidence of health inequalities and social exclusion, with prisoners generally having poorer health than the population at large (Department of Health, 2004). There seems little doubt that the health initiatives being carried out at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre are contributing to addressing these inequalities in health. The Centre embraces a social understanding of health and understands the wider influences which can impact upon it, for example housing, relationships and debt; this work directly addresses the underlying determinants of health inequalities and works towards the 'Programme for Action' set out by the government (Department of Health, 2003).

According to Baggott (2004), the original aims of Healthy Living Centres were to bring together health and social care with other community services, such as counselling, youth services, cafes and children's play areas. The Centre currently brings together all of these services and, like other Healthy Living Centres in Leeds, the Jigsaw Visitors Centre gives added value to the work of the PCT in tackling health inequalities (Webster, 2005). The Centre is targeting some of the most difficult to reach members of society through constructive interventions and effective partnerships with counselling and Citizens Advice services. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre has found 'gaps' in service provision and has addressed this with appropriate services, for example the alcohol awareness course for Muslim prisoners. This particular service works to reduce alcohol misuse and works towards the government report 'Choosing Health' (Department of Health, 2004), which suggests that prevention work around alcohol provides a means of reducing the likelihood of serious alcohol related problems in the population.

Policy initiatives in England and Wales have called for a greater focus on health and health promotion within the prison setting (Caraher et al. 2002), the small but capable staff team at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre have a focus on health and recognise that the prison setting (including Visitors Centres) presents an opportunity to address these issues in 'hard to reach' populations. They are aware that improving and promoting health in this group also has potentially wider repercussions for the health of the community (Condon, Hek and Harris, 2006).

The evaluation would suggest that still more work to raise awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Jigsaw Visitors Centre both inside and

outside the prison is needed. Well informed wing staff may be the vehicle to publicising these services to prisoners as many are unaware of the contribution the Centre makes directly with them. 'Raising the profile' of the Centre with prison staff may be an initial step to address this issue (Loucks, 2002b). Further, any services that are provided should make it clear that they are Jigsaw Visitor Centre services.

The atmosphere in the Centre encourages a stress-free environment where visitors, prison staff and the community can relax. Prison staff reported being able to 'get away' from the prison atmosphere in the Centre and relax in a non-threatening environment. The underlying stress relief that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre provides was mentioned by those who prison staff who completed questionnaires.

The "joined up thinking" that forms a core part of the Centre's work is a powerful indicator of the Centre's ability to address health and well-being issues, as partnership working is recognised as a core value of public health and health promotion practice (Tilford, Green and Tones, 2003). The Jigsaw's effective collaboration with several agencies including the prison ensures that there is engagement with those who would not normally attend or access traditional forms of health advice in the community (Department of Health, 2004). This collaboration creates a stronger and more sustainable organisation, meaning that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre can respond to local challenges more effectively (Webster, 2005).

The flexibility and openness in which the Jigsaw Visitors Centre operates means that the work in addressing health is responsive to user needs. The importance of this responsiveness is highlighted by government reports as being particularly important in addressing health inequalities in disadvantaged populations (Department of Health, 2003). Having prisoners on the Centre's Management Committee is an example of the commitment to user involvement and provides a basis for service improvement (Orme et al. 2003). Involving the local community and making them feel included in activities and events seems to be an area with which the project has struggled in the past. The evaluation would suggest that the youth project work has been particularly successful in raising the awareness of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and has provided extra community provision for young people of Armley and New Wortley.

### **Re-integration and reducing re-offending**

The extent to which prisoners are able to maintain family ties has tremendous implications for determining whether a prisoner will succeed in leading a useful, healthy and law abiding life on return to the community (Woolf and Tummin, 1991 cited in Hartworth and Hartworth, 2005). With the prison population having exceeded 76,000 (Home Office, 2006a) the re-integration and resettlement agenda has never been so important (Hartworth and Hartworth, 2005). However, by drawing on previous studies it can be reported that:

- There is a link between maintaining good family ties and reducing re-offending. Prisoners who are able to keep meaningful contact with their families are almost six times less likely to re-offend (Holt and Miller, 1972) due to improved resettlement on release;
- Home Office research suggests that family contact is associated with successful resettlement. Their research found that family visits are an indicator for successful resettlement as 37% of prisoners who had at least one visit from a member of their family had either employment, training or education (ETE) arranged on release from prison. This was compared with 16% of those not receiving visits (Niven and Stewart, 2005);
- A prisoner's mental health is dependant on his contact with the outside world. The presence of visitors normalises the prison environment (Hairston, 1991) and regular visits improve the transition back into the local community as prisoners are not completely immersed in the prison sub-culture (Gordon, 1999). This contributes towards effective prisoner resettlement on release (Adalist-Estrin, 2003).

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre contributes to both national and regional strategy documents targeted at reducing re-offending set out by NOMS (Home Office, 2004; Home Office, 2005b). In a recent report for protecting the public and reducing re-offending (Home Office, 2006b) there is an emphasis on family links which is suggested to be at the heart of offender management. The role of visitors centres' is essential for maintaining these links.

It would be unrealistic to suggest that a visitors' centre should contribute to all of the 'pathways to resettlement' (i.e. the 9 regional 'pathways' and 7 national 'pathways' to resettlement), however the Jigsaw Visitors Centre does have the capacity to contribute directly in terms of the 'pathways' related to 'Children and Families of Offenders', 'Finance, Benefit and Debt', 'Drugs and Alcohol' and 'Accommodation'.

The potential of visitors' Centre in delivering the strategic aims of reducing re-offending is apparent (Home Office, 2004). It seems clear that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre can contribute significantly to the work set out by NOMS to tackle reducing re-offending especially in a regional capacity. The success of reintegration does not lie solely with the prisoner, but with families and the wider community; the role of a visitors' centre can therefore make a significant contribution to the reducing re-offending agenda.

The role that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and other voluntary and community sector organisations play in the criminal justice system should not be understated. In a report commissioned by NOMS (Home Office 2005c) it was suggested that the effectiveness and strengths of working with offenders in this sector was based on:

- Being community based
- Being 'customer' focussed
- Having specialist skills/experience
- Responsiveness

### **Value for money**

Within the scope of this short evaluation it was not possible to provide a cost benefit analysis for the delivery of services provided within the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. However, the evaluation would indicate that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is deploying its relatively limited funding effectively to make a positive contribution to the health and well-being of prisoners' families, prisoners and prison staff and is reaching out to the local community.

This evaluation, like other research, has indicated the benefits of keeping families together and their effect on reducing future re-offending (Holt and Miller, 1972). Brookes (2005) has calculated using data from the Social Exclusion Unit (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002) that the average sentenced re-offender costs the taxpayer £111, 300 through criminal justice costs. He continues to suggest that if just one prisoner was deterred from re-offending through maintaining family ties, then reasonable investment in visitors' centres would be worthwhile. The cost of running an average prison visitors' centre is approximately the same as locking up a prisoner for one year (Brookes, 2005). Improving the funds to prison visitors' centres not only has the potential to reduce re-offending but represents a good investment of public money.

### **A model of good practice**

Jigsaw is an outstanding example of a visitors' centre. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre pays attention to how things are done as well as what is done or what is achieved. The Centre is willing to take risks and learn from their experiences; they also listen to what users need as opposed to adopting their own agenda. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre is a "learning organisation" (Orme et al. 2003, page 282) as it interacts with its environment, is flexible and open, proactive, participative and responds rapidly to change. In a learning organization, learning is iterative and therefore there is potential for innovation and diversity; a relatively small organisation (like the Jigsaw Visitors Centre) can adapt quickly to changing needs and agendas.

The way the Jigsaw Visitors Centre staff work as an effective team seems to be a key determinant in the success of the Centre. There seems to be some key factors (adapted from Sheard and Kakabadse, 2002) that collectively contribute to this success:

1. Defined goals – understood by all;
2. Individuals with clear roles and responsibilities;
3. Clear leadership and direction;
4. Positive group dynamics;
5. Open communication.

The core elements of the Centre's good practice should form the basis for other Centres across the country. Although it is recognised that not all prisons have the funds or need to deliver an extensive service like this, they can adopt some of the key principles which are highlighted in Box 6.

#### **Box 6. Key working principles**

- Treating prison visitors, prisoners, prison staff and the community with decency and respect;
- Being empathetic to individual need;
- Listen to service users and be responsive to demands;
- Create partnerships within the community to develop wider networks and links;
- Understand the wider determinants that affect health and offending;
- Have an enthusiastic and committed Visitor Centre team with a shared vision and a willingness to learn and develop;
- Have clear roles within the team which are understood and respected by team members;
- Have an interested, supportive and motivated management committee.

## 5. Conclusions and Issues for Consideration

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This evaluation would suggest that the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is achieving its main objectives and doing so in a way which is both innovative and effective. The supportive environment the Centre provides surpasses the norms reported in other visitors' centres; the positive impact on prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community have all been highlighted in this report. The Centre's contribution to tackling health inequalities gives added value to the work of the local PCT. The team's commitment to health and health promotion is evident and through constructive interventions the Centre is targeting some of the most difficult to reach members of society. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre's work toward re-integrating offenders and reducing re-offending has also been shown in this evaluation by linking our findings with previous research. The potential of this Centre (and other Centres) in delivering the strategic aims of NOMS is apparent, especially in a regional capacity.

Despite these positive findings a number of issues for consideration have arisen. These considerations have been divided into those for immediate and future consideration.

### **Issues for immediate consideration**

- The Centre should be open 7 days per week. As well as assisting prisoners' families, prisoners and prison staff it may also attract members of the community who may not have the time to use the facilities during weekdays.
- Currently prisoners are not fully aware of the services provided for them from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre should attempt to 'raise the profile' of the Centre with prison staff who are then able to inform prisoners on landings and wings.
- Special family visits have an important role for families and prisoners and the numbers of these special visits should continue to increase.
- Those visitors who only use the Centre for bureaucratic support should be encouraged to use the Centre for other purposes. This may reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings about visit procedures.
- The staff at the Centre should continue to take advantage of the opportunities for health promotion within the prison setting, both with prisoners and prison staff.

- The building should continue to be used as a community resource. Wider marketing of the facility should be encouraged, as this could generate additional income for the Jigsaw Visitors Centre.
- This evaluation has demonstrated a number of outcomes relevant to PCTs, NOMS and the prison service, this report could form the basis for funding to these bodies.

### **Issues for future consideration**

- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre provision needs to be clearly identifiable by better labelling or 'branding' to improve recognition of the range of services offered.
- More effort and resources are needed in raising the profile of the Centre in the community, this may include establishing a Jigsaw Visitors Centre website. Specifically targeted publicity materials may also increase the numbers of people using the facilities and services.
- Evaluation and accurate monitoring of the Jigsaw Visitors Centre and its services should continue: feedback from prisoners' families, prisoners, prison staff and the local community should be obtained regularly.
- The Jigsaw Visitors Centre may consider longer term follow up and evaluation of families and prisoners that have used their services. This could provide strong evidence of the Centre's success and may attract further or sustained funding. The use of specific case studies could also be considered.
- Although some prison staff have been trained to deal with families this could be rolled out to include more staff in order to develop better understanding of the issues which affect families of prisoners.
- Opportunities should continue to be made available to facilitate positive interactions between prison staff and prisoners' families, breaking down the 'them and us' attitudes.
- Dissemination of learning and good practice from the Jigsaw Visitors Centre to other visitors' centres should be encouraged to continue. However, it is important that the high quality, innovative service at the Jigsaw Visitors Centre is not compromised.

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## Appendix

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### Appendix 1. Services the Jigsaw Visitors Centre provides

<b>Service</b>	<b>Prisoners</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Ex-prisoners</b>
Citizens Advice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Armley Church Advice Centre		✓	✓	✓	✓
Leeds Counselling	✓		✓		
Armey Counselling		✓		✓	✓
Alcohol awareness course	✓		✓		
Yoga	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Massage		✓	✓	✓	
Pilates		✓	✓	✓	
Salsa		✓	✓	✓	
Health Awareness days		✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to health info.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parenting Visits	✓	✓			
Prisoners on release work					✓
Prison liaison work	✓	✓			
Health Visitors		✓	✓	✓	
Family support group		✓			
Condom distribution scheme		✓	✓	✓	✓
Volunteer development		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sensory room		✓	✓	✓	
Room bookings		✓	✓	✓	
Centre as a community resource		✓	✓	✓	✓

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire used with the local community

(Show laminated photograph of Armley Prison Visitors Centre mural to participant)

- 1) Do you recognise this building?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 2) The photograph is of Armley Prison Visitors Centre. Were you aware that it is a resource open to the local community?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]  
**If Yes got to Q5 if No go to Q3**
- 3) The Visitor Centre provides.....Would you consider using any of the facilities in the future?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]  
**If Yes end questionnaire if No go to Q4**
- 4) Are there any particular reasons you may have for not using the facility?

**End of questionnaire. Thank you for your time.**

- 5) How often do you use the facilities or services at the Visitors Centre?
- More than once a week [ ] A few times a month [ ]  
Once a week [ ] Once a month [ ]  
Occasionally [ ] Never [ ]
- 6) The Visitors Centre provides the following for the community (show list to participant). Tick whether you know about these activities and if Yes whether you have used them.

Activity	Have you heard about this		If <b>Yes</b> put a tick if you have used it?
	No	Yes	
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)			
Armley Church Advice Centre			
Armley counselling service			
The Cafe			
Yoga classes			
Pilates			
Massage sessions			
Salsa dancing			
Health awareness days			
Access to health information			
Health visitor			
Condom distribution scheme			
Volunteer development work			
Sensory room bookings			
Internet Access			
General room bookings			
Youth Project			

- 7) Have you used the Visitors Centre for any other reason? If yes please give more details.
  
- 8) How did you first get to know about the Visitors Centre?
  
- 9) Have you benefited from the Visitors Centre in any way?
  
- 10) Would you like the Visitors Centre to provide any additional facilities?
  
- 11) Is there anything about the Visitors Centre you would like to see changed?
  
- 12) What do you think is the purpose of opening the Visitors Centre to the local community?