

Update

nepacs

Supporting a positive future
for prisoners and their families

Summer 2018

New Prison Welcome Centre opens its doors

On Friday 18 May 2018 a new Welcome Centre opened its doors for the first time at HMP Kirklevington.

HMP Kirklevington Grange is a Category D men's and young offenders open prison near Yarm which is primarily for those intending to settle on release in the North East.

The Welcome Centre is a successful partnership project with the youth homelessness charity Centrepont, HMP Kirklevington Grange and Nepacs collaborating to create a unique facility to make family and friends feel safe and comfortable as they visit their loved ones. It will also provide a warm, dry, shelter from the elements for families who may travel many miles to visit a relative at the prison, and will provide lots of advice and information on a range of topics.

The project got off the ground with thanks to funding received by Centrepont from HMP Kirklevington Grange and the Tees and Wear Prisons Group.

The aim of the Welcome Centre project, as well as providing a welcome space for visitors, is to give men due for release an opportunity to put into practice training they have received around roles in the hospitality and service sectors – including reception and general customer service skills. They will also be trained to support families around housing and homelessness issues.



Sally Orlopp (Centrepont's Director of People, Skills and Employability), Angie Petit (Governor of HMP Kirklevington Grange), Helen Attewell (CEO of Nepacs) and Michael Glenn (Head of Skills Development at Centrepont)

The Welcome Centre will run according to an operations manual, co-written with prison staff and prisoners, with every aspect of the daily routine set out to support the development of important employability skills.

Nepacs volunteers will work alongside the men due for release and provide part of the welcome for families, and will be able to promote some of the opportunities which HMP Kirklevington Grange provides to strengthen family ties, such as family days, family learning and the 'Heading Home' programme to support release planning.

Helen Attewell, Nepacs CEO said: "I am delighted that Centrepont and HMPPS have been able to create a new facility for families of prisoners

visiting HMP Kirklevington. Although these family members will probably have had experience of prison visits elsewhere, they still have support needs and our volunteers are looking forward to working in partnership to ensure that their visits are as pleasant and stress free as possible."

Angie Petit, Governor of HMP Kirklevington said: "Strengthening family ties and community support is one of my priorities at HMP Kirklevington Grange, as the men that we release tell us this helps them rehabilitate successfully into communities and to live law abiding lives. I am really pleased with the partnerships that we are developing in the prison and throughout the North East, as this can and does positively change lives."

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Winner 2015 North East Charity Awards
VONNE Award for Uniquely North East



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Celebrating 25 years at HMP Northumberland



On 30 April 2018 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the official opening of the visitors' centre at HMP Northumberland.

The visitors' centre, run by Nepacs, was officially opened on 29 April 1993 by HRH The Princess Royal in what was HMP Acklington, a category C men's prisons, located near the village of Acklington. In 2011 Acklington was merged with the local young offenders institution HMYOI Castington into the newly named HMP Northumberland, which is now run

by Sodexo as a category C prison that caters for adult male offenders.

Nepacs' staff and volunteers now welcome around 29,000 visitors each year at the HMP Northumberland centre and also provide support for prisoners with family issues.

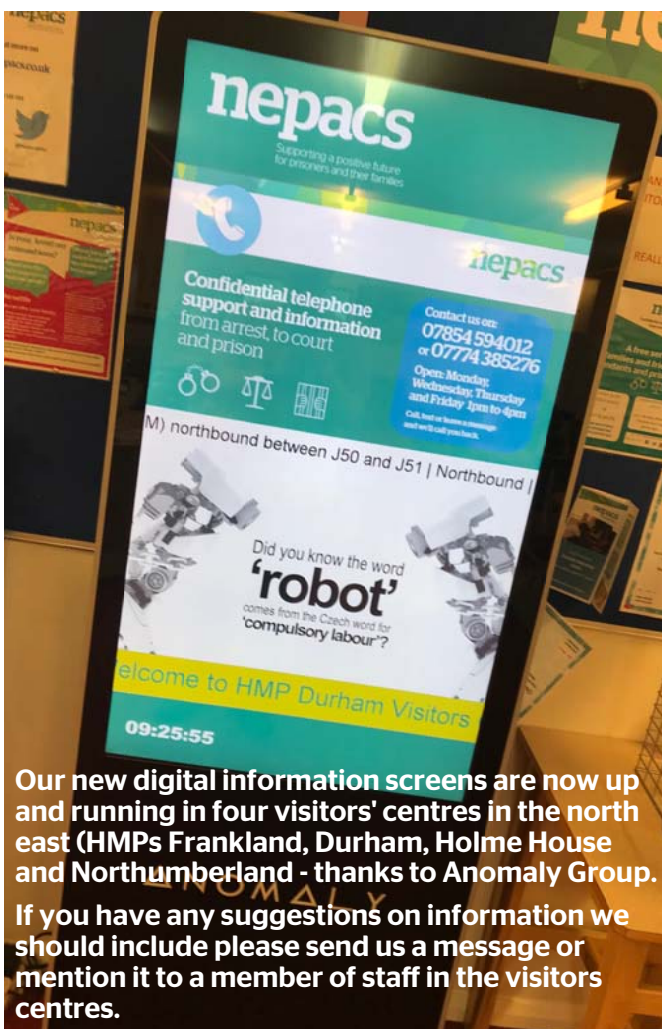
The anniversary was celebrated with a birthday cake and joining in the celebrations were staff from the prison, the High Sheriff of Northumberland and Nepacs' staff and volunteers past and present. Some of the centre's long serving volunteers were also recognised for their hard work and dedication, including one lady who has volunteered for around 40 years at the prison, originally with the WRVS in the visits hall tea bar and then with Nepacs, and others who have volunteered for over 25 years.

Visitors' centre team leader, Liz Arthur said: "The centre has undergone many changes over the years since it opened. We continue to look at ways to improve the services and facilities we provide

for visiting families and to make the difficult experience of visiting a prison as easy and painless as possible. Our staff and volunteers take pride in going the extra mile to offer help and support."

The birthday celebrations took place alongside a volunteer open day for anyone interested in volunteering.

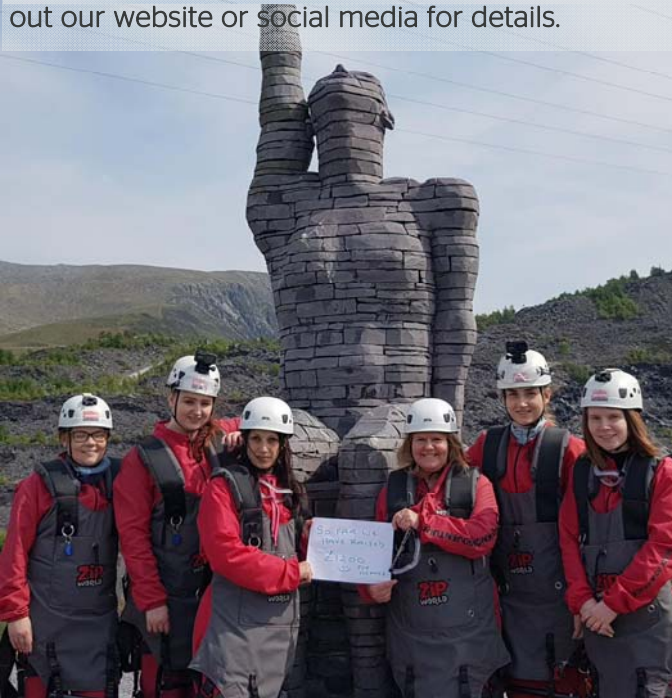
Further details of all volunteer opportunities with Nepacs are on their website www.nepacs.co.uk or by contacting Emma Price, volunteer coordinator on 0191 3757278.



Our new digital information screens are now up and running in four visitors' centres in the north east (HMPs Frankland, Durham, Holme House and Northumberland - thanks to Anomaly Group.

If you have any suggestions on information we should include please send us a message or mention it to a member of staff in the visitors centres.

On 21 May an amazing team took to the heights of Wales on the Velocity zip wire to help raise funds for Nepacs. Well done to Sandi Long, Ruth Bibbings, Sarah Stokes, Mary Barnard, Sam Clark & Selina Royal from Holme House Prison & Visitor Centre. They have so far raised over £1,260 thanks to all the donations received. If you would like to donate please visit their fundraising page—check out our website or social media for details.



Visitors have their say on strengthening family ties and visit services

Our annual Visitors' Voice event took place 6 March 2018 and we were delighted to welcome prison staff and a team from the national Assisted Prison Visits Unit.

The Visitors' Voice event included discussions on: how to improve services for families at north east prisons to help strengthen family ties, and how to improve the Assisted Prison Visits scheme and make it more accessible for all families/friends visiting prisons.

Everyone also took part in a taster session of the Connect 5 wellbeing training that we are currently offering to Nepacs' and prison staff in our area. The families and ex-prisoners, as well as the staff in attendance, all agreed that Connect 5 provided them with useful tools to help them cope with difficult situations.

Thank you to everyone that attended the event. Your input and feedback is very valuable to us and we will certainly look to make best use of all of the comments, thoughts and suggestions you have made.

During March visitors to north east prisons also completed our annual visitor satisfaction survey. The results are now in and we will be discussing them with the prisons and our teams to see where improvements can be made to the visit experience. Thank you to everyone who gave us their feedback.



91% of visitors felt that their experience of visiting made a significant difference in helping maintain family ties

88% thought Nepacs helped reduce the stress of visits

92% of visitors thought the atmosphere in visitor centres was warm and welcoming

Youth project awards, trips, drama and more!

The youth project has had a very busy few months. In addition to external trips and involvement in family visits they have also been involved in a number of events:

- In February a group of young people met Phil Hodgson (Head of Education) and Christine Stonehouse (Leadership Review Adviser) from Durham County Council as part of the **Takeover Challenge**. The event allowed young people to share their experience of having a parent in prison. It included the good practice some schools show but also identified changes that schools can make to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils with parents in prison. The council are now working on a plan that will help schools in Durham provide better support for their pupils.
- On 15 March 2018 Joe Iancu and three young people attended the **County Durham High Sheriff Awards 2018** and were delighted to come away with an award and

cheque for £500. On 21 March they also attended the **Northumberland High Sheriff awards**.

- From 6 - 8 April a group of nine young people went on a **residential trip** to Kingswood, Northumberland.
- On 11 April the youth project partnered with Trilby Cat Theatre to deliver a **drama workshop** where young people used imagination and creativity to solve various problems.

Nepacs has also successfully secured funding from the Wellesley Trust towards establishing a **youth project at HMP Northumberland**. This is in addition to £750 awarded by the Northumberland High Sheriff towards developing a youth zone (now open) at the Visitors' Centre for young people aged 8 - 18. We are delighted that thanks to this funding a new youth worker, Kayleigh Nugent, has now started work at the centre.



NEPACS NOTICEBOARD



Well done to Jess McKinley and Karen Johnson who were highly commended at the Tees & Wear Reform Prisons Staff Awards (22 March) for their work as family support workers in HMP Kirklevington or Deerbolt.



Thank you to Bean Bag Bazaar for their donation of bean bags and cushions which we are planning to use in our youth zones at prison visitors' centres.



The children visiting HMP Durham on 19 May 2018 got involved in the Royal Wedding celebrations by drawing their own pictures of Prince Harry and Meghan on their wedding day.



Thank you to Billingham Foodbank for supplying 11 toiletry packs to our departure lounge at HMP Holme House in April. These packs are given to prisoners, who have absolutely nothing, on the day of their release from the prison.



The team at HMP Deerbolt's visitors centre joined in with the Royal Wedding celebrations with their own take on the wedding cake and a beautiful handcrafted crown!



It is an end of an era! Martin Kesterton from the Holme House visitor centre team has now retired after over 10 years of volunteering. Martin was a fantastic volunteer, who embodied all the Nepacs values and he will be greatly missed.



In March our team at HMP Kirklevington said farewell to one of their long standing volunteers, Mavis Roberts (back right). Mavis volunteered for 10 years and was a great asset to the team. We would like to wish her well in the future and thank her for all her hard work.

Get in touch

If you have comments or suggestions for future issues of Update please get in touch with Tina Young by emailing tyoung@nepacs.co.uk or telephone 0191 332 3810.

For more information on the work of Nepacs visit: www.nepacs.co.uk

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