



**Developments in the HM Prison Service and  
Safe Ground Family Man programme, and the  
Safe Ground Network during 2007-8**

**An independent review**

**By**

**Professor Gwyneth Boswell  
and  
Dr. Fiona Poland**

**School of Allied Health Professions  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich**

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**Professor Gwyneth Boswell & Dr. Fiona Poland**

University of East Anglia

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# Developments in the HM Prison Service and Safe Ground Family Man programme, and the Safe Ground Network during 2007-8

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Safe Ground prison education programmes

The charity, Safe Ground, runs two prison education programmes for male prisoners, commissioned by the Prison Service with dissemination supported and funded by the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). These programmes, *Family Man* and *Fathers Inside*, have been gradually developed since 1999 and refined in a number of prisons with the help of prisoners who have participated in them.

Both of these programmes constitute units of the NOCN (National Open College Network) Progression Qualifications. These qualifications comprise a range of units that provide opportunities for learners to develop skills in literacy and numeracy, learning to learn, and personal development. The qualifications are designed to be simultaneously flexible and achievable, with the learner attaining the size and level of qualification suitable to their needs and stage of learning.

The *Family Man* programme is structured to deliver the core Units of Family Relationships, and Developing Group and Teamwork Communication Skills, and includes assessment opportunities for the Key Skill of Communication, Level 1. *Fathers Inside* is structured to deliver the core Units of Developing Parenting Skills, Level 1 and Developing Group and Teamwork Communication Skills, Level 2. It includes assessment opportunities for the Key Skills of Communication, Level 1 and Adult Literacy, Core Curriculum Entry Level. Prison education departments may choose whether or not to offer these Units and may also determine the process and content of delivery. In common with other such Units, the Safe Ground programme Units each require a minimum of 20 contact hours, and are delivered by 2 Tutors over a period of 3 to 5 weeks.

The independent review process forms the evaluative element of Safe Ground's developmental programme of work, which is funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (Families Unit) and the Henry Smith Foundation (see Acknowledgements). The present review was conducted over a 10-month period from December 2007 to September 2008.

## 1.2 Review purpose

*The Family Man* and *Fathers Inside* Programmes have been externally evaluated (NFER, 2002; Boswell, Wedge & Price, 2004, 2005) and found to have produced positive changes in the attitudes and behaviour of programme participants. Two more recent reviews have assessed what is known about the extent of *Family Man* participants' learning, progression to other appropriate learning opportunities, and programme development to involve families (Boswell, 2006; Boswell and Poland, 2007). Safe Ground has aimed to draw on the recommendations of these reviews to develop arrangements to enhance programme effectiveness for the future. The purpose of the present review is to examine the progress which has been made between July 2007 and September 2008. In effect it asks one broad question, with five main strands, about this progress, the answers to which will be assessed in the final section of this report:

### *What developments have been made by Safe Ground in 2007-8 to:*

- *Meet service users' needs*
- *Provide opportunities for **Family Man** students at HMP Wandsworth to apply their programme learning*
- *Work in partnership with other agencies to continue improving the **Family Man** programme*
- *Ensure the **Family Man** programme meets National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) objectives*
- *Continue improving and enhancing communications with the Safe Ground **Family Man/Fathers Inside** Network*

It is important to note that a review is not a research study in its own right but, rather, seeks to summarise and draw upon available evidence to make recommendations for future practice – in this case to Safe Ground, to the Department of Children, School and Families (DCSF) and to the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

## 1.3 Policy framework and Review focus

The review process is necessarily located in the context of the surrounding policy framework for supporting family ties, family learning and parenting from prison. Much of this recent framework is specifically chronicled in the two previous review documents (Boswell, 2006; Boswell and Poland, 2007) and need not be repeated in detail here. It is important to note, however, that since the reorganization of some Government Ministries and Departments in June 2007,

Safe Ground has been operating to policy emanating from the DCSF and from the Ministry of Justice in the shape of NOMS, as well as to the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit (OLASS) under the auspices of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), a non-departmental public body.

In 2007, the Ministry of Justice and the DCSF conducted the first review of the support needs of children of offenders (DCSF and MOJ, 2007). This was followed by a Cabinet Office review of the needs of all disadvantaged children, including those of prisoners (Social Exclusion Task Force, 2007, 2008). By then, the increased involvement of the voluntary sector in the provision of services to meet the crime reduction and other Government agendas was being promoted (Cabinet Office, 2008). Most recently, the Ministry of Justice and NOMS have explicitly sought to engage the voluntary and community (or 'Third') sector in their reducing re-offending agenda (Home Office, 2004, 2006) by producing a document entitled 'Working with the Third Sector to Reduce Reoffending' (Ministry of Justice and NOMS, 2008). This begins to set out new expectations about grant funding, commissioning, procurement and good practice for voluntary sector work in prisons, to be finalised in 2009. Clearly, then, there are a number of existing and developing policy demands upon the activities and outcomes of Safe Ground.

The present review focuses specifically upon the impact of the revised *Family Man* programme on prisoner graduates and their families, and reports the views of prison and Safe Ground staff, and a range of consultants, policy-makers and national 'players' about this, together with an account of the wider ongoing organizational developments via Safe Ground's **Fathers Inside/Family Man Network**.

#### **1.4 Review method**

The review first presents the experiences and views of those referred to in the previous section in respect of the revised *Family Man* programme, following its trialling at HMPs Wandsworth and Belmarsh during 2007-8. For this purpose, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted face-to-face with a sample of 23 prisoner programme participants and, either face-to-face on a Family Day or (more usually) by telephone with 20 relatives/supporters, who had participated in the Family Action Plan work. These samples were based on prisoners' and relatives' willingness and availability and on the contactability of the latter. To ascertain their views about ongoing developments, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the four members of Safe Ground's staff most responsible for implementing them. Five consultant partners who had contributed specialist expertise and advice to the programme during the same period also completed semi-structured interviews or questionnaires, according to their convenience.

The review goes on to recount developments in Safe Ground's **Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** over the same period, drawing on documentary information from questionnaires, training events and collated programme data. Findings from a focus group which sought advice from a range of participants about taking the revised *Family Man* programme forward were additionally examined. Follow-up information in respect of 211 men, who had completed the *Family Man* programme at HMP Wandsworth between 2005 and 2007, was also reviewed. To ascertain their views on these matters, seven national 'players' in the prisoner/learning/family policy arena were invited to respond to a short survey, either by telephone or e-mailed questionnaire, according to their convenience. Six of these had responded by the report deadline. Finally, the review summarises and draws upon this range of findings to suggest their implications for action, as Safe Ground enters the next phase of its organizational development.

## **2. Revising the Family Man programme**

### **2.1 Background**

The 2006-7 Review recounted the advent of the Family Action Plan (FAP) itself a response to the previous year's Review, which had referred to the need for innovative methods of engagement to support and foster the implementation of prisoner learning on the Safe Ground programmes. Families themselves had long emphasised the importance of their involvement in the prisoner's sentence and post-release planning generally (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Henderson, 2007). As a consequence, Safe Ground decided to increase its own contribution, to this process, particularly in light of the need for a more structured approach to the Children and Families Pathway to reducing re-offending (Home Office, 2004, 2006). The FAP, was piloted at HMP Wandsworth as part of the *Family Man* programme between November 2006 and March 2007, in partnership with the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), which runs the Visitors' Centre at Wandsworth.

The FAP aims to further the implementation of prisoner and family learning by involving relatives in a two-part structured programme which provides them with information about progression routes into resettlement, and with opportunities to communicate with the prison about their respective aims within this process. During the pilot phase, relatives were defined for this purpose as: partners; blood relatives; immediate family/children; and, under special circumstances, family friends and foster parents. The process involved the prisoner identifying an appropriate relative to take part in what began as a one-day prison-based workshop split into two halves and has evolved into a two-day event, with each day timetabled a week apart. Following an interview survey with a sample of prisoners and relatives participating in the FAP, the 2006-7 Review commented that 'the FAP is an enjoyable and meaningful exercise, which engages families and makes them feel part of the prisoner's learning experience'.

### **2.2 Developments during 2007-8**

During the pilot year of the FAP, Safe Ground had identified the need to develop a 'FAP Resource' for use in male prisons. It was envisaged that this would include marketing materials, guidelines and activities that enable prisoners' relatives (including children) to be involved in the education and rehabilitation of that prisoner while he is in prison, and also in appropriate initiatives in providing counselling and supporting family ties. In further pursuit of this aim, Safe Ground had also proposed, and then went on to recruit consultants from PACT, Relate, One-Plus-One, Adfam, and Time for Families to contribute to the Resource and to some of the programme sessions for 2007-8.



Following consultant advice, further trialling and evaluation at Wandsworth, and consultation with existing *Family Man* programme teachers and the **Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** (see §3.3 and §3.4), nine new lessons have been drawn up this year for *Family Man* by the FAP manager. These comprise: a new induction session and five new lessons for prisoners; a new session for supporters; and two new lessons (including ‘What Next?’) for both prisoners and supporters. They contain worksheets (specifically referring to the 7 Pathways to reducing re-offending), printed resources for both students and supporters, promotional materials and delivery and management guidelines. These include bespoke risk assessment, child protection and health and safety guidelines, specific to the challenges of the programme. The notion of ‘relative’ (see §2.1 above) has deliberately evolved into one of ‘supporter’, since experience in the trialling has shown that while not all men may have supportive relatives, they may have close friends, for example, who would be willing to work with them or, alternatively could work with a volunteer from Prisoners’ Penfriends or the National Association of Prison Visitors. A further important development has been the institution of a letter-writing exchange between students and supporters, over a six-week period, focusing on the students’ learning on the programme. This also enables contact with relatives/supporters who are too geographically distant to visit.

The new *Family Man* programme resources involving relatives/ supporters are outlined by Safe Ground as follows:

***Pre-programme participation***

*Procedures and guidelines have been developed for contacting the FM prisoner’s nominated adult relative/supporter. These include a telephone interview and briefing process and security checking procedures.*

***Session 1: The Induction session (3 hours)***

*Relatives work in the Visitors Centre. They meet FM programme staff for the first time and are introduced to the aims and objectives of the FM programme. They take part in a series of activities designed to help them identify what they want to achieve and how to plan their approach with their prisoner relative for the duration of the programme. They suggest and set a goal to support the prisoner’s rehabilitation. The nominated relative/supporter is asked to respond, using a response template to weekly letters they will receive from the prisoner. They are also given a small booklet containing guidance on how to access information and support from other services that specialise in assistance for prisoners’ relatives.*

***Session 2: The Prisoner/Relative session – ‘What Next?’ (3 hours)***

*The nominated relatives/supporters work with the prisoners inside the prison. Working in pairs, both parties discuss each others’ FM work to date and aspirations following programme completion. The prisoner and his relative/supporter consider how they intend to support each other to realise their*

*post programme goals. They meet representatives from different prison departments and resettlement agencies to discuss learning and support opportunities for the prisoner beyond the FM programme. Agencies also attend that can provide support for the relatives. FM prisoners and their relatives have been primed about how to approach these representatives before the 'What Next' activity. Following the meetings the prisoner and his relative will review their goals in preparation for writing a Family Action Plan.*

***Session 3: Prisoner and Relative write an Action Plan (3 hours)***

*Following discussions with agencies and prison staff during Session 2, the prisoner and their nominated adult relative/supporter review their worksheets by comparing their answers and suggested goals. FM tutors facilitate a discussion which enables them to identify one goal for the prisoner. They then identify the stages he will need to go through to achieve the goal. The pair will also consider the impact this goal will have on his family. They also identify and write down the mutual support they will need to achieve the prisoner's goal. The prisoners' and relatives'/supporters' worksheets and Action Plans are taken in and photocopied. These resources are returned to the participants. Copies of the prisoner's worksheets are kept for assessment and for his Sentence Plan (OASys).*

The above account is given to demonstrate the detailed thought and action which has gone into the new sessions involving families or other supporters. Similar detail has been provided about the Family Day, which is the culmination of the work of the programme. Safe Ground's own post-trial evaluative interviews with relatives/supporters led it to conclude:

*Without exception, all contributors to the FAP evaluation stated that prior to the FM experience they were unaware of how much the prison authorities were doing to try and help prisoners to cope and deal with their difficulties. They were surprised by the number of interventions available to the men. Relatives felt that the Induction Session helped to demystify the programme and make the participation process welcome and unthreatening. The evaluation also revealed that many relatives were unaware of the support available to them.*

In the summer of 2008, the revised programme was further trialled at HMP Belmarsh, with further plans for trialling in at least 2 other male prisons, and an aim of launching it nationally in 2009. Being concerned to ensure that this process will be fully evaluated, Safe Ground has initiated discussions to this end with NOMS Research Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) and the DCSF. In the interim, the following sections of this review will report on feedback from a sample of the revised *Family Man* graduates from both Wandsworth and Belmarsh, their relatives/supporters, relevant members of prison staff, the FAP manager and the consultants who worked on developing the programme.

### 2.3 Views from *Family Man* graduates and relatives/supporters

The 2006-7 Review reported views from a survey of *Family Man* graduates and relatives who had participated in the first FAP trials at Wandsworth, highlighting almost universal enthusiasm for the process, accompanied by useful suggestions for the future. As noted above, this positive response was repeated in Safe Ground's own evaluation of the further developments trialled at Wandsworth. For Review purposes it was agreed that more respondents would be sought, to ensure that these earlier views were representative, and also to invite comment from those who had participated in the first trial of the full revised programme at Belmarsh (a high security prison, which had been running the original version of the programme for 3 years). As explained at §1.4, 23 prisoner graduates (13 from Wandsworth and 10 from Belmarsh) and 20 relatives/supporters (13 who had attended the Wandsworth and 7 the Belmarsh programmes) were interviewed about their views and experiences. Again, they were universally positive with little difference between the kinds of responses, except Belmarsh participants had experienced the letter-writing process, where only a small proportion of Wandsworth participants had done so. The responses set out below have been chosen to highlight any new and enlightening views and experiences beyond those generally positive ones already reported.

All respondents were asked whether this was their first experience of a prison-based programme that involved relatives, and this was found to be the case for all, suggesting that, while it is known that a minority of other programmes do have some family involvement, this programme was breaking relatively new ground. When asked what difference this involvement had made to the respective participants, these answers were illustrative (**WW = Wandsworth; BM = Belmarsh; supporter = relative, friend or befriender. Graduates and supporters are not from matched pairings** ).

*WW graduate: The course made me really start to see that my family are serving the sentence too, even though I'm divorced and don't get to see my children much. I never thought of it like that before. Having the extra time with my (new) partner was great, but we did try to use it to think about what needs to change, and it was amazing we both thought the same things! Seeing the guy from Relate was really helpful. My partner still refers to what he said to us. It makes me go back and reflect and say 'Yes, that's one of my goals'.*

*WW supporter: The travelling to get there so early was difficult, and I was really nervous about it, but I'm so glad I went. The staff really put you at your ease and you see other people in the same boat as you and you can have a laugh with them. It makes such a difference to find out what he is actually doing in there. He's really learning something like he tells me on the phone. I found it a bit difficult with all those forms, but the good thing was that you could ask the staff and they really tried hard to explain - they didn't make you*

*feel stupid. And he has to be honest about what he says, because he knows I know! I was amazed and so was he to find that all those things were available to help him at the 'What Next' session. I feel like we can do this together now.*

**BM graduate:** *I did this course 'cos I'd do anything for my kids. I learned more about the responsibility I need to take for my family. Putting scores on the 7 Pathway things made me think in a different way. Writing the letters was really good. We are always on the phone in this country – I haven't written a letter in 20 or 30 years. The tutors helped a lot with the letter-writing and now I can write my own job applications which will really help with trying to support my family for the future. And I'm back on Education and doing English.*

**BM supporter:** *I was impressed. My son's calmed down a hell of a lot. He's realized how his behaviour has affected us, his family. When we did the FAP, he sat and listened and agreed some things and had suggestions of his own. In the role play on the Family Day, he had us in stitches – it was so great to see him working as a team with others and how well they all supported each other. If he wrote letters before, they'd be short and sweet. On the course he wrote long explanations of the sessions he'd done, telling us all about things like bonding. This is just a different person. We also learnt about all the agencies that are out there to help you. What he's had from this course is what I've been fighting for all his life. He's always had problems and once tried suicide. This is the first proper help he's ever had.*

These quotations reflect some important points made by a number of the respondents about the revised programme. Although not all prisoners were still with their partners, or necessarily seeing their children regularly, the experience of working with another family member or supporter was still prompting them to think about their responsibilities as a father. Others who were still in close contact with their families were also sometimes thinking about these matters for the first time. These latter were able to enjoy the additional time with their partners and children afforded by the programme, but were mostly also willing to take the FAP work seriously, and both they and their partners were usually feeling that they were working together to an agreed plan of action. Almost all the men interviewed had moved on to other learning opportunities, or had their names on a waiting list. Examples were given of how the 'What Next' sessions had informed what had previously often been a void in awareness of sources of help. The letter-writing exercise had imparted new or long-forgotten skills to the prisoners, and their contents had frequently opened the eyes of family members with new understandings being reached as a result. Where they were unsure, both men and relatives felt free to ask for help from patient staff members. Honesty on the part of the prisoner was more likely to be an ingredient than hitherto. There were some drawbacks for relatives to do with travelling, timing and initial nervousness, and these were mostly a function of the prison setting

and system and fear of the unknown, but they are nevertheless areas in which some improvement might yet be made.

Other suggestions for development or improvement in the programme's work with relatives/supporters are highlighted in the following examples:

**WW graduate:** *The way those tutors and Safe Ground people are with you. They're so committed to what they do. They really respect you and treat you as human beings. For me nothing was more important than that – they made me feel I was worth something after all. My girlfriend felt just the same. I couldn't believe it when they told us the prison is turning this course over to the Education Dept. They are part of the establishment. They don't see beyond the offender to the human being and they don't care about following people up like Safe Ground do. I can only say that they'd better be very careful what kind of people they choose to run it from Education. If they don't treat them with that same respect, they're on a hiding to nothing.*

**WW supporter:** *There needs to be more thought about the different lengths of time the prisoners are serving, especially with the 'What Next' session. The course feels much more real to them and to us if they're coming out in a few months' time. I know it teaches them to be a Dad from prison, but maybe there are different times in a sentence when it's best for them to be learning these different things. I'm really pleased he's done something he enjoyed so much, but it feels like he should do it again, or maybe some kind of refresher course, nearer the time he comes out.*

**BM graduate:** *The course itself was perfect. I can't praise the tutors highly enough. They were brilliant! But the prison needs to give the tutors some sort of power to hold the men in the prison once they start the course. We started with 16 people and then 2 got shipped out half-way through. One was on a Visits day and what about his family in all that? You get pretty close to people on this course and our group really bonded, so them going was really upsetting for everyone. What good is it to their families either if they start a course about family relationships and then don't finish it? I'm sure there must be a way to stop this happening if the Governor instructs it.*

**BM supporter:** *I know they've increased the number of sessions that families can attend, but I just think there should be a lot more. I think we need to have a copy of each other's score sheets [relates to scorings in respect of pathway-related problems] to think about for a week before we meet to discuss it. We had to reach a quick compromise and go for it! We also need to be able to see more of the programme itself and be involved in it.*

It must be said that the majority of respondents were extremely satisfied with the programme in its current (revised) format, with no suggestions to make for improvement, but these quotations represent a flavour of the other views that

were expressed. The comment about Safe Ground tutor and staff commitment and treating people with respect is one reflected to the reviewer from every corner and is clearly the outstanding feature for everyone who has dealings with them. Prisoners are a group of people who are very quick to pick up on anyone looking down on them or treating them as 'just another villain', and in turn are unlikely to afford respect to or engage in learning with anyone who does not behave in this way towards them. They also know and respect real commitment when they see it. The comment made by this graduate refers to the fact that HMP Wandsworth was not able to continue with the *Family Man* programme during 2007-8, as envisaged in an original Service Level Agreement because, like every prison, it is having to make 3% budget cuts every year for the next 3 years, and felt it could not continue to commit the funding. As a consequence, the programme is being run by the local Education Authority, hence the concerns expressed in this quotation.

The issue about the programme's timing within sentences (whether short, medium or long) has been raised in earlier surveys, re-appearing here, probably because it has never quite been resolved. Although the programme does indeed help students to see how they can be fathers from prison, there are some parts of it, such as the 'What Next' session that are bound to be difficult for those students and families still with a long time to go before release. The desirability of refresher courses is often mentioned. There is no easy answer to this issue, particularly in the absence of any additional resources, but it may be that advice can be sought about its psychological aspects when the theory manual is being prepared, with the possibility of making some adjustments in terms of programme and/or session timing. Consistency with sentence planning would also help here and this also bears on the question of men being moved to another prison mid-way through a programme. At Wandsworth, with Governor commitment, work was done on selecting prisoners at an appropriate time of their sentence. This meant, for example, selecting either short-termers who would be staying in the prison or long-termers who were at the beginning of their sentence and would stay for at least the length of the programme. Safe Ground staff were deemed by the prison management to be excellent at making positive relationships with prison staff, and were trusted by security, wing and resettlement staff. As one of the prison managers said:

*All prisons can do this if they choose. We need to work together. It's the prison's role to say 'These are the kinds of prisoners you should work with, and here's why'.*

Finally, the Belmarsh relative quoted here was one of a number of relatives/supporters who felt strongly that there should be more programme sessions involving them. There are probably few who would argue with this, and it would seem to be in keeping with the aims of the Children and Families Pathway (further discussed at §3.5), but it again has resource implications and

requires the further good will of the prison. Even in its existing form it requires two members of staff with a third part-timer to be based in a Visitors' Centre, who is competent to make sensitive and diplomatic phone calls to relatives, to prison staff and to outside agencies such as Probation. Safe Ground's track record in bringing about the 3 relative sessions and Family Day so far suggests, however, that this development might not be impossible.

## 2.4 Views from staff

As some of the ingredients of the previous section already suggest, the co-operation of prison staff at a number of key levels is crucial to the success of any programme, particularly one run by voluntary sector staff and involving the bringing-in of families with its attendant security (particularly drug-smuggling) risks. A great deal of hard work and constructive liaison is needed to ensure that things run as smoothly as they can. Therefore, as the Deputy Director seeks to trial the programme in further prisons, there are many staff issues to consider in the meetings to bring this about:

*We have to have a different schedule for every prison, according to their needs. Some run their courses full-time and some part-time. Some work well with the Visitors' Centres, others don't. Some people are open-minded but some are not! In doing the staff training, we have to make sure now that staff are equipped to manage the tensions produced by working with supporters, which produces more honesty but more challenges too.*

For the purposes of this Review, a small number of staff from Wandsworth were interviewed, together with the two tutors running the revised programme at Belmarsh. They were all asked to comment about their experiences of working with Safe Ground and the *Family Man* programme and a range of their responses appears below.

**Senior Prison management:** *I knew Safe Ground and Family Man from the last prison I was at and I have a good understanding of the programme. We know what works in reducing re-offending – job, accommodation and family or mentoring relationships. We've done reasonably well on the first two, less well on the last. I've seen some of the data and I believe the course definitely has an impact. The FAP is absolutely essential. It's always well managed, they work closely with security, a real credit to the staff. Governors should have a clear commitment to it and see it as a part of the core business of a prison, not an add-on. The reason we dropped the course this year was purely financial. We wrongly went down the route of employing additional teachers for the course which increased the cost to £180,000 per year. We allowed that situation to develop when we had the cash, but it became too expensive when we had to start cutting the budget. Now the LEA is going to run it and we'll see how well that works. My steer is to keep it as similar as possible to the present model.*

*I think bringing in people like this from the voluntary sector to run programmes is good and that's been a piece of learning for us. It has helped to challenge the previous negative image people have had of prison staff, particularly in this prison. I'm concerned for Safe Ground because they've worked hard to try and meet both NOMS and LSC requirements and are being told that if they want core funding, they have to come down on one side or the other. I think they should probably go for the latter. The awards and certificates are great, but the most important thing is to build family relationships so they are intact on release, and so contribute to the likelihood of reducing offending, together with employment and accommodation.*

**Resettlement:** *I've had the pleasure of being the person who presents the men with their certificates on the Family Day. It's good to be able to wish them well for the future. There's so much more we could do, especially as this work can stop **their** children getting into trouble. It fits into the Pathway work very well. So it's with regret that we let Safe Ground go and, through the LSC, have asked the LEA to do it. It's all about funding. Safe Ground are a bit high maintenance at times, but they're worth it because they're very committed and enthusiastic. There's been a bit of minimal drug stuff, but I've been able to trust them on security issues and by and large they select the people for the programmes who have the best chance of taking advantage of the course and reducing their re-offending.*

*I believe in relatives coming in. The prisoner is only one person and is also a victim of not being with his own family. It's very important that you work with them together – that way you get more honesty from the prisoner within a controlled environment and linking it to the programme. I've learnt from Safe Ground staff's commitment – their determination reinforces my own view about the importance of delivering. If you believe in it, you go for it. If you take it on board you do it 100%. If it doesn't work, you drop it. I could support **Family Man** because it ticks a box – some others I know think like that – but I do it because it does work and it's good to work with such an enthusiastic team.*

**Wing management:** *I've been here since Safe Ground first started 9 years ago. Programming the course is not difficult as long as you make sure staff are fully aware of what's expected, have guidelines and feel supported. It's about working as a team. The Safe Ground staff are all lovely people – they're passionate and committed to what they do. They did their utmost to try and fit in with the prison system, to work together with prison staff. But they've sometimes had problems trying to control prisoners and family members who weren't there for the right reasons. When I was involved, I had to say 'You're not here to consummate your relationships, you're here to learn! If you continue, the prisoner will be returned to the wing'. It was sometimes a lot of effort and a lot of resources for a small number of prisoners – dogs, OSGs, staff attending to give advice.*

*But it was really nice to see those families who took it seriously. I and 2 other officers joined in the games with them. But everything we do links in to the Pathways, resettlement and reducing offending, reducing the risk to the public. I actually believe in it. So I do think the course is beneficial if it reduces offending and the prisoners and families are committed to it. I think they've got to do more to make sure the prisoners are motivated to change. Having said that, I've really got to think about resources too. If the*



FAP continues in the autumn and they reduce my staffing levels on this wing, I'll be furious, because I've got to think of the needs of **all** the prisoners on the wing.

### **Prison officer tutors A and B (running Family Man together)**

**A:** I used to be the stereotypical prison officer – just bang 'em up! But this course happened here because I found it on the internet and went to see it operate at another prison. I was impressed and reported back to my workshop governor. It had the words 'family' and 'qualifications' in it. They like that! So I got the go-ahead to find a venue and set it up. I've done it nearly full-time for 2½ years and I'll go on doing it. I feel we have evolved and helped people to change their lives. Some of the staff think it's soft – changing nappies etc. – but that doesn't upset me now. Sabotage does go on – prisoners not being returned to their old jobs after they've finished the course etc. – but the Governors have been very supportive. If they see it's doing good, they'll find resources, put money into it. It's hard work but you get much more of a reward than the other POs do.

We've both had to learn on the job, though we've had some training from Safe Ground, particularly on these new parts of the course. We both feel it's natural to respect people, but there's been so much learning from Safe Ground. They're so good, very professional, their lessons are so well-structured – I think we subconsciously take in their modeling. The Children and Families Pathway provides a platform to slot into now. The FAP has given the remainder of the course a meaning. I was surprised about the supporters' session. They and the prisoners showing an interest, sharing in the 'What Next' session, actually listening and wanting to do it, despite us being the Prison Service who they just expect to beat 'em up and bang 'em up!

**B:** My workshop governor just handed me a sheet saying your primary task is now **Family Man** – no negotiation, but sometimes 'suck it and see' is the best way! I'd taught on anger management course before, so had some idea about teaching, so I was very happy to do this. I'd also worked a bit with **A** before. Now we work well as a team and can reply on each other. Not being part of the prison officer 'gang' is sometimes difficult, but I don't mind too much any more. It's worth doing this programme – prisoners are so diverse.

Safe Ground are a funny old bunch – very dedicated to what they do. They're young but they see things about learning and behaviour that I never did at that age. They work hard. They're up against a brick wall with the prison system, but they keep going. They've still got a smile on their faces. With the FAP etc. at first I didn't quite know what was going on, but when agencies came in, that worked quite well. Inmates always moan that they have no contact from agencies, but this is quite different. I would find organizing the relatives coming in a logistical nightmare, but **A** enjoys the challenge, the endless telephone calls. We're only prison officers, but we can say 'Do us a favour' to the senior officers, and they do it because they know the course works well. Anne Owers has praised **Family Man**, too, in last year's Inspection report. (Indeed, this report makes several approving references to **Family Man** and praises its work in bringing

prisoners and families together for the Family Day and the 'What Next' session – see Owers, 2007).

*Newer member of Safe Ground staff, working with the above tutors: I'm here to learn about all aspects of working for a charity. I've worked on the FAP and learnt a lot about working with relatives – the importance of supporting people after the sessions and not opening up cans of worms. I'm really impressed by the Directors and their persistence, making sure they're known, working on good personal relations. I've seen them teach too and I've seen how straight they are with prisoners – don't expect miracles but this is what we **can** do. For the last 9 weeks of the programme, I've been like a teaching assistant, helping the men with their portfolios etc. I've been surprised how open the men are to doing it. They want to do it. They say they've never enjoyed learning or felt so engaged in it before. It's lovely to watch them work so hard and then something clicks. It's a lot down to **A** and **B**. They've been a pleasure to work with – they're fantastic. It's been a really fab experience – I've really loved it!*

From the point of view of Safe Ground, working closely with prison staff of all kinds is crucial to the successful implementation of the programme, but it is also very labour-intensive for its own staff. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be over-emphasised, as the contributions from the sections of 2 prisons, above, have shown. They make a very wide range of key points, which are briefly summarized below, and may sometimes seem conflicting, but this is the nature of the tensions that are always at work in the prison system, and have to be engaged with on a daily basis, by those seeking to improve the life chances of prisoners.

- There is an emphasis on the interventions (including *Family Man*) that work in reducing re-offending and an awareness that there is still some work to be done on the related Children and Families Pathway.
- The programme and the FAP are seen as being credible and well-managed by Safe Ground, but its cost clearly poses a problem; they have lost continuity with and resourcing from the prison where they did all their pioneering work and are advised now to settle on the reducing re-offending agenda to gain core funding.
- Bringing in voluntary sector personnel provides a softer image to prisons, which can work to their advantage.
- Commitment, dedication, passion, professionalism are all words which prison staff use to characterize the work of Safe Ground staff – and some have clearly learned from this and see it as a model.
- Despite all the positives, there are real ongoing resource and security issues for prison staff, who have to manage the environment surrounding the programme. New security check and recruitment

guidelines are in place but need to remain high on the agenda; in overall resource allocation, other prisoners' needs have to be considered too.

- Experienced (some might say 'hardened') prison officers have been engaged to run the programme at one prison, more or less by chance (though herein lies a key issue about tutor selection), but have then become convinced of its effectiveness including the FAP work, love running it and are much-praised by both prisoners and Safe Ground staff, because they are both credible as prison officers and humane in their attitude to prisoners. Their programme has been recently praised by HM Inspector of Prisons for its positive family links.

## 2.5 Working with programme consultants

As noted at §2.2 above, and in the 2006-7 Review, Safe Ground had set itself a goal to further develop its FAP work, by engaging consultancy from 5 specialist agencies in the fields of prisoner and/or child and family work: the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) where 2 consultants were employed at different times; Relate; One-Plus-One; Adfam; and Time for Families. (It should be noted that the latter consultancy did not materialize as, after the contract was set up, it emerged that consistent personnel could not be provided, and so the contract was terminated). The FAP manager reported a great deal of learning and professional development on her own account in managing consultancy and contracts for the first time, while also having to write the new lessons for the programme:

*The consultants have taught us so much about things we needed to include in the new parts of the FAP. Most of them had very good understanding of what we were trying to do and they got good feedback from the prisoners too. They pointed out things like the importance of the order of lessons – for example that coping strategies need to go with stress sessions. We did have a few problems and what I've learnt is that you need to negotiate with agencies for people that have at least 3-4 years experience and don't need to be heavily managed – this needs to go in the contracts. I've learned a lot about contracts (though it doesn't really float my boat!). I haven't really had as much head-space as I'd have liked for the development work – the new lessons turned out to be a third of the course. But it's all coming together really well now.*

Clearly, these consultants' advice for the development of the programme cannot be reproduced in full here. The issue for review is how their input was managed and then taken on board by Safe Ground, and a flavour of this will be provided from a combination of their reports, interviews and questionnaire responses. However, for illustration, an example from the (verbal or written) feedback of each of them, which Safe Ground staff have also reported as a piece of learning for their work, is set out below.

**PACT:** *Additional support work from PACT at the Visitors' Centre following the FAP sessions, when sensitive issues for relatives can sometimes be raised and need further opportunity for discussion.*

**Relate:** *Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, linking needs to goals, and showing how this can be incorporated into the programme to relate to the men and their families (see Maslow, 1954)*

**One-Plus-One:** *Facilitating the One-Plus-One training course 'Brief Encounters' at Wandsworth, particularly looking at what makes relationships work and at 'active listening' techniques, and showing Safe Ground how this could be incorporated into the programme's training and instruction manuals.*

**Adfam:** *Helping Safe Ground to design a new worksheet enabling the prisoner and his adult relative/supporter to rate the scale of his problems against the 7 Pathways to reducing re-offending, to inform a comprehensive action plan for the future.*

It is apparent that the kind of help offered by these consultants, though generally of a specialist nature, is also very practical, and that they have been 'hands-on' in enabling Safe Ground to apply it on the programme. The extracts below afford an illustration of their own experiences in working with Safe Ground. They are not attributed to their organizations in order to protect identity.

**Consultant A:** *I had some experience of working with prisoners' families prior to this project and had come across the secrecy and shame that they carry in their everyday life. But working directly with them through this project made me realise that although many have to struggle with chaos everyday, they were still able to make almost superhuman effort to come to the sessions to support their relative. Some had real hope for change and found the peer support from other relatives valuable. I considered it a privilege to work with such an enthusiastic and motivated group of people and to be able to support the development of the **Family Man** course. As a consultant one can feel a bit on the outside but the staff made it easy for me to fit in. The consultation work has been very reflective in partnership and I think that this has added to its strength. I feel that the positive of the Safe Ground approach is the bridge that they are endeavouring to build with the outside as I have been acutely aware of the chasm that still exists between prison and the outside community.*

**Consultant B:** *Because the FAP process was in its very early stages, I did need to do quite a bit of inputting on general planning issues, which I enjoyed enormously. I also did some direct inputting with the guys on the course to help them gain a better understanding of how to set appropriate goals - explaining what SMART targets were - and the Family Man tutors felt this had stimulated great interest amongst participants and positively impacted on their ability to set action planning goals. I found Safe Ground staff very welcoming and eager to learn from the specialist experiences of other agencies and individuals - a really positive experience!*

**Consultant C:** *I have a brief for the consultancy role, but it's a bit long and rambling! But I'm flexible and was confident I could make it work. There were quite a lot of issues to look at in the programme like over-use of competitive exercises, which gives people bad messages about how to bring up children. This needed to be re-framed into something which is about the children's needs – not adversarial but shared. But Safe Ground were very open and willing to take these things on board. The reality is that to achieve all these things, they have already increased staffing levels, funded myself and other consultants, increased the duration of the course, and are have actively enhanced the course content. I consider the development is going extremely well which is down to the foresight and planning of those instigating the initiative, combined with the commitment and energy of the wide range of people who have been engaged in contributing to the process.*

**Consultant D:** *I will use the example of a healthy relationship with the prison and examples of work that I have taken part in to develop new services within and around the prison I am working in now, hopefully with some work incorporating the simultaneous working model. Partnership means working together by sharing information and ideas and putting in equal effort in all areas. It means both giving and taking and also being open and honest and welcoming constructive criticism. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Safe Ground and really appreciate the opportunities that were given to me during the process. I feel my ideas were taken seriously and my input was important during that part of the development process.*

**Consultant E:** *I have worked with prisoners before, so this wasn't new to me, but the difference was working with them when they were with their families in a workshop situation. It was clear in hindsight that when working with families (probably even more so than other supporters) and prisoners together, the boundaries should be set very clearly before the session starts and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour should be made clear before the situation arises. We cannot know what the family dynamics were before the imprisonment or how they might impact upon the workshops. I have become much more familiar with the Family Man course, which has been very useful. It has been a pleasure to work with such a logical, well thought out course and such motivated and dynamic people. I will be able to promote the course to other prisons with confidence.*

Overall, the comments of these consultants demonstrate that they were both unafraid to be critical and were satisfied that their comments and ideas were taken on board by Safe Ground staff. They also show that they, in turn, had learned from working with Safe Ground and the *Family Man* programme – markedly so for those who had not worked in a prison/with prisoners before – and that they would be taking this learning forward in their own work and promoting it to others. Some had experienced the process as a partnership, all found Safe Ground staff enthusiastic, committed, energetic, as many others have commented, and one described the programme as a bridge to the outside community. Taking into account also, the FAP manager's realistic account of the process, it is clear that the consultancy endeavour was one which produced a great deal of mutual learning, not only to the benefit of the programme's

development, but also to the benefit of those working with prisoners and families in the wider constituency.

## **2.6 In summary**

This section has focused upon the process of improving and revising the *Family Man* programme during the 2007-8 period. The main point to note is that, with the exception of a small amount of time slippage in aspects of the trialling process, usually for logistical reasons, Safe Ground has done everything it said it would do this time last year. In terms of the quality of its work in revising and fine-tuning, staff have learned and disseminated new knowledge and skills, as confirmed by prisoner and relative/supporter recipients, and are recognized by consultants and prison staff at all levels as being professional and dedicated to their work. This does not mean that there have not been problems; some of those interviewed have clearly set these out. However, it has also been apparent that constructive criticism is welcomed and addressed by Safe Ground, so that those giving it feel respected and valued, and those receiving it have been willing to implement any necessary action. Such an approach has worked to the overall benefit of the *Family Man* programme and those most closely involved with it.

### 3. Developing the Safe Ground Family Man/Fathers Inside Network

#### 3.1 Background

Safe Ground instituted the **Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** in 2005 for the purpose of sharing and, importantly, embedding learning among Safe Ground staff, programme graduates, their families/supporters, ex-offenders, Tutors, HOLS, Prison Governors, Resettlement Managers, statutory and voluntary family support and educational organization representatives, Government representatives, and policy-makers. Initially it operated through a series of symposia which were popular with participants, but required a longer-term strategy. The DfES/DCSF funding from 2006 – 2009 enabled Safe Ground to develop strategic aims and to clarify that running the **Network** would involve the following activities:

- Networking: regular contact with prisons via email, telephone and visits, co-ordination of events
- Teacher support and training
- Publicity: website, newsletter, network emails, dissemination at events
- Programme monitoring: data collection, entry, analysis, report
- Recruitment of new prisons
- Progress reports: to Director, Trustees, DCSF and NOMS

The 2006-7 Review noted that some progress had been made on all these fronts but that the disproportionate amount of time which Safe Ground staff had to spend persuading prison-based personnel to complete monitoring returns dogged their efforts in the other areas of **Network** activity. The problem has continued during 2007-8, and the last Review's recommendation that a specialist consultant or manager in data collection and analysis should be appointed has not so far been realized for resource shortage reasons. The **Network** manager estimates that eliciting data twice a year from each of the prisons running programmes (23 this year) involves an average of 6-7 telephone calls and 4 emails. As a consequence, she identifies a need to lobby for programme teachers to be supported with paid time to undertake the data collection and feed it in to Safe Ground.

#### 3.2 Programme monitoring and prison recruitment

Presentation of programme monitoring data does not, as in the two previous years, constitute a topic for this third year Review. The issue for review is whether the process is conducted credibly, particularly in the interests of communicating progress and outcomes to the external world.

In previous years, the reviewer has had to assemble the data provided in a form that afforded logical deduction for evaluation purposes. With the continuing caveat that some data remain incomplete for reasons not within the organisation's control, Safe Ground has learned from this process. Its recent internal **Network** data report, together with a report presented to its DCSF funder, clearly demonstrate that data are now being appropriately categorized and employed in a relevant fashion to provide evidence of prison take-up, programme development and student achievement. These show for 2007-8 that student numbers and retention rates remain consistent, with a high percentage (95%) of awards (Life Skills and Basic Skills, where prisons assess for the latter) and progression to further learning. There has been a reduction in prisons offering the *Fathers Inside* programme but, aside from staff shortages, budget cuts and the like, this is likely to be a function of the *Family Man* programme having been prioritized for revision activity over the last 2 years and should pick up when *Fathers Inside*, too, comes to be revised, if further funding can be gained for the latter. In the meantime, work goes on to recruit new prisons or re-engage old ones and this has resulted in four prisons beginning or resuming the programmes this year – again, broadly consistent with the numbers in the previous 2 years. (See **Appendix 1** for a list of establishments running *Family Man* and *Fathers Inside* during 2007-8).

### **3.3 Teacher support, training and networking**

A considerable proportion of Safe Ground staff's time is spent on supporting and training the teachers and, to some extent, the prisons which deliver the *Fathers Inside* and *Family Man* programmes. During 2007-8, staff made a number of visits to participating prisons to provide support to managers on how to improve delivery of the programmes. Given the extensive developments in the *Family Man* programme described in §2, it was also timely to hold a training event at HMP Wandsworth in January 2008 to provide an update on these developments, and advice on how best to facilitate the participation of relatives/supporters into the programme. Seventeen delegates attended from six prisons. While their response to the event was positive, they were also concerned that their education contractors (who generally supported the idea of working with relatives) would not necessarily provide them with sufficient extra time to deliver this work effectively. A similar problem tended to arise in terms of teachers being allowed time away to attend training events. As is so often the case, apparently irresolvable budgetary constraints reinforce the adage that 'the best is the enemy of the good'.

The training of new and inexperienced teachers, in accordance with one of the **Network's** stated objectives, is part of Safe Ground's ongoing work programme. However, the objective also relates to the continuing support and professional development of experienced teachers. A brief account of a Drama Skills and



Training the Trainers Workshop held in March 2008 will serve to demonstrate the way in which Safe Ground appropriately combines the process of skills and knowledge development for experienced teachers with an opportunity to receive feedback from them about Safe Ground's own developments and plans.

On this occasion, the aim was to spend the morning on developing the drama skills necessary for running the considerable drama element of the programmes. Teachers had responded to a previous training needs questionnaire sent out by Safe Ground that this element often proved challenging for those without any drama background. Building on Safe Ground's experience of holding a focus group (see §3.4), the afternoon took the form of a consultation session for teachers to contribute their knowledge and experience to Safe Ground's development of a 'Training the Trainers' manual to be made available to all programme deliverers in the future. This was part of a wider consultation process on the manual, the aim of which is described by Safe Ground's Director as being 'to draw together a proposal to NOMS, highlighting the need for a more systematic and formal approach to the recruitment, selection and training of tutors involved in parenting and family relationships education for prisoners'.

The workshop was deliberately held in a central part of London, near Westminster, and scheduled so that participants could enjoy spending time in the capital the night before and also following the event. The aim of this was to enable them to feel that they were 'at the heart' of things and indeed also in the area where Safe Ground staff operated and had their offices, instead of being geographically distanced and operating literally behind locked doors as would be their daily norm. Additionally, and in line with another of the stated **Network** objectives, it facilitated their engagement in the crucial process of networking between themselves, and learning from each others' experiences and practices, which has always been welcomed in training event feedback to Safe Ground.

The workshop was attended by 26 delegates from 15 prison establishments, by five members of Safe Ground staff and a professional percussionist who provided an entertaining warm-up and input into rhythm and movement work. The schedule for the day was very clearly set out for the participants, with detailed advice on the presentation of each session for the workshop leaders. Safe Ground provided feedback questionnaires to participants after the event, and used these to collate its own internal evaluation report which, as with the programme monitoring data, it has subsequently been able to use in its progress report to the DCSF.

Safe Ground's training events have always been popular with prison teachers and this is reflected in the internal evaluation's finding that:

*All teachers reported feeling enthused, looked after and welcome. They found the environment comfortable, the lunch tasty, and the Safe Ground team dedicated and 'inspirational'.*

While they had a range of suggestions for improvement and extension to this and training/networking events generally, the evaluation importantly showed that they had both enjoyed and learned from the drama workshop, and particularly appreciated the courtesy of being consulted about their programme experiences:

*Teachers found it very valuable to look at what makes a good tutor: they said it was professionally affirming because it highlighted their own qualities and experience and was helpful in identifying their own future training needs. Many enjoyed the 'silent' groups and the chance for inter-establishment discussions. They also liked being consulted for their views on training, which they said made them rate their own experience and feel appreciated.*

The point of recounting the various processes involved in this particular workshop is, firstly, that the positive feedback from participants is congruent with direct feedback to the reviewer at previous training/networking events, and, secondly, that Safe Ground is now more confidently and competently integrating these feedback mechanisms on its own account. As a result, it can assure itself that experienced teachers have learned something new and important this year, and that it has sensibly been able to utilize this opportunity both to further its own learning and, in the process, demonstrate that it values these teachers' views and experiences. As the **Network** manager has observed:

*The most important people in all of this are the teachers. Our priority is to be in touch with them and to nurture them.*

### **3.4 The Focus Group: taking the revised *Family Man* programme forward**

A new departure for Safe Ground in 2007-8 was its decision to hold a focus group of **Network** members to invite their views and expertise on how best to take the revised *Family Man* programme forward, particularly in terms of the implications for increased relative involvement. This replaced its planned **Network** symposium but fulfilled a similar function. Fifty one people attended this event, held in HMP Wandsworth's Visiting Hall. They represented a range of prisons, prison staff, regional prison and probation staff, the voluntary sector, and prisoners and relatives. Disappointingly for Safe Ground, the DCSF Families Unit and NOMS Partnership Strategy Unit were not able to send representatives. Following a presentation about the *Family Man* revisions, the focus group participants worked for 90 minutes in discussion groups of eight, each with a

note taker, with findings fed back to an independent facilitator. They were given one of two sets of questions to discuss as follows:

**Groups A:**

- *What are the advantages and disadvantages of providing male prisoners with an opportunity to work with their relatives on a prison-located family relationships educational programme?*
- *What needs to be done to overcome any problems for undertaking this work safely?*

**Groups B:**

- *What advantages and disadvantages are there for voluntary sector organizations to work collaboratively to increase opportunities for prisoners to work with their adult relatives?*
- *What needs to be done to overcome problems associated with working in partnership?*

Additionally, each group member was given a post-card to complete, with answers to the following questions:

- *What do you think Safe Ground needs to do to take the revised **Family Man** forward?*
- *How can you help us achieve this?*

The group notes and individual post-cards were used to prepare a summary report of the focus group findings and this has been made available internally, to funders and others. All these materials have been seen by the reviewer. They are competent, and the clearly-written report is a fair representation of group members' views, which provide thoughtful, practical suggestions about involving and communicating with relatives, the importance of effective inter-agency liaison, and follow-up evaluation work with leadership from NOMS and LSC. What the report does not do is to distinguish between the actual findings from the focus group discussions and the implications which Safe Ground drew from these. While the exercise was undoubtedly worthwhile, to ensure the complete credibility of such a venture in the future it might be advisable to involve or take advice from an experienced researcher

The findings from this focus group event were later drawn upon to inform a subsequent presentation given by the two Governors of HMPs Wandsworth and Belmarsh at the Prison Service conference, which Safe Ground staff attended, also enabling them to further their networking objective.

### 3.5 The Children and Families Pathway 6 Survey

As indicated in §3.2, communication and publicity for the two programmes constitute an objective which is, to some extent, met through **Network** contact via dissemination at various events, through email exchange, the Safe Ground website and so on. However, as part of the activity towards meeting this objective, it is also necessary to think strategically about marketing the programmes. As §1.3 demonstrates, the policy framework surrounding Safe Ground's work is both dense and challenging to unravel. It seemed to Safe Ground that the over-arching policy requirements might reasonably be expected to be located within the Children and Families Pathway, the sixth of the seven identified pathways to reducing re-offending (Home Office 2004, 2006). This Pathway is intended to cover all aspects of prison activity relating to children and families of prisoners. Three of its seven stated aims read as follows:

- *Maintain family relationships to prevent re-offending*
- *Encourage the inclusion of life skills, including parenting and relationship skills, within mainstream support for offenders*
- *Recognise that most prolific offenders are often those with the most challenging lifestyles who require additional help to maintain their family ties* (Home Office, 2006:40)

However, few would argue that Pathway 6 has been one of the least developed of the seven pathways to reducing re-offending, in that it was given no national overseeing sub-board nor terms of reference, in contrast to the other six pathways. In consequence, individual regions, and prisons within them, have found it difficult to locate other pathway work and, therefore, to operate in a 'joined-up' way or to harness cross-Government resources. In the interests of identifying how best to market its programmes to prisons, Safe Ground decided to investigate the ways in which the Pathway was being interpreted and implemented in a sample of prison establishments. This exercise is recounted here, both to highlight some original and possibly unique research on this topic, and to demonstrate, again, that Safe Ground is able to identify pressing questions about its programme take-up, and then to employ the appropriate means to answer such questions.

The Pathway 6 telephone survey was undertaken by the **Network** manager, and an interviewer appointed to assist her, on six designated research days during June 2008. Thirteen prisons from the **Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** were

selected on the basis of seven programmes running currently, five which had run them in the past, and one whose staff had attended the training but never actually delivered a programme. Pragmatically, it was also believed that making contact with these prisons through staff already known to Safe Ground would make access to the person leading the Pathway 6 work in each prison more likely and more straightforward. In the event, this did not prove to be the case, as the **Network** manager reports:

*The job description and responsibilities of the Pathway 6 leads in each prison varied a great deal: from Head of Resettlement who is responsible for implementing all 7 Pathways, to Teachers or Family Link Officers who were able to focus exclusively on Pathway 6 management. This means they have different amounts of time and interest to devote to this area of prison activity. In 5 cases we were not able to speak to the Pathway 6 lead: instead we spoke to one Head of Learning and Skills, one Curriculum Manager, two teachers, and a Head of Reducing Offending who delegated day to day management of P6 to a deputy.*

It was clear from questioning about Pathway 6, that a number of respondents either did not know or needed reminding what the nature of this pathway actually was. Although stating that it was important, many respondents were vague when asked to say why:

- *It has a role to play in resettlement*
- *It is very important for lifers*
- *It reduces re-offending*

Most were also unable to quantify the hours spent by staff on Pathway 6 activities or to name Pathway targets (which have not hitherto existed) other than in their personal action plans, which might entail delivering Safe Ground programmes, family visits, Story Book Dads etc. Monitoring of Pathway 6 activity via a range of audits was mentioned by some respondents. Education contractors were generally thought to value family relationships and parenting education, though one respondent spoke of a contractor who does not see a link between education and family relationships and thinks 'What's that got to do with me?'. There was uncertainty about the extent to which other accredited family relationships and parenting education courses were available in the prisons surveyed. However, there was a general belief that these courses were in the ascendant and that it was still important to have Basic Skills mapped to Safe Ground programmes, which were highly rated by these respondents.

Many of these findings engender scepticism about the extent of national or regional will to make Pathway 6 meaningful or workable, and this leaves those whose business is to develop, co-ordinate and deliver the relevant programmes

uncertain as to what Pathway 6 expectations are and how and whether supportive resources might be available to them. Having spoken to a range of people from different geographical locations and prison types, the **Network** manager reached the following conclusions:

- *Policy for this Pathway is open to the point of being vague, and not governed by targets or audit paths.*
- *There is great variation in understanding and implementation of Pathway 6 policy, and this can often depend on the staff member in charge, their workload and personal investment in Children and Families. Where there is an enthusiastic knowledgeable member of staff in place there is a lot of scope for initiative and creativity in the way the Pathway is implemented and this has great benefits to the prisoners. But this Pathway comes low on the list of priorities of some busy managers in charge of reducing re-offending. Some members of staff did not understand why they had been delegated responsibility for this Pathway nor did they want it.*
- *There seems to be very little funding available through this pathway, and what there is varies hugely at local level.*
- *There was a consensus of the importance of Children and Families in prisoners' lives, but not of how the prison is responsible for facilitating prisoners to address/nurture/build these relationships.*
- *We have no expectation of tapping into funding from this source, except through provision of officer hours in course delivery, and this is not governed by any obligation on the part of the prison, so has to be negotiated according to local individual prison policy.*

Overall, this investigation by the **Network** manager showed that, despite in theory an over-arching policy framework being provided for prison-based family relationship and parenting programmes, there was little mobilization of this Pathway at individual prison level and little hope of drawing upon it for funding to realize its objectives. As another of Safe Ground's managers observed, 'The Children and Families Pathway just isn't happening'. This is also a reminder that Safe Ground's decision of last year to explore the potential for accreditation as an offending behaviour programme may well constitute the most feasible way forward. In pursuit of this, the consultation described in this section towards the production of a 'Training the Trainers' manual, together with ongoing work with a well-known psychology academic to produce a theory manual, would appear to be the most sensible and realistic way to proceed over the coming year.

### 3.6 In summary

This section has reported on the way in which the **Fathers Inside/Family Man Network** has furthered its strategic objectives during the past year. The 2006-7 Review highlighted the difficulty for an organization which seeks to be evidence-based to spend disproportionate time on eliciting programme monitoring data which should really be produced routinely by programme teachers, who are mostly not given the time to do this. It suggested a move both to employing a specialist consultant in data management and analysis, and to the further exploration of offending behaviour accreditation which, among other things, would institutionalize this process. Resource shortages so far preclude the former, but some progress is being made towards the latter and should continue.

Training events continue to be inventive and popular with participants, though time off to attend them is clearly still a problem and, like data returns, probably still needs to be lobbied for. The involvement of experienced programme teachers, and the wider **Network** in the development of the 'Training the Trainers' manual has been a popular and intelligent stratagem to employ, showing that Safe Ground both values and can learn from its teachers.

Safe Ground, even though a small organization, has always been cognizant of the importance and value of good research. In 2007-8, it furthered its own ability to undertake monitoring and analyse training event evaluations, and has also demonstrated its capacity to conduct a survey on an important and central topic, and to run a focus group. In all cases, it has produced reports which read well, but should perhaps take research advice before trying new techniques in the future. Overall, however, its competence and increasing confidence show through this year in the important business of providing credible evidence for its performance and achievements.

## 4. Gaining evidence for effectiveness

### 4.1 The views of policy-makers and shapers

Six out of seven national 'players' from both statutory and voluntary sector settings relating to prisons, prisoner education, reducing re-offending, supporting families, and family learning responded to the invitation to comment for the Review on the developments in Safe Ground's work during 2007-8. The aim was to gain some insight into the knowledge and understanding of those who have oversight and influence in these policy areas and, indeed, have in some cases advocated the said developments. Their names and roles appear below, but comments are not directly attributed to them.

The respondents are as follows: Vivien Brandon, Strategy Lead for Offender Social Exclusion, Criminal Justice Group/Ministry of Justice; Frances Flaxington, Deputy Director, Partnership Strategy Unit, Ministry of Justice; Lucy Gampell, Director, Action for Prisoners' Families (APF); Rukhsana Hussain, Policy Advisor, Dept. for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); Sue O'Hara, Offender Learning Director, Learning and Skills Council; and Phil Wheatley, Director General, NOMS, Ministry of Justice.

All of these respondents were familiar with Safe Ground and its programmes. All said that they had seen either full or summary copies of one or more previous Reviews, though not all professed to be cognizant of the detail they contained. Respondents were given key findings from these Reviews, notably the high rates of programme completion and progression, and the positive response of relatives to the developing FAP work. When asked whether they viewed these developments as meeting the need for active family involvement, responses, were as follows:

*Not fully. Family involvement is limited by prison constraints, which I understand.*

*Yes (No explanation).*

*Yes. There is no doubt Safe Ground is seen as positive by prisoners, families and staff involved in it. The crunch issue is whether, given the cost of running the programme, the same resource invested elsewhere would produce a greater effect on reconviction.*

*Yes. We would say we need greater support for children and families.*



*Yes. There is general recognition that the partnership at HMP Wandsworth, led by Safe Ground has made significant progress in involving family members in the **Family Man** programme, and that this has involved a range of interventions including learning, planning, drama, family days, family support etc. NOMS is aiming to 'take stock' of what is needed to support the Children and Families Pathway across a range of family related interventions. It will therefore be reviewing this pathway, as part of the plans to improve operational policy across the reducing re-offending pathways and to ensure that appropriate activities are prioritised in line with resource constraints, so that delivery of key outcomes can be assured in prisons and probation. This will be one of the first areas to be reviewed and is due to be completed by April 2009.*

*Yes. It meets our objectives for support for vulnerable families, parenting support, and wider framework support links. But no-one owns prisons and families. The biggest challenge for Safe Ground is finding the right policy link. I do see these developments as appropriate, but the system challenges them. We have to accept that breaking new ground takes time.*

These responses serve to illustrate the tension which always surrounds the topics of prisoners and families when they are brought together. Some policy-makers have previously called for an increase in opportunities for prisoner/family learning, but when these are brought about (through the hard work and determination outlined in preceding sections), the associated difficulties and barriers tend to be raised anew. Cost, too, is an ever-present constraint. The review of the Children and Families Pathway described in the penultimate quotation is a reference to the document 'Working with the Third Sector to Reduce Reoffending' (Ministry of Justice and NOMS, 2008), described at **§1.3** above.

The issue of programme accreditation has also been of ongoing concern to Safe Ground, since it has sometimes been suggested that the current NOCN (National Open College Network) accreditation may no longer be the most appropriate one for *Family Man*. However, there were no respondents in this group who took that view, though one had a caveat (again about re-offending), one an explanation, one a suggestion, and one felt insufficiently knowledgeable about other forms of accreditation to answer :

*The NOCN is fine (2 respondents)*

*I suspect the concern here is really about how we manage the move to a new qualifications framework. Earlier LSC advice was that providers should consult NOCN about which of their products will end up on Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF).*

*Of course, awarding bodies operate in a commercial market, and will naturally have an eye towards which of their qualifications draw in the most learners. Therefore, there are likely to be more opportunities to take for funding via a mainstream qualification rather than seeking to develop/maintain something special for offenders. Except where the particular needs of delivery in a secure setting require it, we are not trying to do anything different for offenders than happens for mainstream learners. Clearly many offenders have complex learning needs that need to be sequenced carefully with their other offender management needs, but although the necessary personalisation of the learning offer is likely to be considerably more extensive for offenders than for 'ordinary' learners, the general approach of diagnosing learning needs and then addressing them is exactly the same.*

*The QCF is a broad initiative applying across all learning, introducing a new way of recognising skills and qualifications. It does this by awarding credit for qualifications and units (small steps of learning) that enables people to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes. As the framework represents a big change to current arrangements for qualifications, regulators have been asked to report on their tests and trials which they started in September 2006.*

*The accreditation is okay but does not produce evidence of effectiveness in reducing re-offending.*

*NOCN is appropriate. But I've encouraged Safe Ground to speak to the National Parenting Academy (which it has, in fact, recently done) as it will be necessary to develop a more extensive accreditation process for the future.*

The second response is the only one to address the uncertainty about the appropriateness of NOCN accreditation and affords an explanation of what developments might be expected in the future. The last 2 responses again demonstrate the difficulty of working to a jigsaw of policy agendas, all of which have to be interacted with for longer-term programme survival. The call for reducing re-offending evidence is reiterated.

Evidence of effectiveness of the Safe Ground programmes in terms of reducing re-offending has been cited by some policy-makers in the 2 previous Reviews as an exercise which Safe Ground and others need to undertake, if they are to be successful in obtaining core statutory funding. Respondents were informed about the follow-up graduate survey in which the organization is currently engaged (see §4.2 ), and further asked how they thought a voluntary organisation with funding difficulties could best demonstrate the longer-term effects of its programmes on families and on re-offending, which potential funders now tend to require:

*Issue men with a hotmail account and get them to give you permission to contact them – informed consent.*

*Probably by adopting a long-term research strategy, partnered with a good university department using Ph.D. students to do the research as their Ph.D. dissertation.*

*This is the most difficult issue for Safe Ground and all of us working with offenders and families. I don't think they can realistically, and are probably best to link their qualitative findings to larger research studies into the importance of 'healthy' families to outcomes for children and factors that desist people from re-offending.*

*It's difficult to get sound evidence for re-offending. We're waiting for the outcome of an economic appraisal of **Family Man** to show where it adds value and supports reducing re-offending.*

*Recognise that this is a challenge for the Third Sector generally, and many organisations have an identified need to develop skills in measuring the outcomes of their work, including to demonstrate value to funders and commissioners. MoJ Analytical Services are commissioning a toolkit for providers of offenders' services on monitoring and demonstrating effectiveness and outcomes. We are also looking to ensure organisations working with offenders and their families benefit from the infrastructure funding given to Clinks, Action For Prisoners Families and the Reducing Re-offending Arts Alliance etc to support business the evidence base and shared learning. (see Ministry of Justice and NOMS, 2008). We recognise that part of the problem has been a lack of clarity about what outcomes are required i.e. 'what commissioners really want'. MoJ and NOMS have commissioned an economic appraisal of family related learning which will include Family Man to help fill this lacuna – and will include any findings from the Family Man follow-up sample. NOMS-led work on specifications for the Children and Families Pathway and other pathways is obviously highly relevant.*

*The call for hard evidence has become very prominent. Family output evidence is much more difficult to measure. We're looking at what we can do to build an evidence base. It's a big time-line and we're not always clear about what we need. RCTs (randomised control trials) are way above people's budgets. But we say, go out there, be pro-active, engage across Whitehall, have a discussion with us.*

Essentially, these responses accept that the provision of hard evidence is a difficult demand to meet, especially for a small voluntary organization. RCTs, which provide the best chance of reliable evidence, are indeed expensive as well as complex to support. Practical suggestions such as the hotmail account and involvement of Ph.D. students are not without merit, and might be worth

investigating, but essentially nothing on a major scale is going to happen unless it receives substantial funding, backed by a statutory sector which is prepared to take it seriously. Nonetheless, things have advanced somewhat this year, in terms of one department inviting discussion, and another having undertaken an economic appraisal, the outcome of which is due towards the end of 2008.

Finally, this group of respondents was asked for any other comment they would wish to make about their experience of Safe Ground. Four chose to respond to this:

*I've visited the programme at Wandsworth. I thought it was very effective in bringing people together from all walks of life. It had changed prisoners' perceptions of parenting. They had learnt, even though they hadn't been parented properly themselves. We need more system change, not just for prisoners but for families and children, to offer a seamless service that is simple but effective.*

*It's a good programme that supports a family approach and involves partners, but also sets itself up in terms of skills and OLASS. Do you do Children and Families or OLASS?*

*The programme is still very vulnerable in my opinion – one strong leader, but others are weaker. In my encounters with them, it's been her persistence that has kept things going and I wonder what would happen to Safe Ground if for some reason she wasn't there anymore.*

*Previous reviews have already reflected the excellent work Safe Ground has done in promoting this intervention, their flexibility in working with Prison Service and other partners in what can be a difficult operational context and their knowledge and skills in reflecting what prisoners felt about being an opportunity to improve family links. But excellence worth stressing again I think!*

This small cluster of additional comments again demonstrates the tensions between policy areas and again highlights the seeming need to choose between policies in which to locate the programme, rather than advocate the 'joined-up' thinking which would appear to be needed if the programme's educative role is to be material in building prisoner self-esteem and confidence, which adult learning theory has shown leads to building blocks of achievement which, in themselves better equip a prisoner to lead an alternative life to offending (see Rogers, 2002). The penultimate comment, however, is surprising in light of all the other evidence that all Safe Ground staff are almost universally respected and valued, but it is setting-specific and does not refer to the 'coalface' prison work, where the other staff show their qualities without their 'leader' being present. The last comment shows knowledge of the hard work Safe Ground has done to

reach the point it is now at in its partnership work to improve links between prisoner and families, and characterizes this work in terms of 'excellence'.

Overall, the comments from this respondent group generally indicate that they rate the programme, and include pieces of advice for the stability of its future development. In this connection, the next section of the Review provides some evidence from the follow-up survey of programme graduates referred to above.

#### **4.2 The follow-up survey of 211 *Family Man* graduates**

This section provides some selected data relating to this survey, which at the time of writing, remains to be completed because of security requirements and the need for further cross-referencing for reliability, though the intention is to present it to NOMS and DCSF for analysis in the autumn of 2008. At present it does not contain control group information. The rationale for the survey is described by Safe Ground as follows:

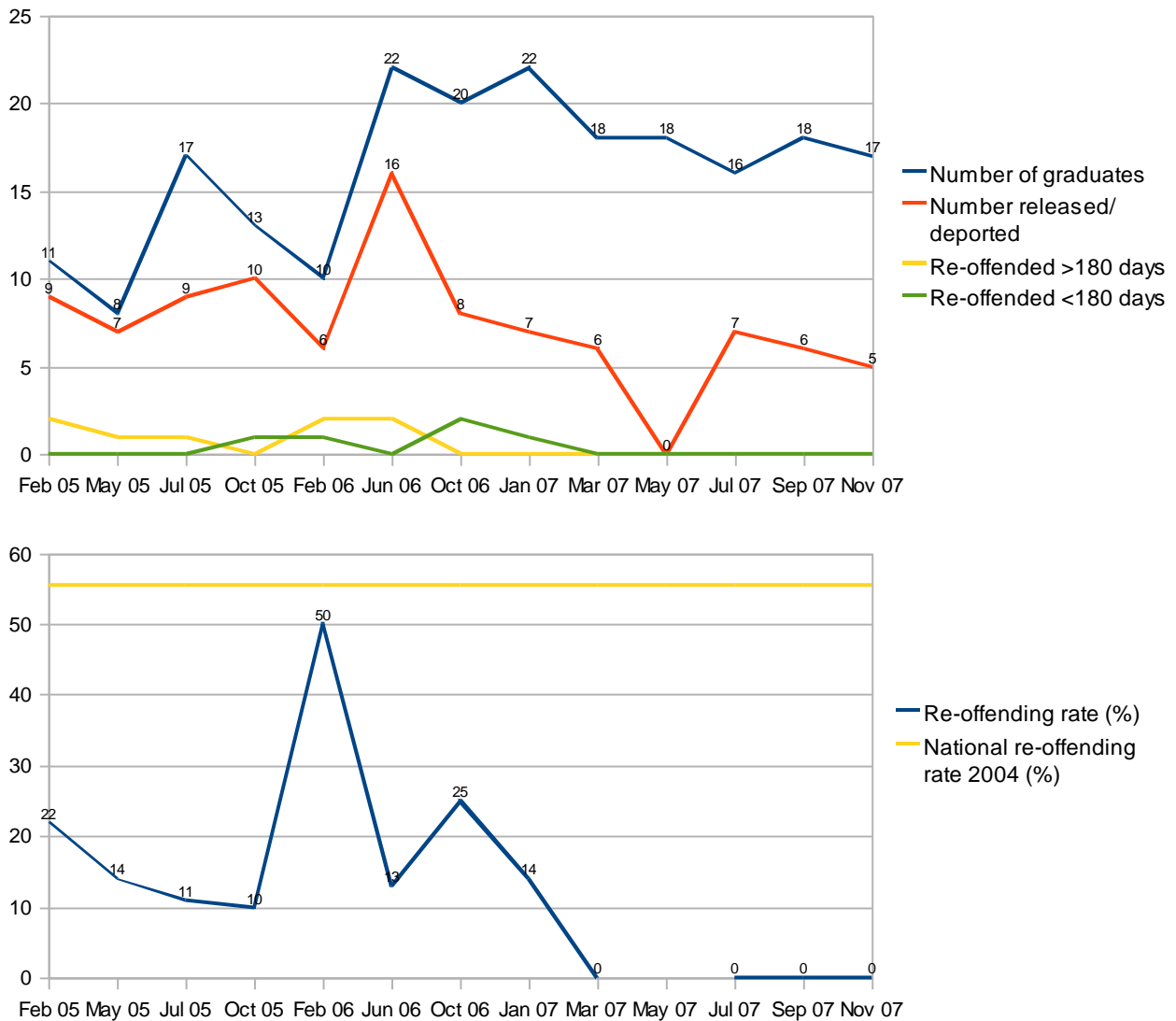
'We used our time at HMP Wandsworth to improve our methods of collecting and analysing information relating to prisoner participation and what happens to graduates following FM completion.

We collected detailed information relating to the offences, backgrounds and intervention, employment and education history pre and post FM for 211 prisoners who graduated from FM for the period June 2005 – March 2008. In addition we have established a control group of an additional 60 prisoners who were recruited onto FM, but who did not ultimately take part in the programme. The aim of this project is two-fold. Firstly to demonstrate to NOMS that it is possible for a voluntary sector organisation responsible for managing a parenting and family ties intervention to collect detailed information relating to a prisoner's behaviour pre and post course. Secondly, to provide evidence that the behaviour of a FM graduate, whilst he is in prison, improves following his completion of FM. This evidence can be used to support our case that FM should be commissioned and supported as a Foundation Programme – one enables offenders to learn behaviours that start the process of change. It is essential to recognise that the involvement of a prisoner's family members acts as an incentive to the participant to change'.

The most relevant data for review purposes are contained in the following 3 tables, which represent re-offending rates for released men and 'before and after' *Family Man* prison adjudication rates for 211 men who graduated from the programme at Wandsworth from 2005-2007 inclusive. It is important to note that the re-offending rates emanate from the prison's LIDS (Local Inmate Data System) and ILS (Internal Inmate System) which are not completely reliable due to incompleteness and error (Collins, 2008), but at least begin to provide a steer

on this vexed issue. Adjudication rates are taken from prison records. (Local Inmate Database System) and the IIS system (Internal Inmate System).

**Tables 1 and 2: Re-offending rates of 211 released *Family Man* graduates '05-'07**



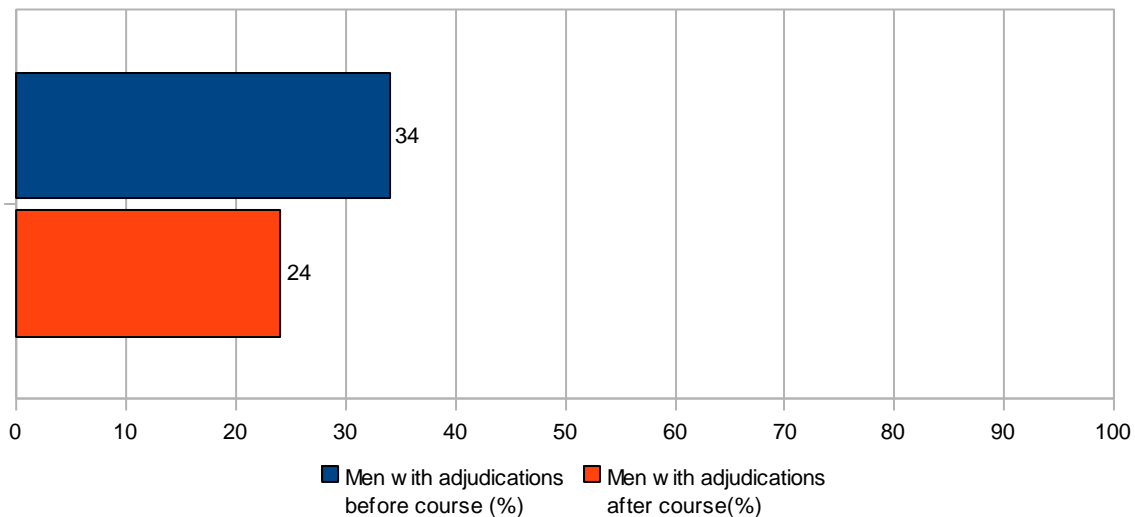
**Table 1** above shows the number of *Family Man* graduates over the 4 quarters of 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. It shows in parallel the number of men released or deported over those same periods, depicting a sharp drop in the latter from June 2006 onwards, which might reflect, for example, men serving longer sentences graduating from the programme. It can be seen that very low numbers who were released re-offended within the first 6 months, and very slightly more beyond that 6 months (though the data do not clarify the period of follow-up of the latter). However, it is also notable that there was no recorded re-offending in under 6 months by men released between February and July 2005 and March and November 2007; nor in excess of 6 months by men released between March and

November 2007. However, there is no control group to compare these findings with at this stage.

**Table 2** above compares the percentage re-offending rate of *Family Man* graduates with that of the national prisoner re-offending rate in 2004. Clearly the period of comparison is not quite the same, but the graph does provide some guide as to the difference. Only in the middle of 2006 did the re-offending rates of *Family Man* graduates reach anything approaching that of the national 2004 rate. For most of the period 2005-7, it stayed well below that rate.

**Table 3** below shows the percentage of men with adjudications acquired 6 months before and 6 months after the course. They were all in prison both 6 months before and 6 months after the course.

**Table 3: *Family Man* graduates '05-'07 with adjudications before and after course completion**



In short, as this bar chart shows, there is a 10% reduction in prison adjudications in the 6 months after the men completed the *Family Man* programme. Bearing in mind all the stated caveats, it seems possible cautiously to conclude that attending this programme made a contribution to reducing the anti-social and offending behaviour of these men.

### 4.3 Future plans

The previous section has provided some examples of the work Safe Ground is currently engaged in to try and meet the pervading demand for evidence relating to changed behaviour and re-offending rates following completion of the *Family Man* programme. This is challenging and much work remains to be done over the coming year, but is demonstrating the efforts that a small organisation, with its limited staffing resources is willing and able to make. Ideally, if resources

could be found, a full-time data manager would be appointed to handle this and the routine program data collection. In terms of the continued development of the revised *Family Man* programme, further trials are planned in a range of prisons to gain further evidence of what is needed in terms of prison liaison, staff training and so on, to ensure that the programme works effectively wherever it takes place. It is planned that the **Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** will develop its marketing strategy aimed at increasing the number of prisons delivering *Family Man*. If further funding becomes available, a parallel revision process for *Fathers Inside* will also be embarked upon. Also during the coming year, a final over-arching review will be produced of the work of Safe Ground over the last three years.

As the Director of Safe Ground has observed, 2007-8 has been a challenging year for Safe Ground. They have been absorbed in programme revision, **Network** development and striving to produce outcome evidence. It has taken most of the year to set up round-table meetings with NOMS, DCSF, OLSU, OLASS and others in order to gain advice on future programme commissioning arrangements and movement on an economic appraisal of *Family Man*.

*Safe Ground has a fantastic team of very dedicated women who don't give up and are truly committed to make things work. We have achieved so much in the development work and continue to be there for the teachers who deliver the programmes and to give them the confidence to overcome the challenges they face. They appreciate hearing about all the developments and having a chance to contribute to them.*

*We lead by example and we put our hands up if we've got it wrong. We have high standards within the prison system. So when we train the trainers, we realise you have to get the right people. We'd really like to spend some time working out just what kind of teachers are needed, but getting funders and the Prison Service to see this is pretty difficult.*

*We've spent so long trying to get round-table meetings set up to try and establish whether we've done enough now to get the programme commissioned as an offending behaviour programme. We can't keep asking charitable foundations to fund something NOMS and the others won't make a commitment on. If we get to the end of the current funding period without a decision being made, we'll just have to present the new programme manuals to the Prison Service and accept that we've done everything possible but we've gone as far as we can go.*

Since this interview was conducted, and into the new review year of 2008-9, a round-table meeting was convened in early August 2008, its brief being 'to discuss Safe Ground's proposal for joint NOMS/LSC and DCSF commissioning of *Family Man* as the first educational offending behaviour programme and strategic management of the programme from the centre'. As it was not part of the present review period, it will not be discussed in detail here, but it is important to know first that NOMS and LSC indicated that they could not commit funding in the way proposed by Safe Ground. However, it



was agreed that the commissioning of the economic appraisal would be taken forward by early autumn that Safe Ground should consider how it is promoting its interventions under the Children and Families Pathway, and the implications of the QCF modular approach being developed for 2009/10 with NOCN. In fact, it has since been established that the *Family Man* programme meets QCF requirements, and is therefore fundable under LSC rules, if providers wish to use the programme. A meeting has further been convened with NOMS 'to discuss how *Family Man* might be covered by the work of the Reducing Re-Offending Operational Policy and Third Sector Partnerships Unit, to specify activities across the pathways, so that delivery of key outcomes can be assured in prisons and probation'. This refers to ways in which a Children and Families Pathway intervention such as *Family Man* might seek to show that they support other pathway outcomes which could lead to reductions in re-offending, rather than continue to strive to produce such direct evidence themselves. Therefore, after a great deal of effort to bring these discussions about, there is movement, though much of it remains slow.

#### **4.4 In summary**

This section has considered the issue of Safe Ground's need to provide evidence of the effectiveness of its work in terms of reducing re-offending. It has set out the views of policy-makers and shapers, some of whose departments have previously pressed for such evidence as an implicit pre-requisite for funding. This group in general expressed positive views about Safe Ground and its work and something of a revised understanding of the difficulties it faces in providing the evidence that has been called for. Information has been presented which shows that Safe Ground nevertheless continues to go to some lengths to provide such evidence within its own limited resources and, with some caveats, has produced findings which cautiously suggest some post-programme reduction in both re-offending and adjudication rates.

The challenges for organisational leadership, where an intense programme of development has been taking place on all fronts, and progress on trying to establish core funding frustratingly slow, have been immense. However, as the latter part of the previous section shows, some movement began to take place in the review period beyond the present one, to the extent that it is now known that the programme is LSC-fundable, and that a realistic consideration of the evidence provision issue will now take place.

## **5. Summary and implications of the 2007-8 Review**

The purpose of this review has been to examine the developments made by Safe Ground in its revision of the *Family Man* programme during the period 2007-8. This section reiterates the specific questions being asked and summarises the answers and implications to be drawn from the foregoing sections.

### **5.1 Developments to meet service users' needs**

Prisoners and their relatives/supporters have constituted Safe Ground's service user clientele during the revision process of *Family Man*. Findings from the newly developed lesson formats, and from interviews with prisoners and their relatives/supporters, have confirmed that these developments are both appreciated and meet their joint needs for identifying the type and degree of movement along the seven pathways that can lead to reducing re-offending. This successful development process provides a model for a similar process in respect of *Fathers Inside*, if the funding becomes available to undertake this work.

### **5.2 Developments to provide opportunities for *Family Man* students at HMP Wandsworth to apply their programme learning**

The developments in the revised programme have enabled *Family Man* students to add to their prison-based learning and achievements through an active joint consideration process, via written and verbal exchange with a nominated relative/supporter, as to how they need to change and move on. Student suggestions have also been fed in to the process, in order to ensure that the new proposals for the application of their learning prove realistic and relevant. Safe Ground has built, here, on its tradition of incorporating prisoner views into its programmes as they develop and, again this affords a model for *Fathers Inside*.

### **5.3 Developments to work in partnership with other agencies to continue improving the *Family Man* programme**

Through choosing to work with specialists from four relevant agencies, Safe Ground has been able to take advice and constructive criticism on board so that, for example, games and exercises are structured in an appropriate way, and there are guidelines for crucial programme ingredients such as child protection and for group behaviour. All consultants were positive and complimentary in

their written reports and their interviews about the experience of working together with Safe Ground staff to enhance the quality of the programme. This process has built on Safe Ground's productive experience of working in partnership with PACT and, although it has resource implications, is clearly a model of development worth continuing with in the interests of promoting best practice.

#### **5.4 Developments to ensure the *Family Man* programme meets NOMS and LSC objectives**

During this year, Safe Ground has followed up 211 *Family Man* graduates in an effort to show (with modest success) that there was a post-programme reduction in prison adjudications and re-offending over a 6 month+ period. Although it took some time to bring about, and did not take place during the 2007-8 review year, a round-table meeting was finally convened in the summer of 2008, and was able to offer some clarification of what was and was not possible. As a consequence, Safe Ground now knows that it meets LSC objectives, and is due to be offered guidance on how to show, through cross-pathway activity, that it can meet NOMS reducing re-offending objectives. Clearly, this will be a further piece of work for the organisation to address, but it should certainly also preserve its longstanding commitment to obtaining evidence of all kinds in relation to the effectiveness of its programmes and associated activity (ideally seeking specialist advice along the way) since this enables a continuing focus on the longer-term purpose of its endeavours.

#### **5.5 Developments to continue improving and enhancing communications with the Safe Ground Family Man/Fathers Inside Network**

The **Network** furthered its strategic objectives this year, firstly by continuing its efforts to collect and collate monitoring data, but confirming in the process that in the absence of it being made a requirement upon prison-based teachers, specialist assistance is ideally needed to conduct this work comprehensively. Secondly, the **Network** continued to show its strengths in training programme teachers, and employed innovative methods to draw on their experience and knowledge to help develop the 'Training the Trainers' Manual. It also drew on the expertise of a Psychology academic to assist in the development of a Theory Manual. Thirdly, the **Network** also engaged in some research to elicit information from prisons about their operation of the Children and Families Pathway. Safe Ground's qualities of persistence, valuing the experience of others, and willingness to engage in innovative processes are manifest in the activities of the **Network**, and the work of the organisation will clearly always benefit from the injection of these qualities into its developments.

#### **5.6 The overall conclusion of the 2006-7 Review:**

The evidence has been set out and summarized here in terms of the documentary and programme data, consultant, prison and Safe Ground staff interviews relating to the *Family Man* programme revisions in **Section 2**; the documentation on the focus group, the Children and Families Pathway survey, relative and Safe Ground staff interview data relating to the **Safe Ground Family Man/Fathers Inside Network** in **Section 3**; and the national 'players' interview data, the Safe Ground *Family Man* follow-up survey, and its future plans relating to development and evidence of effectiveness in **Section 5**. It leads to the following conclusion.

## 6. Conclusion

This is the third annual Review of Safe Ground's activity and development. The foregoing evidence reflects a continuing pattern of clearly-set objectives, which the year's activity has not only met, but met in depth and with a strong commitment to the professional development of its own staff and its **Network** members in the process. Prisoner and relative/supporters confirm that they have been given new and relevant learning experiences, knowledge and skills. They, prison staff and consultants all testify to Safe Ground's professionalism and dedication to their work, which at least some see as a model for their own practice. Problems and criticisms have not been absent, but they have been both addressed and valued by those receiving them. Evidence has continued to be gathered, with new and innovative methods being drawn upon to produce it. All of these ingredients have worked to the overall benefit of the *Family Man* programme and those most closely involved with it.

Thus, Safe Ground has not only undertaken a pioneering role to develop this work, but it has done so in such a way as to make a real contribution in capacity-building through its development of training and manuals for trainers, and in finding enterprising ways to test and improve the effectiveness of revisions for diverse groups of participants. In conclusion, the following quotation from the partner of one of the *Family Man* graduates who had taken part in the revised programme, serves to highlight the importance of the work which has been conducted during 2007-8:

*He's never written me letters like this before, really opening out, telling me all he was learning, telling me things he thought I ought to know about bringing up children. But then he was talking about how we needed to agree on these things and do them together so that would help him to stop getting into trouble. I was a bit sceptical at first, he's made so many promises before. But then we did that scoring thing and I was so impressed, he sounded really intelligent about it, saying things I wish he'd said years ago. Those tutors and the staff on the FAP visits, they made him feel like he could be something*

*more than an offender and they made me feel like there's some hope for us as a family at last.*

## List of Tables

**Table 1: Re-offending rates (%) of released *Family Man* graduates '05-'07**

**Table 2: Re-offending rates(%) of released *Family Man* graduates '05-'07 as against the national re-offending rate 2004**

**Table 3: *Family Man* graduates '05-'07 with adjudications before and after programme completion**

## Appendix 1

### List of establishments running 'Family Man' and/or 'Fathers Inside' in 2007/8

ESTABLISHMENT	NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES RUN APRIL 2007 - AUGUST 2008		
HMP Ashwell			1
HMP Aylesbury			2
HMP Belmarsh			5
HMP Birmingham			2
HMP Bristol			3
HMP& R/C Cardiff			2 (1 FM + 1 FI)
HMP Channings Wood			7 (Figures not differentiated)
HMP & YOI Chelmsford			1
HMYOI Deerbolt			1
HMP Durham			1
HMP Exeter			3 (2 FM + 1 FI)
HMP & YOI Guy's Marsh			1
HMP Highpoint			3
HMP Leeds			2
HMP & YOI Lewes			1
HMP The Mount			2
HMYOI & R/C Onley			1
HMYOI Rochester			2
HMP Stafford			2
HMP Swaleside			2
HMYOI Swinfen Hall			1
HMP Wandsworth			5
HMP Winchester			2
<b>TOTAL PRISONS 23</b>	<b>TOTAL PROGS.</b>		<b>52 (+ 2 prisons with no data)</b>
<b>Colour Key:</b>	<b>Fathers Inside (13+ deliveries)</b>	<b>Family Man (32+deliveries)</b>	<b>Both programmes</b>
<b>Abbreviation Key:</b> R/C = Remand Centre      YOI = Young Offender Institution			

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