



Case Study:

Voluntary Action for Oadby & Wigston and the Glen Parva Young Offenders Visitors Centre

Project: Supporting Offenders

Area covered: Oadby & Wigston

Providing impartial advice to visiting relatives and friends

Voluntary Action Oadby and Wigston in the Leicester run the Visitors Centre at Glen Parva Young Offenders Institution with the help of volunteers to offer a welcoming, safe environment in the Visits Centre, which is reassuring to visiting families, reduces stress and worry, which will help improve the quality of the visit. Staff and volunteers at the Centre work in close partnership with the Family Liaison Officers within Glen Parva.

The Visit Centre is an important part of the prison especially to the families as it provides advice and help especially if it is their first visit, a reassurance that someone independent from the prison will listen to them and their concerns. For first time visitors, the centre staff and volunteers will go through the procedure of what will happen before they enter the prison.

For the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007 it is estimated that 30,000 adults have passed through the Visitors Centre and 2,400 children up to the age of 18. This is an average of 2,700 visitors per month. The Visitors Centre is open 6 days a week – closed on Wednesdays.

In-visits Play Area

For a child, visiting a prison can be a strange and frightening experience. The in-visits play area gives children an opportunity to play during their visits. This has proved to be a highly beneficial way of coping and there has been a noticeable difference in the children's behaviour when the play area is open. During 2006-07, 779 children enjoyed this facility.

In March 2008 the centre held the first family visit afternoon where 9 prisoners had a visit with their children and partners. Feedback from the family and the prisoners was very positive and they also gave the centre ideas of how to improve the family visits.



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Both visitors and prison officers comment on how much help it is to have a play area in the visits room. It brings relief to parents and prison officers appreciate happily occupied children.

Besides the benefits that prison visitor centres bring to the families of prisoners, happier, more supportive families play a big role in effective rehabilitation and reduction of re-offending rates.

Contact details:

Address: Voluntary Action for Oadby & Wigston
132a Station Road,
Wigston,
Leicester
LE18 2DL

Tel: 0116 281 0026

Email: enquiries@vaow.org.uk

Website: www.vaow.org.uk