

# Jigsaw Piece



## Jigsaw staff begin work in Leeds Combined Court

### How would you feel if when you got to court....

There was a someone with a calm friendly approach to greet you who wasn't judging you in any way.

There was someone who could give you relevant and factual information about the court process and the prison your son may go to.

There was someone offering emotional support today and every day after should you need it.

You were introduced to a serving prisoner who would be able to look after your son should he go to Armley prison.

#### Answer:

*Calmer, Relieved, Scared but maybe not quite as scared, Re-assured, Comforted, Grateful*

Leeds Crown Court has 14 courts over 2 floors which are mirror images of each other. The waiting areas are large square spaces with the court rooms leading off from them. This is a good design for us as everyone is in one area. However, it does mean that we have to be sensitive as everyone, without exception, waits in the same space; i.e. defendants, witnesses, victims and families of all. These

spaces get very busy and are filled with tension, emotion, nervous energy and fear which are all palpable.

The first thing we do is look at each court list to see where our services are needed the most. We 'set up' an information point with the many and varied fact sheets and information booklets we take and then split the room; Gary covers one side and I the other. We approach every person waiting to offer any information, advice or support we can. The majority of people have welcomed our services and have been appreciative of the information we provide and the knowledge we have.

We often sit inside the court room with a family so we can interpret what is going on so they can understand and follow it. When families are so engulfed in emotion it is hard to take anything on board. In our experience some legal teams often give families, and especially potential prisoners, some very odd information and advice that is not helpful. We hope that they refer families to us instead of giving them wrong information!

Currently we can only cover Fridays, but are hoping to increase that when we have trained volunteers

We will also be covering Bradford Crown Court very soon and have been invited to cover Leeds Magistrates but unfortunately due to staffing capacity and lack of funding – we have to take one step at a time.

**Malka Denton Service Development Co-ordinator**

**Malka and Gary workers at the court**



## **Managers Report**

This issue covers a range of articles reinforcing the variety of work which Jigsaw undertakes ~ from our core service delivery in the Play Areas, helping to make visits a more enjoyable experience for children, to our new and innovative work in the local Courts. All have the common objective of helping families who have loved ones in Prison.

At the same time we are keen to continue our approach of involving others who can add value and insight into our operation – such as the medical student placements and our partnership work with agencies who are keen to support our ground-breaking work with prisoners and partners.

The next few months will be exciting as we move forward into new areas. There will be lots of information in this Newsletter so, as the saying goes, “Watch this space!”

Rita Hindley  
Manager, Jigsaw Visitors Centre

### **The bi-annual Partnership Event helps the Visitors Centre with our pioneering work**

The Centre held the second of its bi-annual partnership events on Wednesday 29th November 9.30am—12.30pm. The event focused on the new Children’s Service and Children’s agenda. The main speaker was Marianna Pexton Chief Development Officer of Children’s Service for Leeds. Marianna gave a detailed presentation of what is happening in Leeds around children’s work.

The event had two workshops-one on how the Centre could get involved with the Children’s Agenda and the other focusing on the pioneering relationship work which we are

developing with prisoners and their partners. This gave us an opportunity to sign up agencies who are interested in getting involved with this new stream of work. Our intention is to work alongside prisoners as they move out into the community and make valuable links with providers. We can then refer couples to these providers so that they are able to access any additional support that they may need.

The event attracted 41 people from a wide and diverse range of organisations including statutory and community and voluntary sector agencies.

## Drug awareness event held at the Visitors Centre

The Jigsaw Visitors Centre, in partnership with HMP Leeds Short Duration Drug Programme, held an event for agencies who carry out work around drugs in West Yorkshire. The event was held on Wednesday 8th November 9.30am—12.30pm and showcased the short duration drug programme. A key part of the event was two workshops focusing on the best way to set up referral systems for prisoners who need support around drugs when released back into their local communities. A group of ex prisoners who had been involved on the programme came and spoke about their experiences on the course

and how valuable it had been for them. The event attracted 47 people from 25 different drug agencies from West Yorkshire, these included statutory sector and voluntary and community sector agencies.

The event proved to be very successful and everyone who attended got something out of it, even if it was just to pass on their contact details to the prison so that prisoners can be referred to their agencies. The event finished off with a buffet lunch and a valuable opportunity to network.

## The Visitors Centre celebrates Christmas

The Visitors Centre celebrated Christmas in style by holding its annual Christmas Fayre on Friday 15th December 11.30am—2.00pm. We had:

**A Santa's grotto for the children**

**Raffle & Tombola**

**A handmade Jewellery stall**

**Cakes and Buns stall**

**Wooden garden bird boxes**

**A bric a brac stall by New Wortley Community Centre**

The event attracted over 60 people including prison visitors, prison staff and people from the local community.

A great time was had by all who attended and we raised £110. This will go towards improving our services delivery in the centre.

A big thank you to Santa, who made it all the way from Lapland to be here!



# What goes on in the play areas at HMP Leeds

Providing play development and support for children of prisoners is a key area of work for the Jigsaw Visitors Centre. We provide play area facilities in the Visitors Centre and also in the Prison visits room.

The play area in the visits room is open every visit session to provide fun and stimulating support for children over the age of two to enjoy whilst they are visiting loved ones at Leeds Prison.

We've worked with over 2200 children in the play area during the last quarter, that's over 170 children every week!

Jigsaw Visitors Centre is a charity and as such toys and play facilities

are funded either through grants or donations.

There are lots of daily activities that are on offer including:

- a large range of board games and table top games,
- a home corner, and dressing up corner,
- play station with various games,
- construction toys and small world experiences.

In the play area we have monthly topics where children can be involved in craft activities, story telling sessions and themed events.



## Story teller reading with children on a recent family visit

We host regular themed family visits. These are advertised in advance and are open for anyone to apply, but please be aware that numbers are restricted and demand is always high. The Christmas family visit on page 7 demonstrates in detail how these visits operate.

# What goes on in the play areas at HMP Leeds

We follow monthly themes. These include under the sea, fairytale favourites, seasons, new life, how we grow, safety, around the world and many more.



**Children enjoying activities with their families at their table**

Caroline, Ronnie, Clare and Sarah form the Family Play Worker team and are usually found in or around the play area.

Carolyn is based in the Visitors Centre and is on hand with the rest of the team to offer families advice, information and support.

For information about what's on offer in the play areas and the Visitors Centre please come in and see us or call 01132032771.

Children are invited to take some games and creative activities back to the tables to enjoy as a family.

As under 2's cannot be left in the play area unless they are accompanied by an adult, they have their own selection of specially chosen toys that can be taken to the table to encourage family discussion throughout the visit.



**Children's entertainer with children in the Visitors Centre play area**

We have a creative area that provides a fresh activity where children can make or do things that can be given to a family member, taken home or displayed in our gallery or as part of our themed board,

## Medical students spend time at the Visitors Centre

For our community based project we attended the Jigsaw Visitors Centre at HMP Leeds. Our aims were to:

- learn about the support services available for both prisoners and their families
- the healthcare facilities available within the prison
- speak to a prisoner about the experience of being in jail,
- ascertain how drug and alcohol misuse is managed within the prison.

We were given a tour of the entire prison . We were surprised not to feel intimidated and threatened by prisoners as we walked through the wings. Instead we felt saddened that they may not have had the opportunities that we have had in life and therefore may have been more susceptible to a life of crime and misdemeanor. This helped us to banish stereotypes of prisoners which we may have developed as a result of the media. As future doctors, we feel this will be beneficial when treating offenders, as we will be able to demonstrate a sensitive and empathic approach to their needs.

We were fortunate enough to be able to speak to a current inmate about general life inside prison, emotions commonly encountered, and their

experiences of healthcare and support services. Through these conversations we learnt about the Listener Scheme, a support network provided to prisoners by fellow prisoners, specifically trained by the Samaritans. This is a very successful system, especially in reducing suicide and self-harm. It allows prisoners to unburden any concerns or feeling of depression, as well as providing support from experienced prisoners who understand the rules and regulations inside the prison.

We also spoke with workers within the Visitors Centre. We heard about common difficulties and emotions which prisoners' families regularly experience such as financial problems, loneliness, discrimination and fear. All of these issues can affect individual's healthcare needs and reinforced our views on the importance of an holistic approach to medicine.

We undertook a project which examined the non-clinical services available within the Leeds area. The aim of this was to help the Centre compile a database for the future, to aid direction of prisoners to the appropriate General Practices.

**Jessica & Fiona Medical Students**

## Christmas is a time for families

Christmas can be a very testing time for families, especially if they have a loved one in prison. The Jigsaw Visitors Centre recognises this and organised not one but two special Christmas visits. We held the two Christmas Visits on 21<sup>st</sup> December, due to the usual overwhelming demand. They were both well attended by 21 prisoners, 21 partners and 46 children, who were all involved in various craft activities including hat making, card making and the design and construction of a family photo frame. Individual family photos were then added and presented to the inmates and their families.

We had a Story Teller who came and told the children tales of an enchanted Christmas, along with singing and party games. Santa made a special appearance with presents for all the children and the obligatory photo opportunity.

A fabulous buffet was enjoyed by all, including staff.

Evaluations taken at the end of the visits all proved positive with these comments;

*"The whole preparation and the way the visit was set up, i.e. only taking 5 minutes for families to get into prison, activities, photos, Santa. TOP MARKS!"*

*"It helped bring us together at a time when we needed it the most."*

*"Being able to spend time with my kids and feed my baby and get a photo taken with them, THANK YOU for treating me like a normal person."*

All responses to the visit were excellent and all families were really involved in the day.

**If you would like information about family visits taking place this year please contact Caroline or Ronnie at the Visitors Centre or on 0113 2032771**



**Families enjoying activities at the special family Christmas Visit**

### Special Announcement !

From the 3rd March the Jigsaw Visitors Centre will open on Saturday's 8.15am—4.45pm. All visitors will be booked in at the Visitors Centre before going onto their visit.

This new provision is now possible through extra staff being employed at the Centre.

We feel this will further enhance the provision we provide for prisoners children and families that visit HMP Leeds.

## Programme of activities

### Weekly sessions in the Visitors' Centre

	Day	Time
<b>Family Support</b>	Daily	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Health Information Advice &amp; Support</b>	Daily	10.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Blue Pepper Café</b>	Daily	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Free Internet Access</b>	Daily	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Health Information point machine</b>	Daily	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Massage Sessions</b>	Tues & Weds	11.00am — 1.30pm 11.00am — 1.30pm
<b>Community Meeting Room Available</b>	Mon– Fri	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Sensory Room</b>	Mon-Fri	9.00am — 5.00pm
<b>Youth Project</b>	Wednesdays	4.30pm — 6.30pm

### Service Providers

	Day	Time
Citizens Advice Bureau (Prisoners/Families/Staff)	Mon-Thurs	10.00am-4.00pm
Jigsaw Counselling Service (Staff & Prisoners)	Mon-Fri	10.00am-4.00pm
Jigsaw Counselling Service (Visitors/Community)	Thurs	(Appointments only)

### Forth coming events

	Day	Time
Stepping Stones Partnership Event	Tues 23rd February	9.45am—12.45pm

**The Visitors' Centre is open Monday—Friday 9.00am—5.00pm**

### Contact Details

**Lee Stephenson** Health Information & Development Worker, **Tel:** 0113 2032512  
**or Email:** [Lee@jigsawvisitorscentre.org.uk](mailto:Lee@jigsawvisitorscentre.org.uk)  
**Write to:** Jigsaw Visitors' Centre, c/o HMP Leeds, 2 Gloucester Terrace, Armley, Leeds, LS12 2TJ

**Our Vision:** "The Visitors' Centre is here to provide friendly and independent support, information and advice and healthy living activities for all communities associated with the Visitors' Centre – families of prisoners, prisoners and ex-prisoners, prison staff and the local community. We aim to empower people and their families to make positive choices about their lives and life style."



The Jigsaw Visitors' Centre is funded by Big Lottery Fund, HMP Leeds, Leeds Primary Care Trusts, Lankelly Foundation, Leeds Health Action Zone, Tudor Trust, Action for Prisoners' Families

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