

**The Nurturing Programme in Foston Hall:
piloting the full programme**
An evaluative commentary

A Report for Family Links

Jonathan Nicholls
Research Consultant

April 2006

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 History of the Foston Hall pilot	
1.2 The four changes to the Foston Hall pilot	
1.3 Aims of this commentary	
1.4 Structure of this report	
2. Considering the aims in more detail	8
2.1 Aim 1: lessons from the four central changes to the Foston Hall pilot	
2.2 Aim 2: assessing the content, structure and duration of the programme	
2.3 Aim 3: how the prison context supports the Nurturing Programme	
2.4 Aim 4: identifying the support needs of the facilitators	
3. Setting up the pilot	15
3.1 The initial contact with Foston Hall	
3.2 Engaging the prison	
3.3 Contrasts with Styal	
Recommendations from Chapter 3	18
4. Delivering the course in Foston Hall	20
4.1 Delivering the full intensity of the programme	
4.2 New elements of the course	
4.3 Encouraging participants to "have a go"	
4.4 Supporting the participants and managing risk	
4.5 Delivering accreditation in a prison setting	
Recommendations from Chapter 4	27
5. The impact of the four programme changes	28
5.1 Overview of course	
5.2 Running the "full" programme	
5.3 Practicing the skills and strategies	
5.4 Can the programme be delivered just by external facilitators?	
5.5 Issues arising from accreditation	
Recommendations from Chapter 5	44
6. Further key lessons from Foston Hall	46
6.1 The structure and duration of the course	
6.2 The prison context	
6.3 Facilitator support needs	
Recommendations from Chapter 6	57
7. Engaging with the prison service	59
7.1 Communicating and marketing the programme	
7.2 Broadening the appeal of the programme	
7.3 Other models for rolling out the Nurturing Programme	
Recommendations from Chapter 7	64
8. Conclusions and key messages	65
Summary of Recommendations	67
Appendix 1: Overview of the course run in Foston Hall	71
Appendix 2: Overview of methodology	73

About this report

This study was commissioned by Family Links, who ran the Nurturing Programme pilot in Foston Hall. It was conducted by Jonathan Nicholls, a freelance research consultant with experience in the fields of mental health and criminal justice, who also authored this report. The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the author, based on the findings to emerge from the interviews and fieldwork conducted for this study.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the two Programme Directors at Family Links; and the staff at HMP Foston Hall, particularly the Head of Learning and Skills who arranged the field visit itinerary.

Particular thanks are due to the women of Foston Hall who gave up half an hour of their Nurturing Programme to answer questions for this study.

The time that all made available for interviews, and the feedback they completed, have been invaluable in producing this report, and it is hoped their views are accurately reported in the following pages.

This project was first conceived when the author worked for the Mental Health Foundation, and their support is also acknowledged

1. Introduction

1.1 History of the Foston Hall pilot

Family Links is a national charity in the UK that both advocates and provides training in emotional literacy for parents and children. The principles they work to are described in *The Parenting Puzzle*¹, and are put into practice with families through their training course, the Nurturing Programme. Traditionally they have run this programme in schools and community settings, but Family Links has also been active in seeking other settings for the course, particularly settings where there are high levels of need around parenting skills.

In the summer of 2005, Family Links were involved in piloting a version of the Nurturing Programme in Styal Prison in Cheshire. This programme was jointly facilitated by a Family Links Director and a Family Learning Coordinator from the prison service. Family Links commissioned an evaluative study of the Styal pilot, and this drew out a range of recommendations and lessons for translating the course from a community to a prison setting².

One of the key issues to emerge from the Styal evaluation related to the nature of the course itself. This had been adapted in a number of ways compared with community-based courses including:

- less time being given to encouraging course participants to reflect on their own experiences and how this affected their parenting styles
- little emphasis being placed on practicing the new skills being learned between sessions
- greater use of videos to make some of the learning points
- there was less emphasis on some aspects of the language used in the Nurturing Programme; and some of the exercises were done in a briefer form than occurs in community groups

These changes had been made largely based on the advice of the facilitator from the prison service based on her experience of working in the prison setting, and were underpinned by some important reasons:

- most importantly, the women had very little access to their children, so there was not the opportunity to practice their new skills with them
- prisoners spend much of their time locked up in their cells with little to distract them; there was a concern that if they were encouraged to reflect too deeply on their past, this could be distressing for them
- for pragmatic reasons, the course was run over five full day sessions (rather than ten half days in the community); it was felt that delivering the course in its full intensity would be too much for the participants, so there was a need to lighten the course, for instance with videos
- some of the language and exercises in the course were felt to be inappropriate for this client group

Family Links acknowledged these arguments, and were content to run the course in this modified form. The course was well received, both by the mothers who took part, and also by the education staff in Styal prison. Furthermore, the pilot generated a number of important

¹ *The Parenting Puzzle*, Candida Hunt (2003), ISBN 0-9544709-0-7

² *The Nurturing Programme: a prison based pilot*, Jonathan Nicholls, Mental Health Foundation (September 2005), available through Family Links

lessons emerged, both about how to deliver such a course in a prison setting, and about the training and support needs for facilitators delivering the course in a prison.

However, the modifications to the course remained a point of debate throughout the pilot, with Family Links having concerns that these were diluting the programme's impact. Consequently, they were keen to run a second prison pilot, working much more closely to the format of a community based course. After approaching the Women's Estate of the Prison Service, Foston Hall women's prison in Derbyshire put itself forward as a pilot site. After a period of liaison between Family Links and the Learning and Skills Department of Foston Hall, the second pilot took place in March and April 2006.

1.2 The four changes to the Foston Hall pilot

It is useful to highlight the key differences between the Styal and Foston Hall pilots, both because they identify what is distinct about the Foston Hall course, and also because they have been a central focus of this evaluation.

In all, there were four changes of significance:

- **running the course in its "full" form:** a key intention was to emulate how the Nurturing Programme runs in the community. This included: encouraging the same level of self-reflection as occurs in community courses; drawing more heavily on people's experiences as children and parents, without using videos; and conducting exercises in line with how recommended in the facilitator guidance notes, including using the same language as in the community.
- **encouraging the women to practice new skills:** as in Styal, the women in Foston Hall did not have regular contact with their children. However, it was felt that many of the skills and strategies learned on the programme, such as using praise or using "I" statements (assertive language) could be applied to other relationships in the prison. Therefore the Foston Hall pilot reintroduced the *Time to have a go* element to the course, encouraging the women to practice their skills between sessions with each other, with other inmates and with prison staff. In addition, more emphasis was placed on relaxation skills, and women were encouraged to practice these between sessions when back in their cells.
- **using external facilitators:** in contrast with the Styal course, both facilitators in Foston Hall came from Family Links. This gave them greater control over the delivery of the course, although it also meant the facilitators were less experienced both with the prison setting and client group.
- **accreditation:** Family Links has been working with the Open College Network to make the Nurturing Programme an accredited course. This has been identified as being attractive to organisations who might want to commission Family Links to run the Nurturing Programme. This involved ensuring the participants capture their experiences and learning in written work, which is then assessed by the facilitators and externally. Family Links are piloting accreditation in other settings, and were keen to learn how it would work in a prison setting.

The evaluation questions arising from these changes are explored more fully in Chapter 2.

1.3 Aims of this commentary

A central aim of this study has been to identify the impact of these four changes to the programme: how have the changes worked in practice, and what impact have they had on the course?

In addition, in discussion with Family Links during the planning stages of the study, it was identified that these changes may have knock on effects in several particular areas. In particular, given the more intense nature of the course:

- was the course structure and timing used in Styal still appropriate?
- did the course place greater demands on the prison?
- did the course place greater demands on the facilitators?

These issues were all explored in the evaluative commentary for the Styal Pilot, which revealed a number of useful lessons. Given the changes in the Foston Hall pilot, an important question for the present study was what *further* lessons could be learned? Family Links are looking at the potential of rolling the Nurturing Programme out to other prisons, so any further lessons from the Foston Hall pilot would be useful in informing that process.

With this in mind, the four aims for this evaluative commentary were agreed in terms of the following questions:

- Aim 1:** What are the additional lessons from running this programme with these four changes: in its "full" form, encouraging participants to practice their skills within the prison, using only external facilitators, and as an accredited course?
- Aim 2:** Given this revised format for the course, how helpful were the content, structure and duration of the course in the Foston Hall pilot, and do these need adapting in any ways before rolling out to other prisons?
- Aim 3:** How effective is the prison context itself in supporting people on the Nurturing Programme, and are there any issues that need to be addressed for the course to be delivered effectively?
- Aim 4:** What are the support needs that arise for the facilitators when delivering the Nurturing Programme in this form, particularly where the facilitators are external to the prison service? How should this be reflected in the training, induction and support offered to Health Visitors³ running the programme in prisons?

It was also identified that, as in Styal, to answer these questions, it was important to seek the views of a range of stakeholders: the facilitators, the prison staff and the course participants themselves. Furthermore, where the Styal review only sought the views of prison education staff, an aim of the present study was to get a broader cross section of prison views. This report therefore draws out the lessons relating to each of these aims, drawing on feedback from a range of stakeholder views.

In passing, this report will also compare and contrast the practicalities of taking the course into Styal and Foston Hall. This will help in identifying what practical barriers are specific to each prison, and what was common to both. This will assist in identifying which issues need to be covered in any training for Health Visitors going into the prison setting.

Finally, the reader should note the following about this report:

- first, the report is *not* intended as a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the course in Foston Hall. Rather, its focus is on the lessons to be learned in running such a course.
- this report does not attempt to revisit all the issues identified in the Styal pilot; rather its focus is on the new lessons to emerge at Foston Hall. The report is therefore

³ At the time of planning the Foston Hall pilot, a favoured model for rolling out the Nurturing Programme across prisons is for it to be delivered by Health Visitors from the local primary care trust. In the follow discussion it has been assumed that future course would be delivered by Health Visitors, though later in the report, other models for rolling out the Nurturing Programme are considered.

intended to complement the Styal report, but it can also be read as a stand alone document⁴.

- finally, while the report makes reference to a range of the exercises in the Nurturing Programme, it does not attempt to describe these in detail. For this, the reader is referred to *The Parenting Puzzle*.

1.4 Structure of this report

The report is presented as follows:

- chapter 2 looks at the study aims in more detail, drawing out some of the particular questions of interest
- chapters 3 and 4 draw on interviews with the facilitators conducted during the planning stages of the Foston Hall pilot. Chapter 3 briefly reviews their experiences of setting up the pilot; and chapter 4 considers the issues they had to address as they brought the course more in line with how the programme is run in community settings
- chapters 5-7 then review the lessons to have emerged from the Foston Hall pilot, drawing together the perspectives of the facilitators, the prison staff and the women who participated in the course. Chapter 5 reviews the findings relating to Aim 1: the impacts of introducing the four changes to the course. Chapter 6 reviews the findings relating to Aims 2, 3 and 4: the structure of the course, the prison context; and the demands placed on the facilitators. Finally, chapter 7 identifies a number of other important issues to have emerged during the study
- chapter 8 then pulls together some of the key learning points from the pilot

Each chapter concludes with a list of recommendations, and these have been drawn together as a Summary of Recommendations at the end of the report.

In addition, there are two appendices. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the course delivered in Foston Hall; Appendix 2 briefly describes the methodology for this study, and lists the respondents interviewed during the study.

Nearly all quotations in this report have been extracted from taped interviews. The exception is the women's focus group, where quotes were captured by a note taker; consequently, these quotes are not exact, although they have only been included if there was a clear recollection of the point being made. Throughout the report, some quotes have been edited for sense or brevity, and some minor details have been changed for confidentiality; the meaning or emphasis of the quotations has not, however, been altered. It should also be noted that when the first draft of this report was reviewed (by the Family Links facilitators and Foston Hall's Head of Learning and Skills), it was pointed out that several quotes were not strictly accurate. These quotes have *not* been amended, as they represent the perceptions of the respondents at time of interview – but any identified inaccuracies *have* been reported as footnotes.

Finally, it should be noted that this study was qualitative in nature. Its aim was to draw together a range of contrasting perspectives on the Foston Hall pilot, and qualitative research allows this to be done in some detail. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the sample sizes in this review were very small, and care should be taken when generalising these findings to other settings. Furthermore, as some stakeholder groups were not available to interview within the timescales of the project, some perspectives are not represented in this report.

⁴ As noted, the original report is available through Family Links.

2. Considering the aims in more detail

The preceding chapter outlined the four aims of this project. However, during the planning stages of the pilot, a number of key questions were identified within each aim. It is worth reviewing these, as these more detailed questions have informed the fieldwork, analysis and writing up of this report.

2.1 Aim 1: lessons from the four central changes to the Foston Hall pilot

As noted previously, compared with the Styal course, four key changes had been introduced in the Foston Hall pilot:

- it was to be run in its "full" form, modelled more closely on community-based courses
- the *Time to have a go* practice element had been reintroduced
- both facilitators were external to the prison service
- the course was being run as an accredited programme

A number of key questions were associated with each of these changes, as outlined below.

What issues arise from delivering the Nurturing Programme in its full form?

While the Styal version of the Nurturing Programme had been somewhat modified, the participants in the Styal pilot were universally positive about their experiences of the course: they had found the environment supportive, they felt engaged and respected by the facilitators, and they reported the course material encouraged them to think about their own experiences and parenting practices.

The Foston Hall pilot, however, was intended to be far closer in content and style to the Nurturing Programme as delivered in community settings. This involved removing the video element of the Styal course, and giving far more time for the women to reflect on their own experiences as children and how these were affecting their parenting styles now. While this was intended to give the women a far deeper experience of the programme, it did raise a number of questions:

- how would the more reflective aspects of the course would work in a prison setting, particularly as some participants in this setting were likely to have had particularly difficult childhood experiences?
- how well would the facilitators be able to engage the participants in this deeper material, especially given the constraints that prisons place on how the course sessions are delivered (such as the materials allowed, timings, prisoners being move to other prisons, etc)?
- what issues would arise for the course participants *between* sessions – particularly as in prison, the participants would have long periods in their cells, when potentially they could dwell on issues surfaced during the programme. To what extent could the prison meet any support needs that emerged?
- taking all these issues into account, were there any notable risks associated with delivering the full Nurturing Programme in a prison setting, and how did these need to be addressed?

What issues arise from asking participants to practice the Nurturing Programme skills in the prison?

In a community setting, a important component of the Nurturing Programme is experiential. At the end of each session, parents are encouraged to try the skills and strategies from the

course with their families – and observe how this affects their relationships, their children's behaviour, and so on. They then bring their observations and reflections to subsequent sessions of the course, which further enriches the group discussions. This element is called *Time to have a go*, the intention being that course participants get to see how changes in their own behaviour lead to changes in the behaviour of those around them.

In Styal, this aspect of the course was considerably diluted. Some parents had little or no contact with their families, and even where there was some contact, (in visitor hours or on the telephone), the course participants often had other things they needed to talk about. Even if they did try relating to their families differently, there was little chance to get the "feedback" of seeing how changes in their own behaviour led to changes in their family relationships.

In the Foston Hall pilot, Family Links attempted to address this by encouraging course participants to practice their new relationship skills with others in the prison – other prisoners and prison staff. As well as encouraging the women to practice these skills, it also meant they would get first hand experience of how changes in their own behaviour led to changes in others' behaviour. This therefore sought to re-introduce an important element of the community-based programme.

However, this approach also raised a number of questions. For instance:

- to what extent did the participants on the Foston Hall course actually find it possible to try out different ways of relating to other prisoners and prison staff?
- where participants were able to practice these skills, how useful did they find the resulting experiences, and to what extent could these experiences be brought back into the course to extend their learning and reflection? To what extent did they observe changes in their own behaviour leading to changes in others' behaviour?
- what effect did this have for the participants, in terms of their behaviour and ways of relating to others? To what extent did the women feel they were behaving differently or had more choices in how they behaved? And to what extent did others in the prison perceive that the women's behaviour is changing?
- taking all this together, to what extent did practicing their skills in their prison relationships fill the gap that occurs through the women having very limited access to their families? Overall, how appropriate was it for the Nurturing Programme to encourage this in the prison setting?

In addition, the Family Links facilitators also recognised that the women were in an often stressful environment, and that they had considerable amounts of time in their cells. They therefore decided to place more emphasis on teaching the women relaxation and self-nurturing skills during the course, and on encouraging the women to practice these back in their cells. Again this raised questions:

- how would the women take to the relaxation and self-nurturing skills? How useful would they find them, and to what extent would they practice them between sessions?

What issues arise from using only external facilitators?

In the Styal pilot, one of the course facilitators was a member of the prison service, and brought considerable experience about the internal workings of the prison service. This proved helpful in a range of ways:

- negotiating a range of issues with the prison service, such as access to the prison and what materials could be brought in for the course

- it provided valuable insights into “prison craft” – what could and could not be done in a prison
- it meant that one of the facilitators had useful experience of prisoners and of some of the challenges that can arise when working with this client group

This last point relates to a debate that emerged during the Styal pilot about whether the participants were different in kind to those who attend courses in the community:

- the prison-based facilitator suggested that prisoners will tend to be more manipulative and to push at boundaries more than participants on a community course. As a consequence, she argued that in prisons, facilitators needed to be firmer at maintaining personal boundaries and classroom management; she also suggested that if facilitators are not used to this client group, they can be taken in by them – “which can get you into trouble”
- in contrast, the facilitator from Family Links felt that even in a community group, some participants can bring challenging behaviours. Consequently, even if they didn’t have direct experience in a prison setting, experienced Nurturing Programme facilitators *would* generally have the skills needed to work effectively with this client group.

The Styal pilot did not provide sufficient evidence to support one of these views over the other. However, it highlights several potential risks when both facilitators are external to the prison service: they may have experience additional organisational barriers, less leverage with prison staff, less familiarity with prison protocols, culture, and client group, and so on. All of these could potentially undermined how the course is delivered.

This was particularly important because, if the Nurturing Programme is rolled out to other prisons, one proposed model is that it will be delivered by health visitors – who would be external facilitators. Using external facilitators in the Foston Hall pilot therefore mirrored the position of health visitors going into prisons – and could potentially identify some of the challenges they might face. It was hoped that this would identify some of the training and support health visitors would need to meet this challenges. Key questions included:

- were there any additional difficulties in getting access to the prison, getting approvals for what materials could be taken in, etc?
- were there any issues or difficulties in facilitators’ relationship with prison staff which might have been eased by someone with more prison knowledge?
- how did the group compare with a community based group – in terms of how they engaged, classroom management issues, etc? Was there any sense that they were being manipulative or seeking to break course and personal boundaries?
- were there any issues or challenges in working with the group that might have been eased if one of the facilitators had had more prison knowledge?
- if there were any challenges or difficulties, then if the course is to continue to be delivered just with external facilitators, how could these challenges best be addressed?
- given the experience in Foston Hall, is it realistic to expect the course to be delivered only by external facilitators – or is it the case that at least one of the facilitators should be from the prison service?

What issues arise from this being an accredited course?

Family Links have been going through a process of obtaining Open College Network (OCN) accreditation for the Nurturing Programme. This provides a level of external recognition for

the learning that takes place on the course, and consequently makes the course more attractive to potential commissioners – including, in this case, the prison service⁵.

The course has been approved by the OCN at Level 1 and 2, giving six credits, which is equivalent to 60 hours work. This 60 hours is made up of the course time, practicing the skills between sessions, and completing a 50 page accreditation booklet, in which participants write up what they have learned from the course. The facilitators then make a judgement about whether the participant has achieved Level 1 (able to describe what they have learned) or Level 2 (more reflective in their learning). This rating is then both internally and externally moderated before the award is finally given to the participant.

While this is potentially attractive to commissioners, it brings with it a number of challenges for Family Links, which may be further exacerbated in the prison context. Key questions for this study therefore include:

- how well does the accreditation process work in a prison setting? Given that start and end times of sessions are determined by the prison, are the facilitators able to provide the necessary support to the women within the time available? Does the accreditation process place additional demands on the facilitators as a result of being in a prison setting?
- how well do the women in a prison setting engage with the accreditation process? How do the participants react to the accreditation booklet, and do any find it off-putting? Are the women willing to complete the written work, are they able to bring the required level of reflection and self awareness to the process?
- does the accreditation process affect how the participants view the facilitators? As well as delivering the course, they are also assessing participants on what level they have achieved. Does this affect how the relationship between participants and facilitators develops? (This question would apply in other settings, but may be particularly relevant in prisons, for instance if the women had had bad school experiences.)
- what other challenges or risks arise from the course being accredited – *particularly* in relation to delivering it in a prison? How can these best be addressed?

2.2 Aim 2: assessing the content, structure and duration of the programme

Course structure and duration

One important question explored in the Styal pilot was the appropriate duration of the course. In community settings, the course is generally run over ten weeks, with one session per week lasting around two hours. In Styal, however, the course was run as five full day sessions over five weeks. This was partly because the prison found this easier to accommodate, and partly because the facilitators were travelling long distances, making ten sessions unviable.

Family Links had some concerns that the course would have less impact running over a shorter period; on balance, however, there was general agreement in Styal that a five week course was the best compromise, and this was the structure adopted in Foston Hall.

However, this raised some questions:

- given the Foston Hall programme was being run more like in the community, with deeper reflection and more practicing of skills, was five weeks still the best compromise? Did this allow time for the course to work – did the women have enough time to assimilate their learning?

⁵ Foston Hall's interest in accreditation was visible here, in that they agreed to pay OCN fees of £18 per student.

- furthermore, if the course was being run in a more intense form, were full day sessions still feasible, or would this become too much for the participants to engage with?

Linked to this, in community courses, Family Links have noticed participants go through a process. Over the first few weeks the group starts to gel and participants start to become more open to considering their own experiences and parenting skills. By about week five, many have become aware their parenting skills are not fully effective (they experience "conscious incompetence"), and they can find this part of the course challenging. The remaining five weeks of the course is used to "put the women back together", building their skills, strategies and confidence. In Styal, this had not been an issue because the women were not taken through this level of self-reflection, but as Foston Hall *would* do this, it raised further questions:

- would participants go through this experience of "conscious incompetence"? If so, would it occur at the same mid-point of the course (ie week 3, given the course was five weeks)? Or did it still take five weeks for women to reach that point – meaning that it happened in the final week of the course, leaving no time to rebuild their sense of competence?

Running the course as an accredited course raised further questions about the course structure and duration. In community courses, participants can discuss their accreditation work with the facilitators before or after the session; in addition facilitators can put on an extra session if needed to talk through accreditation. These opportunities were not available in Foston Hall: start and end times are fixed, and the course timetable was agreed. The support work around accreditation therefore had to be fitted into the main sessions of the programme. This raised additional questions:

- was there enough time available to provide the necessary support for the women to complete their accreditation reports; and did this leave sufficient time for going through the core programme material?
- also, as the course was only five weeks, did the women have enough time between sessions to practice new skills, reflect on their experiences and write up their accreditation booklets?

Course content

As noted, in the Styal course, there had been several changes to the course material. Throughout that pilot, there had been discussions between the Family Links and prison-based facilitators about some of the content being delivered. In particular:

- the prison-based facilitator felt that some of the language used and the exercises were would not work in the prison setting. As a result, for instance, there were only passing references to "warm fuzzies" and "cold pricklies" rather than these being used as the basis for a discussion⁶; and some exercises were only done as demonstrations, rather than the women participating themselves.
- a number of videos about parenting were used which are not part of the Nurturing Programme. One reason for this was that as the sessions ran for a full day, the prison-based facilitator did not want to overload the women, and the videos therefore provided something of a break.

Family Links were keen to test out whether the original Nurturing Programme language and exercises would work in the prison setting, and so the reverted to this material in the Foston Hall pilot; similarly, videos were not used. An important question for this review was how this material was received.

⁶ These are Nurturing Programme language for talking with children about feelings.

2.3 Aim 3: how the prison context supports the Nurturing Programme

Supporting how the programme runs

The importance of ensuring emotional support is available for the participants has already been discussed under Aim 1. However, there are other important ways that a prison may or may not support the Nurturing Programme. For instance, in Styal, there had been a degree of disruption to the course, including:

- start times being delayed as participants had to queue for their medications
- participants being taken in and out of sessions
- the prison seeking to add a new person midway through the course

These occurred for legitimate operational reasons. Nevertheless, the point here is that it made attendance on the course less stable and predictable, which potentially undermined the impact of the course. The question for the Foston Hall pilot was therefore:

- would the prison be able to provide a buffer against such disruptions? Would it be possible, for example, for the women to be given priority with their medications, so that training sessions could start promptly?

Family Links raised these issues in their initial discussions with Foston Hall, and this issue was therefore included in the present evaluation.

Attitudes of prison staff and officers

The support the prison provided to the programme depended in large part on the attitudes of the prison staff and officers. If these were positive and sympathetic to the aims of the Nurturing Programme, the course would run more smoothly, as there would be a willingness to resolve any problems that arose. Similarly, positive staff attitudes would be likely to reinforce the learning the women were doing in the sessions – and between sessions, when they "had a go" at using new skills and strategies. Family Links were therefore keen to explore these attitudes, and in particular, to get a broader cross section of views than was obtained in Styal. Key questions included:

- what value did they place on the course, what did they want the course to deliver, and what were their expectations of what it actually would deliver?
- did they believe the course would make a difference to the women, and were they aware of any changes in the women's attitudes and behaviour?
- did they feel the course posed any demands to the service (for instance, to support participants if they become distressed between sessions), and how did they feel about the service being asked to respond to these needs?

2.4 Aim 4: identifying the support needs of the facilitators

An important aim of the Foston Hall pilot was to provide further lessons about the training and support that facilitators will need when taking the Nurturing Programme into prisons.

The Styal pilot had gone some way to exploring these issues. However, a key question was whether the four programme changes in the Foston Hall pilot – the full version of the course, encouraging participants to practice their skills, only having external facilitators, and running the course as an accredited programme – would lead to other support needs being identified. To explore this, it was particularly important to understand the facilitators' experiences of delivering the course. Specific questions included:

- given the likely history of some of the course participants – and the fact that the Foston Hall pilot explored this in more depth – how would this affect the facilitators themselves – both their effectiveness and their own wellbeing?
- how did this vary over time: were there points in the course which were particularly challenging or demanding for facilitators?
- taking account of the above, what are the particular support needs for facilitators providing the course in this environment? How can these best be met (in terms of training materials, professional supervision, additional support, etc)?

3. Setting up the pilot

One possible model for rolling the Nurturing Programme out across prisons is that Health Visitors from local Primary Care Trusts will facilitate the course. These would be in a similar position to the two Family Links facilitators in the Foston Hall pilot, in that they would be external to the prison where the course was being set up. It is therefore useful to review Family Links' experience of establishing the pilot project, as this can provide some useful lessons for Health Visitors setting up future programmes. The following discussion provides this analysis, comparing the experience with the Styal pilot where relevant.

The material in this chapter is drawn from interviews with the facilitators conducted while the course was still being planned, so represents their views *at that stage* of the pilot. Some of these issues were also covered in the subsequent interviews, once the course was underway, and these are revisited later in this report.

It is also worth noting that to ensure clear liaison between Family Links and Foston Hall, all contact during the set up stages of the pilot was through the Programme Director who had taken part in the Styal pilot. The issues reported in this chapter therefore largely reflect her experiences of liaising with the prison.

3.1 The initial contact with Foston Hall

In the Styal pilot, the main driver for the project came from outside of Styal Prison: while Styal had certainly had an interest in the programme, the main instigator had been the Family Learning Co-ordinator from another prison.

In contrast, in the present pilot, there was a much stronger sense of Foston Hall taking a lead role in commissioning Family Links to run a pilot. Family Links had approached the Prison Service Women's Team and then sent out a group email across the Women's Estate about the Nurturing Programme. Foston Hall had been one of the prisons that had responded, keen to pilot the programme:

They had run a parent programme a number of years before⁷ which had died a death because of poor take up, and there was a sense from the Head of Learning and Skills there, that they wanted to regenerate a parent programme.

Family Links facilitator

As well as Foston Hall's clear interest in the Nurturing Programme, it was also chosen as a pilot site partly because of its location, and partly because it had a more stable prison population, something the Styal pilot had identified as important.

They had women who were there longer term, it wasn't a dispersal prison; and they had a track record of supporting women.

Family Links facilitator

Interestingly, Foston Hall's commitment to the programme appears to have had a positive effect on the liaison around setting the programme up.

My liaison with prison has been fine, very easy. It feels to me like this is much more of a programme that they're interested in – how it's going to affect women between times, what their anxiety levels are going to be, how they're going to be able to sustain the programme after we've gone. You know they are really taking it potentially more seriously. I think in Styal, they were doing us a favour, whereas now we're doing them a favour.

Family Links facilitator

⁷ In fact, it is more accurate to say that parenting work had formed part of the curriculum.

In rolling out the programme to other prisons, clearly there will be benefits in finding the prisons that are highly committed to the programme. The challenge for Family Links is therefore to determine how the Nurturing Programme can be presented to best appeal to the prison service, and therefore build that commitment. This issue is considered further in later chapters of this report.

3.2 Engaging the prison

Family Links' main point of contact in Foston Hall during the planning stages was with the prison's Head of Learning and Skills. At their first meeting, some months before the pilot began, Family Links proposed the programme to the Head of Learning and Skills, who then took a recommendation for the programme to the prison governor. While Family Links did not meet the governor themselves, this process appears to have been successful in securing prison support for the programme.

Getting clearance for *how* the course would be run, however, proved more laborious than in Styal:

In Styal, I did it through [the prison-based facilitator] as a contact, I had very little direct contact with Styal before the event. But here there was the pre-meeting and emails going back and forward. They want to know everything we are taking, and we've had a huge clearance operation, as opposed to Styal where we were just a visitor each time. This time it's been in triplicate what we've had to respond to, we've had to provide referees, photographs, all of that, so we've got full access to the prison.

Family Links facilitator

The Family Links facilitator was not certain what underlay this difference: it may have been because Family Links were not accompanied by someone from the prison service (as had been the case in Styal); or it may simply be that different prisons operate different regimes for negotiating access. What is clear, however, is that negotiating access into a prison can be somewhat onerous, and sufficient time and resources will need to be allowed for this when rolling the programme into other prisons.

While negotiating clearance for the programme took some effort, Family Links nevertheless felt that Foston Hall had been very supportive to the programme throughout the discussions to set up the programme. This was demonstrated in a variety of ways:

- the prison offered to provide a member of the learning and skills team to support delivery of the programme

They talked about having someone who would be there as a support person for our facilitation – it's someone who's done other similar support work for other projects in the prison such as drama projects. This person would look after us, as well as be the person for them to check out our programme. ... She'll take more of an active part [in the programme] than just observe.

Family Links facilitator

- they provided more user-friendly surroundings for the programme than had been available in Styal: a dedicated training room with a separate space for breaks
- they offered to provide an additional family day, beyond prisoners' normal visitor allowance, to allow more the participants more opportunity to practice their parenting skills

They were keen to encourage parents and give them extra chances to be with their children. The idea came from the prison, and we don't know yet how that's going to look, it's very much at the end of the course, we'll have to work that out as we go along, what's going to be appropriate

Family Links facilitator

This level of engagement was clearly recognised and appreciated by Family Links, and was useful in ensuring the programme was set up smoothly:

It sounds like they are very much on board from an official capacity, they seem to be very focussed on what they want, and sorting things out, and that feels good.

Family Links facilitator

One final point about liaising with the prison is also worth noting, as it highlights what Health Visitors may experience going into a prison to deliver the programme for the first time. As noted, all the negotiations with Foston Hall were carried out by one of the Family Links facilitators; both facilitators felt this was the right thing to do in terms of making the relationship with the prison as clear as possible.

However, the other facilitator also reported that during the planning stages, this left her somewhat distant from the project.

It will be quite interesting for me to measure how it feels having been out of that loop. But I realise you do need one key communicator for consistency. So at this point, I don't have a relationship with the prison at all – but I do have lots of information via [the other facilitator].

Family Links facilitator

While this did not cause insurmountable problems, the facilitator did feel that this should be addressed when planning future courses in prisons.

I'm now thinking as a model, it would be good to do a pre-meeting [with the prison] with both Health Visitors for the first contact, then leave it to one of the people to do all of the briefing stuff, cos I do feel slightly disadvantaged, cos I haven't a clue about the prison.

Family Links facilitator

This suggests that for future courses – and particularly for Health Visitors that are new to prisons – it will be helpful for them to have contact with the prison in the planning stages, so they are orientated to the prison before they start delivering the programme.

3.3 Contrasts with Styal

The Styal report noted that different prisons have a degree of operational autonomy, so one issue explored in this study was whether there were any notable differences in the constraints that the two prisons placed on delivery of the Nurturing Programme.

One issue of interest was whether Foston Hall set different limits on what could and could not be taken into the prison. In practice, however, this was not greatly tested, as the Family Links facilitator was guided by her previous experience in Styal:

I didn't even ask about things that I couldn't take in to Styal – so no blutak, balloons, that I knew were not allowed, I didn't even put on my list. So in some ways I haven't tested them in that sense. But everything I've asked to take in, they've come back and said everything is fine.

Family Links facilitator

This may reflect that different prisons operate to similar guidelines, though it would be useful to keep this under review as the programme is extended to other prisons.

One notable contrast, however, related to what could be left in the prison between sessions:

They've said they don't want anything left in the prison between weeks, so we've got to cart everything in and out on each day [whereas] in Styal we had a locked cupboard where we could leave things – that was useful⁸.

Family Links facilitator

Lack of storage space is unlikely to have a major impact on delivering the programme, but may prove to be inconvenient. Where possible, it would be useful to negotiate some storage space with the prison.

Another challenge in Styal concerned attendance on the course. For instance, women on the course often arrived late because they were getting their medications; and the membership of the group fluctuated as women left the prison or the prison sought to add new participants to the group mid-course.

This had been something of a concern for Family Links during the Styal pilot, and was even more so in Foston Hall, given that the course was potentially going to be more emotionally intense. Consequently, during the planning stages for the Foston Hall pilot, Family Links sought to negotiate some greater stability for the group, both in terms of more predictable start times, and more fixed membership for the group⁹; Foston Hall was supportive:

They did talk about trying to prioritise the meds for our group, which is what they'd done with another group. I think that should be better than it was in Styal. But they're all at the mercy of the officers – it just depends how the system works there.

Family Links facilitator

We made that clear that it's not a group that's joinable. They need to be there from the start, because Week 1 is effectively the first two sessions, so after that it's closed to the group. The prison agreed to that.

Family Links facilitator

Recommendations from Chapter 3

There appear to be clear benefits from working with prisons that are actively committed to the programme. To build that commitment, Family Links should consider how it can present the Nurturing Programme to best appeal to the Prison Service.

It appears that negotiating access into a prison for the first time can be time consuming; sufficient time and resources will need to be allocated for this when rolling the Nurturing Programme out to other prisons.

Assuming two facilitators deliver the programme, it would appear most effective if one of them takes the lead in liaison with the prison during the planning stages. However, it also appears important that *both* facilitators have at least some contact with the prison during the planning stages, so that both are familiar with the prison environment. This will be particularly important for facilitators who have not previously worked in prisons.

⁸ While this reflects what the prison said during the planning stages, the facilitators were in fact able to leave boards and flipcharts in the classroom once the programme was underway.

⁹ In addition, the fact that Foston Hall was not a dispersal prison also built in some greater stability into the group, as participants were less likely to be moved out at short notice.

Family Links should keep under review whether different prisons have different guidelines about what materials can and cannot be taken inside. This will give a clearer idea of what flexibility there is in how the course can be delivered.

When planning programmes in other prisons, it may be useful to negotiate with the prison to provide some storage between sessions.

4. Delivering the course in Foston Hall

While the Foston Hall pilot was intended to be far more like a community-based course, this did not mean the programme could be delivered *exactly* as it is in the community. A challenge for the Family Links team was how the aims of a community course could be met given the constraints of the prison setting. Similarly, the constraints of the prison setting raised some challenges for the facilitators in supporting the women towards accreditation

This chapter reviews how Family Links went about meeting these challenges – as this will provide lessons for others delivering the Nurturing Programme in prisons. Again, this chapter is based on the interviews with the facilitators before the course took place. It therefore aims to capture their reflections during the planning stages of the pilot. Family Links' success at meeting these challenges is considered in the subsequent chapters of this report.

4.1 Delivering the full intensity of the programme

While the Foston Hall pilot attempted to deliver the course with its original level of depth, the facilitators were also aware that prison context meant various elements of the course needed to be adapted. This included adapting existing exercises, and introducing new exercises that were particularly relevant to the prison context. Some of the key adaptations to the course are outlined below.

Using existing Nurturing Programme material

The Nurturing Programme aims to provide participants with a range of strategies which they can bring to their parenting role. These are described in *The Parenting Puzzle*, and include strategies such as *Time Out*, *Personal Power*, and *Choices and Consequences*. One of the facilitators pointed out that even where it wasn't immediately obvious, many of these strategies were directly relevant in a prison context. For instance, while prisoners may initially believe they have little power and few choices, the programme could highlight that they *did* have options open to them:

Personal Power is a massive concept for them with something like that. Hopefully they will feel they *have* got the power to make that choice for their own benefit.

Family Links facilitator

Something like *Choices and Consequences*, they might not get a chance to use that while they're inside, as it might not feel the appropriate place, so there might be some that we feel are harder to practice or use in their environment, but my guess is that with most of them, there will be opportunities somewhere along the line.

Family Links facilitator

Adapting existing material

The prison context also meant that some of the programme material needed to be adapted. For instance, strategies such as participants using *Time Out* with their children did not easily apply in prison, but could be adapted:

So for example, there might be a strategy, *Time Out*, let's say. It's not one they're going to be able to use in the way that it's written in the programme. But we could talk it about it [in a prison setting] saying we can take time out *for ourselves* – so if we get annoyed with someone, we might not be able to walk out of the room, but we can choose to not respond, we can choose to do some relaxation, something like that. So that's how we can tweak it.

Family Links facilitator

Furthermore, prison policy also placed some restrictions on how some parts of the course could be delivered:

We can't involve touch. Quite often there will be a goodbye circle that will be a touch – a gentle touch of some sort, a hand on shoulder or something – which is something we [the facilitators] do. ... I guess if the women choose to touch each other, they're allowed to, but we won't be involved. We'd probably do it differently, find another way around it.

Family Links facilitator

It will be useful to ensure there are clear guidelines recorded for how existing material needs to be adapted, as this will need to be shared with other facilitators going into prisons to deliver the programme.

4.2 New elements of the course

As well as the existing Nurturing Programme material, the facilitators also identified several areas that needed additional emphasis for this particular client group and context. Given that the sessions in the prison were two and a half hours (each morning and afternoon) compared with only two hours in community courses, the extra time allowed the facilitators to build in additional material in several key areas:

- relaxation and self nurturing: given that the women on the course would be spending a lot of time in their cells, it was felt important to give them the skills to make as positive use of that time as possible. This was intended to give the women strategies they could use both during the course and over the longer term.

We want to do much more in terms of relaxation exercises, giving them strategies they can use back in their pads for releasing tension or anger or whatever. So maybe some yoga, maybe some physical exercise. ... And that's not as overt in the [community] programme as it will be in prison. There *are* relaxation exercises in the [community] programme but they only cover three stages – whereas [in the prison] we would probably do one every week.

Family Links facilitator

But the nurturing bit can really carry on – so if we can really create that model, there's nothing to stop that carrying on.

Family Links facilitator

- praise: it was felt that this was critically important if these women were to develop effective strategies and relationship skills – and yet for this particularly client group, their experience of praise may well have been limited.

There's also a sense that praise is something very fundamental, about praising each other and praising ourselves, which we want to really encourage within the prison context.

Family Links facilitator

- fun: again, this was something that was felt likely to be lacking in a prison setting, and so needed to be brought into the course if the women were to be engaged effectively. Furthermore, as the course was delivered in full days rather than evening sessions, it was important to make the experience as much fun as possible.

But we wanted to put more fun in as well, because it's quite a long day for them. And more work breaks for them, thinking about learning styles. And thinking more about peer and facilitator bonding. ... And thinking about pace,

to allow for that short burst of deep, meaningful learning.. And more kind of creative time.

Family Links facilitator

Importantly, the Foston Hall facilitators were introducing these other elements by drawing on their experience from other training settings, and they felt that Health Visitors going into prisons in the future should be encouraged to do the same; it was not felt that such additional exercises should be *prescribed*.

I don't think we'd want to be prescriptive by saying at this point, you must do this activity. It'll be encouraging facilitators to use their own professional judgement and experience, and build it according to the needs of the women

Family Links facilitator

This suggests that when selecting Health Visitors to deliver the course in prisons, one of the selection criteria should be that they have experience in areas such as yoga, exercise and so on, so that they can bring these elements into the course. Furthermore, when preparing the to work in prisons, they should be encouraged to think creatively about how best to do this.

This also raises a further point: while the intention is that prison based courses should work at the *same depth* as in the community, there will still be important differences in how the course is structured. Health Visitors delivering the course in prisons are therefore likely to need more planning time together than for a community-based course, to work out which additional exercises each will introduce, and how these can best be built into the course structure. This will particularly be the case where they haven't worked together previously.

I would like to think that for Health Visitors working together, that they would get the chance to meet more [in the planning stages]. ... The most important thing is planning, so you both feel confident, feel up to par.

Family Links facilitator

4.3 Encouraging participants to "have a go"

An important question for the Foston Hall pilot was how to adapt *Time to have a go* so that participants could practice their skills in the prison. Two particular challenges were identified during the planning stages:

- number of sessions: the prison course lasted only five weeks, compared with ten weeks in the community. This potentially halved the numbers of opportunities to have a go. The facilitators planned to address this by using the lunchtimes between the morning and afternoon sessions as a further opportunity to "have a go".

From the lunchtime [of the first session]. There will be a very brief *Time to have a go*: try praising someone for something in the lunchtime, and see if there's something you can try and nurture yourself with at the lunchtime. So trying to bring that into their consciousness.

Family Links facilitator

- lack of private space: in community courses, parents get to try the new skills in the privacy of their own homes; in contrast, the women's experience of practicing the skills with others in the prison would be much more public, and therefore potentially more risky. The facilitators recognised this risk, and acknowledged that some of the skills practice might need to take place within the group.

Some of them maybe don't "have a go" out there [in the prison], they just "have a go" in the safety of the group. So we're just going to have to be really open about what they are able or not able to do. It will depend on whether they are in a similar place to each other, so they can have a go with each other.

Family Links facilitator

One particular question of interest was whether participants would make the connection between "having a go" in the prison and their skills and strategies as a parent. When planning the course, the facilitators felt that as the women were learning good relationship skills and seeing how they were effective, the women would transfer these skills readily to their family relationships. The facilitators would support this by encouraging the women to:

... capture this learning in the reflection women do, and in the accreditation process.

Family Links facilitator

4.4 Supporting the participants and managing risk

In both the Styal and Foston Hall pilots, the facilitators acknowledged that the participants in a prison setting were particularly likely to have had difficult childhood experiences.

There are some people that will have huge issues that come out.

Family Links facilitator

As the Foston Hall programme was expected to encourage more reflection than in Styal, it was acknowledged that this might surface some very painful issues for some of the women concerned. While in some senses, this is the *purpose* of the Nurturing Programme, in a prison context this brings with it a number of risks. In particular:

- if painful issues come up *during* a session, how easy is it for the facilitators to support her within the confines of a prison training room?
- if issues come up *between* sessions, what support is available for the women from within the prison itself?

This second point is particularly important in the prison setting. In community courses, participants have the facilitators contact numbers if they need to talk between sessions, but this option is not available in the prison. Furthermore, in prison, the women will spend a lot of time locked in their cells with little to do, so potentially may dwell on things that have come up in the course. This may be exacerbated when "having a go" at the skills between sessions, and by doing the accreditation homework, which asks participants to reflect further on their experiences.

To some extent, there was a feeling that the women themselves would manage these risks, by limiting how deeply they went into issues. For instance, when talking about one of the exercises in the programme, one facilitator said:

We're going to do the *Hurting Touch* session as it stands. And based on the experience of Styal, I think the women will engage in it as far as they feel safe to.

Family Links facilitator

Even so, there was evidence that participants can find it painful between sessions, and can dwell on difficult issues between sessions. For instance, in another setting, Family Links had been piloting the accreditation process, which invited participants to write down their reflections between sessions. One of the facilitators noted:

One or two of them wrote in their books that it was painful and they didn't particularly want to reflect. So I have a bit of a concern about opening up that reflection. ... Because it's not what happens in the group, it's the week they have to reflect on it.

Family Links facilitator

I've been more aware of it since they've been writing down, which of course I never had that feedback before. It did surprise me how many do dwell on that parent relationship they had. That's a bit difficult as well in terms of their support.

Family Links facilitator

Consequently, these risks were felt to be real – so one issue explored in the initial interviews with the facilitators was how these risks would be managed.

Supporting the women during the sessions

The facilitators brought considerable experience to their role, and this was an important part of ensuring the women on the course did not become unduly distressed. This included monitoring the emotional state of the women during the sessions, identifying which issues might prove difficult, and being ready to interrupt a session if they felt it became necessary.

Week 1, we get a baseline of what key markers alert us to what we think might be potentially challenging to certain people, depending on what they've come up with. So to a degree, we are aware of, or clocking that. ... I suppose we're always alert to body language and feedback.

Family Links facilitator

Also with our own professional judgement, if there's a situation where it's all going completely pair shaped, you wouldn't have any qualms about stopping the session – saying this is all a bit painful for everyone, we need to recover ourselves. We don't want to open wounds that are going to be bleeding all week.

Family Links facilitator

In addition, the size of the facilitator team – which included a member of the prison library team, who was also a qualified drama tutor – was important in making sure there was the support for anyone who became overly distressed.

The fact that three of us are going to be there, one of whom is part of the prison ... so whoever isn't leading that particular session would support the person through that time.

Family Links facilitator

Importantly, the facilitators were also ready to advise the prison staff if they felt a participant might need additional support during the week

Then we would make sure that after the session, it was flagged up with the prison authorities about who is feeling stressed and the kind of support that they might need in the week between.

Family Links facilitator

Supporting the women between sessions

In relation to providing support between sessions, the facilitators sought to put a number of safeguards in place:

- engaging both the prison chaplaincy and the Mental Health Team so they were aware of the course and how the participants might be affected, and making sure they knew which women were on the course

The chaplaincy team will know about it, and will be given the names of the women who are doing it, so they know if something comes to them from one of the women on the course, they'll be forewarned. ... The Mental Health Team will also have their names.

Family Links facilitator

- there was also a listener scheme in the prison, in which prisoners who had been given counselling training could be called on to support other prisoners. Family Links had sought to ensure the course participants had access to this if needed
- making sure that the women themselves know who they could turn to if needed

I think we'll need to clarify at the beginning if there was anything they wanted to talk about during the course of the week, these are the people that are available for them

Family Links facilitator

Another potential resource was the uniformed officers on the wing. As one of the facilitators noted, "They'll be briefed about who's on the course because they'll have to unlock them". It was not suggested that the officers should have to provide emotional support to the women; they would, however, be able to recognise if one of the participants became distressed, and refer the woman on if needed.

Finally, it is worth noting that from the planning meetings, there was a strong sense that the prison was very supportive towards the women's wellbeing:

They [the prison] have been very helpful, and there's definitely a concern for the women's health. They're concerned about wanting to support the women.

Family Links facilitator

Disclosure and confidentiality

It was noted that when delivering the Nurturing Programme, facilitators sometimes get disclosures around sexual abuse and other issues. This may be a particular risk in prisons: as noted elsewhere, the women in this setting may be particularly likely to have had such histories.

Furthermore, Health Visitors taking the course into prisons are likely to be seen by participants as external to the prison service – and participants may therefore feel safer disclosing to them than to anyone in the prison. Participants may also have unrealistic expectations about what Health Visitors would do with that information; for instance, if anyone is at ongoing risk, a Health Visitor may be obliged to refer on to other agencies, even if the participant wishes the information to remain confidential.

It is beyond the scope of this report to consider how disclosure and confidentiality issues should be handled in the prison setting. What is important, however, is that when Health Visitors or other external facilitators deliver the course in prisons, they should ensure there are clear disclosure groundrules in place, agreed with both the prison and the participants.

4.5 Delivering accreditation in a prison setting

There were a number of challenges running an accredited course in a prison setting. Perhaps the biggest was the lack of contact time the participants have with their children.

The 6 credits awarded for the programme assumes 60 hours of learning. With only around 25 hours to deliver the course, this meant the women needed to do a further 35 hours themselves between sessions. In a community setting, much of this is achieved by practicing new skills and strategies in the family, reflecting on the outcomes and writing this up in the accreditation booklet. But in a prison setting, without that practice time with the family, the facilitators needed to think more imaginatively about how the women could do these extra learning hours. Solutions included:

- encouraging the women to do the *Time to have a go* practice with others in the prison setting (see earlier discussion), and reflecting on this and writing it up. To enable this, some parts of the accreditation booklet, that focused heavily on the family, needed to be adapted.
- encouraging the women to do more self-reflection time and more self-nurturing, particularly when they were locked in their cells
- encouraging the women to develop their observation skills between sessions, and use this to develop the quality of their relationships and self-awareness

Them becoming more observant could be part of that work. To actually possibly lift their self-awareness hopefully, and look at body language and tone of voice, and if they can check responses from people, that does feed into the accreditation.

Family Links facilitator

As well as ensuring the women built up sufficient *hours*, the facilitators were also keen to ensure that they built up a sufficient *range of experiences* needed for accreditation. Again, with little family contact time, the facilitators needed to find other ways to provide evidence of this. These included:

- the facilitators themselves putting more emphasis on noting down evidence during the group discussions. One facilitator noted, “we could actually verify that evidence, which is acceptable to the Open College Network, it’s just something we haven’t needed to do before”.

If I get some feedback from one of the participants that’s relevant to the assessment criteria, I’m thinking, well that would be really good for them to talk about in their [accreditation work]. And that usually happens at the feedback sessions, and we’ve tried a number of ways of capturing that in a way that isn’t obvious, if you like. We’ve jotted it on the flipchart, and called it a “market place” so everyone can write on it.

Family Links facilitator

- using the participants’ relationship with the facilitators and each other as evidence to support accreditation:

We should be clocking their relationship with us, so the *Time to have a go* thing can happen *in* the group, so we can count them praising themselves or each other, or [the facilitators]. And they could try *Choices and Consequences* out on team members. Facilitators always try out the strategies in the group, and I think [we] need to be more mindful of how useful that’s going to be.

Family Links facilitator

- using some of the course exercises specifically to build evidence for accreditation

The idea is they’ll all have one in the group and we’ll be awarding a silver star to praise someone, and a gold star for praising themselves. And that will be part of their accredited documentation.

Family Links facilitator

Recommendations from Chapter 4

It will be important to keep a systematic record of how existing Nurturing Programme exercises need to be adapted in the prison context. This can be used to supplement the training materials provided to facilitators.

While the Nurturing Programme is still relatively new to prisons, it will be useful to keep a record of how different exercises have worked in different prisons. This will allow Family Links to identify whether any of the exercises require further adaptation in the prison context.

Where new exercises on issues such as self-nurturing and relaxation are introduced, it will be useful to record how these can best be delivered, and where they can best be integrated with the existing structure of the Nurturing Programme. Again, this could be developed into supplementary training materials for facilitators going into prisons.

When selecting Health Visitors or other facilitators to deliver the course in prisons, one selection criterion should be that they have experience in relevant areas that they can introduce to the programme, such as yoga, exercise and so on. When training facilitators to go into prisons, they should be encouraged to think creatively about how best these elements can be introduced to the course.

External facilitators in prisons will need more planning time together than for a community-based course, particularly if they haven't worked together previously. This is so they can jointly work out which additional exercises each will introduce, and how these can best be built into the course structure.

For external facilitators, it is important that they ensure there are clear groundrules in place for handling disclosure of sexual abuse and similar issues, including a clear understanding of what will and will not be kept confidential. The groundrules should be agreed with both the prison and the participants themselves.

It would be useful to record how the accreditation booklets needed to be adapted in a prison setting, as this will be useful for other facilitators delivering the course. Similarly, it would be useful to provide guidance on how facilitators can capture accreditation evidence for the women during the sessions.

5. The impact of the four programme changes

The remaining chapters of this report focus on the findings from this study. These were drawn together predominantly from the field visit to Foston Hall, which took place on the penultimate day of the course; and two subsequent telephone interviews. The vast majority of the quotations that follow are drawn from these sources. In addition, several quotes have been extracted from the weekly reports and pro formas completed by the two facilitators.

This chapter focuses on the findings relating to Aim 1 of the study, looking at the four substantial changes that had been introduced in Foston Hall. The discussion first provides an overview of how the course unfolded, including a report of the participants' perceptions of the course. It then goes on to review each of the four main changes to the programme in turn. The discussion focuses on the experiences of different stakeholders, and how the changes affected the delivery and outcomes of the programme.

5.1 Overview of course

In the preceding chapters, the Foston Hall pilot has been described as a five week course, each week being made up of two sessions from the community based course, joined back to back.

In practice, however, there were a number of changes to the course, notably that it was delivered over six weeks; and there was some significant restructuring of the course material. The reasons for this are explored in detail in the following sections. However, to make sense of the discussion, it is useful first to briefly outline how the course developed.

In addition, this section also provides a brief picture of how the women from Foston Hall reacted to the course. This too provides some useful context for the discussion that follows.

How the course unfolded

Key points to note are as follows; these are drawn from the weekly reports provided by the Family Links facilitators:

- the prison had recruited around ten women to take part in the course. These had been selected through the OASys¹⁰ process, an assessment activity within the prison
- the selected participants were in the main women with children, who were liable to be a good way through their sentence, and who were felt suitable for the programme; attendance was voluntary
- the prison also provided a member of staff to support the facilitators; this was a library assistant, who was also a qualified drama tutor¹¹
- attendance in Week 1 was very poor, which seems to have arisen from a range of communication difficulties; the session was turned into a half day introductory session, with the full course restarting the following week
- in Week 2, the full course was restarted; the morning went well, but the afternoon session was problematic; three women did not return the following week¹²
- between Weeks 2 and 3, the facilitators restructured the course considerably, to address some of the issues that had arisen in Week 2

¹⁰ Offender Assessment System

¹¹ She is referred to throughout this report as the Prison Support Worker

¹² In the case of one woman, this was because the prison had decided she was not suitable for the programme; in the case of the other two, they appear to have chosen not to return

- from Week 3, the course continued smoothly, with a group of six participants who returned consistently each week
- the morning sessions started promptly, but in the afternoons, the start of the session was often delayed by between 45 minutes and an hour and a quarter; this was because of staff meetings which meant no one was available to escort the women to the course
- in Week 5, the prison experienced a lock down (all women locked in their cells); despite this, the prison made special provision for the women to attend the course

Some of these points are explored further in the following chapters.

The women's perceptions and experiences of the course

A focus group for the women on the course was held in the afternoon of the penultimate session of the course. Their comments are reported on a range of issues through the remainder of this report. However, it is first worth drawing together an overview of their general reactions to the Foston Hall pilot.

Throughout the focus group, the women were upbeat, with lots of laughing and a real warmth between each other. They seemed keen that they should all take part in the discussion, with the women encouraging each other to tell their stories of what had happened on the course. The general mood of the group was one of excitement and enthusiasm, and the women seemed to have really engaged in the course – which was also demonstrated by their consistent attendance levels.

It's fun, alright, it's showing us different ways.

Course participant

I thought it would be boring – but it's not.

Course participant

The women reported that the course had brought them closer together, and they had really enjoyed "working together – and learning off each other". They also welcomed the fact that they now knew more friendly faces on the wings.

There was also a common feeling across the group that this was more than just an enjoyable day out of the cells, but that there was a real point to attending:

It makes you see things different, gives you ideas

Course participant

It makes us look at ourselves and how we are going wrong

Course participant

They also particularly appreciated getting a personal letter from "the boss of the Parenting Puzzle".

When asked whether the programme should be rolled out to other prisons, there was a resounding and unanimous "Yes". This then prompted a discussion between the women about what would be the best settings to deliver the programme. There was a strong feeling that the programme should be provided in Young Offender jails and mother and baby units, and that it should be taken into other settings with young parents, such as schools.

It's good for young mums ... it can teach you a lot on this course.

Course participant

As this discussion continued, several of the women started to argue that the course should also be taken into men's prisons: "Dad's need to wake up!" While there was general agreement on this, there was some debate about whether the course would need to be changed for men.

Men wouldn't like the games [like throwing balls].

Yes, but if you looked at us on the out, you'd say the same thing about us.
So maybe it's the same with men.

Exchange between course participants

There were some aspects of the course where the women were more critical, notably two exercises, which the women described as "the warm and fuzzy teddy bear", and "the paper on your feet thing" (*Suppression*).

Writing your problems on a bit of paper, and putting it under your feet, that felt silly.

Course participant

There was also a shared feeling that the first full week of the course (Week 2) had been too intense (see Section 5.2 for a further discussion). Three participants did not return to the course after Week 2, and several of the remaining participants reported that they had also intended to give up too, although were persuaded to give it a further try by the prison support worker.

I hated it then, but I love it now.

Course participant

However, the women also recognised that the facilitators had responded to this, for which they got a lot of credit.

[The facilitators] listened to us and changed it, it made it worth coming back.
... they're lovely people.

Course participant

One last issue to note is that many of the women felt the course was aimed at parents of younger children, and that the material was not relevant to teenagers. One woman disagreed – "It's OK for me, and I've got teenagers". Nevertheless, this may be something that Family Links wishes to consider further.

Overall, then, while the format and intensity of the course initially posed some teething problems, the course was universally well received by the women, and was seen as both useful and fun.

Finally, as in Styal, perhaps one of the clearest measures that the women were enjoying the course was that they were voting with their feet. As one of the resettlement managers noted:

The fact that they're still there and it's still going on, that's a good sign!

Resettlement manager

5.2 Running the "full" programme

The first substantial change to the Foston Hall course was to run the Nurturing Programme at the same depth as in community settings. This section draws out the key lessons from that. It was not the intention of this review to systematically report on each exercise in the programme; however, where relevant, lessons from specific exercises have been noted. The discussion starts with a review of the first full session of the programme, which took place in Week 2. A number of issues emerged in the afternoon of this session, from which there is some useful learning.

The experience of Week 2

Because there had been so few attendees in Week 1, the course was restarted the following week, so Week 2 as the first full session of the course. This afternoon of this session proved problematic. As noted above, the women on the course reacted badly to it, and it was clear to the facilitators and the prison support worker that it had not been well received.

They just didn't have the energy for it, and were getting quite obstructive with their view points.

Family Links facilitator – debrief report

The first week¹³ I followed them back to the wing, and they were quite negative about it, saying they didn't like certain things about it – that it was childish.

Prison support worker

From the facilitators' point of view, there were perhaps two broad causes: the behaviour of one participant; and how much material they had to cover in a full day session.

One was that the group had a person, who was very hyperactive, very dominant. Her behaviour was quite challenging – so the dynamic of the group was quite tricky.

Family Links facilitator

While the morning got off OK, the afternoon we had too much, it was just requiring them to concentrate too much on the taught material. So they were getting restless, they were losing concentration, they were losing the plot.

Family Links facilitator

From the participants' perspective, the problem was more specifically one exercise, which looked at emotional language that can be used with children.

The warm and fuzzy thing, the teddy bear. That felt stupid, we didn't do it. We sacked the teddy!

Course participant

It's difficult to explain, but they felt humiliated and patronised by the warm fuzzy feeling bit.

Prison support worker

The issue of the difficult participant relates in part to how the group was recruited, which is discussed further in Chapter 6. However, the overload that some of the women felt, and their reaction to the warm fuzzy exercise relate directly to the Foston Hall pilot being a "full" version of the programme. Looking more closely at this session therefore provides some useful lessons.

¹³ This refers to the first *full* week of the course – ie Week 2

The women's experience of overload

The material covered on this day would have been two sessions in the community. In Styal, each full day joined two community sessions together, but then softened their impact by using videos and so on. In Foston Hall, in contrast, the aim was to run the programme in its "full" form – so the first full week of the course was essentially two full community sessions presented back to back. This, however, appears to have been too much, which afternoons characterised by:

... low energy levels and distraction and finding it difficult to concentrate.

Family Links facilitator

In that first session, this was further exacerbated by the demands of accreditation:

And we were still going on, as I felt the pressure of getting through the content, so they could get their accreditation booklets sorted.

Family Links facilitator

The facilitators acknowledged that this had proved to be overly ambitious, and it suggests that full day sessions are too much if the course is to be run at the same intensity as in the community. The Foston Hall pilot, however, had to continue as full day sessions – which meant the facilitators needed to rework their plans considerably.

We learned a big lesson from that, that the afternoon has to be much more chilled, we have a couple of breaks instead of one, we do the accreditation booklets with them, we do some relaxation with them, we do some activity which is not so demanding, which needs less reflection.

Family Links facilitator

It's interesting to note that in the Foston Hall pilot, the facilitators drew the same conclusion as in Styal: that running two community sessions back to back is too intense. However, it is also interesting that they identified a different solution to this, one more in keeping with the original approach of the Nurturing Programme:

I guess my take on the videos was that it was quite passive, and you'd have some discussion after it, which was fine. But it didn't do the relationship stuff, which we do here, because we do interactive stuff, we do a board game, we have nice chats round our break time, we try relaxation, which they can take back with them.

Family Links facilitator

The reaction to warm and fuzzy

The negative reaction to this exercise was put down in part to having done this in the first full session of the course.

It was very early in the course to introduce that vocabulary, and it probably would go down better later in the course.

Family Links facilitator

I think it can be very difficult to do as an adult, a childish exercise ... It was not appropriate *at that stage*. I think once they've been in the group a few more weeks, and become a bit more comfortable, they're more open to being more childlike.

Prison support worker

However, this does not appear to be the whole explanation. Even three weeks later, during this fieldwork, the women appeared to remain hostile to the language, and the warm and

fuzzy props used in the exercise ("we sacked the teddy!"). This is in contrast to their reaction to the *Suppression* exercise, the other exercise that they really reacted against. The women refused to take part in *Suppression*, as they thought it was "silly" – but they were still prepared to give it a hearing. Their continued hostility to "warm and fuzzy" suggests something deeper may have been going on.

One factor may have been that the point of the exercise had not been fully understood by them.

We could have introduced it in a way that helped explain that it was a language that helps children articulate feelings – they may have taken it then.
Family Links facilitator

If the women believed they were being told this was language for them, rather than for talking with their children, this may partly explain why they felt patronised.

Beyond that, it may be that this language simply doesn't work with this client group. In Styal, one of the facilitators worked in the prison service, and she had removed some aspects of the course because she felt they wouldn't work with prisoners; in the Styal pilot, "warm and fuzzy" only got a passing mention. Similarly, the prison support worker in the Foston Hall pilot also felt there was a mismatch with this client group:

If it was up to me facilitating it, I'd change it. Because some of these are hard women, and when you go in, you've got to be careful. ... you know, they're tough and they have to keep face about it.

Prison support worker

Hence, both individuals with prison experience have questioned this material – so it should at least be considered whether this exercise should be changed for the prison setting. That said, it would be useful to pilot this material again, with a fuller explanation, and later in the course.

How the women engaged with the course material

The facilitators adapted the course, introducing more "chilled" afternoons, and the six women who returned to the course in the second full week engaged far more positively through the remainder of the course. It is useful to outline how they engaged with some of the particular elements of the course.

As noted above, the women seemed really enthusiastic about the course, and there appeared to be a pattern to what they enjoyed most: activities where there was a clear task and goal.

The exercises where they've done a bit of flipchart brainstorming have been good, they've been able to enjoy that and come together.
Family Links facilitator

They were doing the folder work, they really *loved* the folder work.
Prison support worker

The games that we've played have gone down really well.
Family Links facilitator

The women also appeared to be picking up some of the key messages of the course. For instance, there was a recognition that the course was not just about how to parent, but about their attitudes and how these affect how they raise their children.

[It's about] how we are, and how we expect our kids to behave.
Course participant

In addition, a number of examples were starting to emerge suggesting the course was starting to change some of the women's behaviour – even if they were sometimes bashful about sharing it in the group discussion:

They don't always tell us, but [one participant] said [to another], yeah you *do* want a star, because you did that, that and that on the wing. And she was all embarrassed. So they're watching each other and supporting each other.
Prison support worker

This reluctance to share positive experiences was also noted by one of the facilitators. She felt she was more likely to hear examples one-to-one in the coffee break than in the group feedback sessions. She contrasted this with what happens in community groups: there, the feedback sessions are an important part of bonding the group and of shared learning.

In a community group, that's the magic moment at the beginning of a session. You get four or five examples of somebody trying something. But [in the prison] it doesn't happen like that at all. So we miss a perfect opportunity to reinforce and encourage the more sceptical ones – they don't get that, oh *she* had a go at that, I'll have a go.

Family Links facilitator

In the later sessions, the women seemed to be becoming more comfortable with discussing substantive issues in a group. For instance, one participant reported back about an angry altercation she had had:

She regretted it, she felt straight away she hadn't handled it well. And she was able to say to the group, how could I have done it differently. ... And the group did come up with some ideas about empathy and appropriate expectations. I waited a bit to see if they'd come up with a choice and consequence. They didn't, but once I mentioned it, they said, yes, yes, and she said, Oh yeah, I'm going to try that next time. ... And I thought here's a gem, she's actually asking now, and we've only got another week to go.

Family Links facilitator

The facilitator's frustration with a five week course is also apparent, an issue that is explored further in Chapter 6.

Finally, there was certainly evidence the material could have a profound effect. One woman on the course talked about how she'd realised she wanted to become much more involved with bringing up her children, rather than handing them over to her grandmother all the time.

If I had a problem, I would pass my kids to my nan – but I want that to change. I want to spend more time with them.

Course participant

While this is easy to say, for this particular woman, there seemed to have been a real recognition of the importance of this, as she emphatically stated, "They're *my* kids, not hers."

Praise and relaxation

A particular area the facilitators wanted to emphasise was the importance of praise. There was a general acknowledgement that the course had been successful in doing this – and the women appeared to have picked up strongly how important this was. There was genuine excitement about the shells and stickers that were awarded to praise the women during the course. Furthermore, during the focus group, a couple of women readily awarded shells to praise each other – and the author!

The stickers are good – they make us feel wanted.

Course participant

In addition, during the discussion, there were several occasions where women mentioned praise spontaneously: for instance, one of the women mentioned praising someone on the wing, and another said she would use it more with her children. The facilitators also noted some successes in this area:

We're beginning to model praise more comfortably in the group, the group are more easily taking it on.

Family Links facilitator

They've praised their friends a lot and got a lot of praise back.

Family Links facilitator

And these successes appeared to have become more embedded as the course progressed:

I've notice more this last week of how more easily they've found praising each other, using the reward system, helping each other. So it seems after five weeks they're feeling more comfortable as a group.

Family Links facilitator

Another priority for the facilitators was to support the women in developing relaxation skills, although time pressures limited some of the work they wanted to do with yoga and massage. While the women were positive about this, they were less enthusiastic than they were about praise, and some of the women felt a bit self conscious about it.

They've been willing to do it, even if they've struggled with it. ... some said, well I find this really hard to do, but they acknowledged that it's not a bad thing as well.

Family Links facilitator

I don't find it as good, my friend laughs at me.

Course participant

As with praise, there was a sense of the barriers coming down over the length of the course, and that the women were becoming more able to engage with the relaxation work. As one of the facilitators reported:

Well it feels like it's only now after five weeks that they've got to know us, so we could actually start to be more creative with that. Because at first, they looked at us as if we were mad. And it feels like now they're just getting it.

Family Links facilitator

That said, the impression given was that most of their relaxation work was done in the training group, rather than out of the wings – although one woman reported:

When I'm angry, I try it on the wings.

Course participant

The emotional impact on the women

Key questions for the pilot were whether the depth of material would be overly distressing for the women, and if this was the case, whether they would be able to get effective support in a prison setting.

It certainly was the case that the women in this setting came from emotionally difficult backgrounds --and that this was more consistent across the group than is the case in community groups.

They're just normal people, but they've had rough tough lives, and in a community group you might just get one or two, but I think every women in the course that's been running, they have *all* had some horrendous experiences.

Prison support worker

Furthermore, that led to a different pattern of disclosure than in a community group.

There's been probably more disclosure of abusive and violent relationships than would come up in a community group. ... It's more widely spread, and it kind of ricochets, so that if one discloses there might be several others.

Family Links facilitator

However, this did *not* appear to have lead to the women becoming highly distressed, either within the group or between the sessions.

There hasn't been any crying. There's been maybe quietness. But there hasn't been a sense that we've worried about anyone going out feeling disturbed.

Family Links facilitator

I'm not aware that others have gone away and had issues about their emotional health in the intervening week. ... I think we would have heard through [the prison] if there had been a big issue.

Family Links facilitator

One facilitator suggested that this may have been because the "self protection" displayed by the women in Styal was also operating here.

It's often brushed off as, that's my childhood experience and that's OK. So, my brother beat me up and I'm glad about it because it made me tougher. A sense of being damaged by that doesn't always seem to be reflected, so I don't think that they're necessarily absorbing the full weight of their emotional legacy. I think there's a protection factor going on.

Family Links facilitator

While it was not needed in this pilot, an emotional "safety net" was in place in case any of the women had become distressed between sessions. Because it wasn't used, it is not possible to assess how effective this would have been. However, it's worth noting that is included the following:

- the prison chaplain and mental health team had been engaged during the planning stages of the pilot
- each woman had a personal officer she could turn to
- counselling support through the prison listeners scheme and the Samaritans

It was not possible to interview the chaplain, anyone from the mental health team or a prison officer during the fieldwork for this report, so it is unclear how engaged they were with the pilot scheme. However, the support worker from the prison indicated the women would be most likely to turn to counselling support or their personal officer.

They have listeners, which are the prisoners themselves, so they can request a listener, and a prisoner will come who's had some counselling training.

They can ring the Samaritans any time they like, and they have personal officers they can talk to.

Prison support worker

It should also be noted that the prison support worker herself offered a further, informal channel of support, as the women had access to her through her job in the library. Although from observations in the group she clearly had a good, open relationship with the women, she noted that the women hadn't sought any such support from her.

One question that was posed at the start of the study was how much officers in general would support the women and the aspirations of the study. As it was not possible to interview a wing officer, this was not explored. However, two of the prison staff interviewed pointed out that it's important to be realistic about what support officers can provide: they have different roles and priorities.

I guess officers will feel very differently. [For them] it's about discipline, all those sorts of things. They *can* be there and appropriate with people, I know, ... but of course it's resources, and they have their wing to run, and they're not necessarily giving everyone that individual attention.

Prison drama therapist

If you open the can of worms, and you send the woman back on the wing, and there's two officers with forty other prisoners, well you need some other sort of backup.

Prison support worker

The findings from this study, then, are that even with the course being delivered in its "full" form, and even where the women are engaging with the material, they are doing so at a level that is emotionally safe for them. The "self protection" that they appear to be using means that the women do not become overly distressed, either in the sessions or back on the wings.

Nevertheless, while that has been the experience of *this* course, there will always be a risk that in future courses, some women will need support between sessions. It is important, therefore, that as future courses are developed, effective support mechanisms should still be put in place.

It should also be noted that, as in Foston Hall, where the prison provides a support worker for the programme, they can provide an additional channel of support between the sessions. This mirrors what happens in community courses where participants can contact the facilitators between sessions. It is therefore recommended that the individuals selected for this role should have the skills to provide such support if needed.

5.3 Practicing the skills and strategies

The second of the four main changes to the programme was to encourage the women on the course to practice the new skills and strategies they were learning. However, while the women engaged well with the course in its "full" form, the findings relating to *Time to have a go* are perhaps more cautious.

From the women's point of view, they talked less in the focus group about *Time to have a go* than other aspects of the course. While they reported "we all tried it", there were few specific examples given. One woman did say she had been trying her relaxation skills when she got angry on the wing, and another mentioned she had tried praising someone. It was difficult, however, to obtain concrete examples of the women having a go back on the wing.

The facilitators were also less sure about how well it had worked. In a community course, this is quite a structured part of the programme: a session will focus on a particular skill or strategy, and invite the participants to practice that over the coming week, with their family. In

Foston Hall, in contrast, the women did not appear to be engaging with it in such a formal way; also, as in Styal – and as expected – there was very little practice with family members.

I don't think much has happened. I haven't sensed that they go away thinking, right, I'm going to do a choice and consequence.

Family Links facilitator

They've had very little chance to practice with their children, even on the phone.

Family Links facilitator

That said, a number of examples of practicing the skills did emerge, with family members, women on the wing, and each other – and also themselves. For example:

There was: when I spoke to my mum when she put the phone down on me, I was going to say to her if you listen to me, we'll get it sorted out, if you don't we'll never get it sorted out. So they are trying it.

Family Links facilitator

One of the girls wanted to hit someone, but she didn't, instead she said that I gave her a choice, and that worked.

Prison support worker

I've seen a couple of women doing it with each other, you know, I'm going to give you a star today because you've been really good – so they are doing it with each other. They're sort of play acting it, but that's fine, because they're trying it out.

Prison support worker

And the nurturing self, they're having a go at that, definitely.

Prison support worker

So while it did not have the structure of *Time to have a go* in a community programme, it did seem to be something the women engaged in a more informal way, which appeared to be useful.

Sometimes they don't, they say they haven't. Sometimes they'll say yes, I did this, I had a go at praising, and that worked. I think that works quite well – on the whole, I think one or two will have had a go each week.

Prison support worker

It is interesting to consider why the women may not have engaged so formally in the Foston Hall pilot. One factor may have been the structure of the course:

- as the sessions were full days, they were covering a lot more material than in a community session, so the women may have been less clear about exactly *what* they should be practicing
- in addition, as the course was only five weeks, the women only got a few weeks between sessions to practice, and so may not have got into the weekly "routine" that would happen in a community course
- in this context, it is notable that practicing in the lunchtimes between the morning and afternoon sessions did not appear to be particularly fruitful

This may also have been exacerbated by the time that was lost from the late starts to some afternoon sessions. One of the facilitators reported feeling a bit rushed, and that the guidance to the women about what to practice may not have been clear. She suggested giving out written slips at the end of sessions to make this clear, as was done in some community courses.

Another explanation may be linked to the fact that, as noted, the women did not tend to engage so much with the group feedback sessions.

The strategies are being delivered in the same way, and are being received quite well. But there isn't that sense of taking them home, trying them out, and coming back and saying this worked, that didn't, things like that. So there isn't the sense of mutual encouragement, they don't have that opportunity that a community group would.

Family Links facilitator

One final finding is particularly important in the prison context. During the planning stages of the pilot, it had been suggested the women might practice some of their new skills and strategies with the prison officers. As well as giving them another way to practice, it was thought that by engaging with the officers more positively, this might improve the women's relationship with the officers – and therefore improve their experience in the prison.

However, having suggested this to the women, both facilitators felt that this was actually very unrealistic: from the women's perspective, the risks were simply too great:

I think the whole power structure is very difficult for them to be assertive, even respectfully. So an I statement is probably not a realistic expectation.

Family Links facilitator

[One of the participants] explained it really well: although it's an assertive response, if she feels that an officer might take it to be aggressive – if they're practicing it and don't quite get it right, or if they get it right but the officer just thinks they're being clever – it would then get them into trouble. ... I'd assumed it would be a great opportunity to use an "I statement" on the officer because she didn't get her post on time. And she gasped in horror, thinking, *I don't think so*, the last thing I want to do is upset the officer, or I won't get my post at all.

Family Links facilitator

Whatever the reality of officers reactions, the women saw these risks as very real – so in future prison programmes, *Time to have a go* with officers should probably not be encouraged.

5.4 Can the programme be delivered just by external facilitators?

The third change from the Styal pilot was that both facilitators were external. This was done partly so that Family Links could shape the course content in Foston Hall. But in addition, they were keen to explore whether delivering the course just with external facilitators was realistic. This was important because if the programme is to be rolled out across prisons, one likely model is that it will be delivered by external Health Visitors.

The *practical* issues raised in the Foston Hall pilot were similar to those identified in Styal: access, security, needing to be escorted, and so on. These are explored in the Styal report, and have not been considered further here. Rather, the following discussion attempts to draw out some of the more substantive issues related to having external facilitators.

Is the course viable with only external facilitators?

The first question is whether it's actually feasible to run the course *only* using external facilitators. If so, the Styal review suggested this would be attractive to prisons, as they would not need to find staff to support the programme.

The findings from Foston Hall, however, indicate that even if the facilitators themselves are external, they will still need an internal member of prison staff to act as a support worker for the programme. Foston Hall provided a member of staff for this role, and the facilitators felt she had been essential to making the pilot work.

Crucial, totally crucial, there's no way we could have done this without someone who knows the routines and protocols, and cleared stuff for us.
Family Links facilitator

However, this has consequences for rolling the Nurturing Programme out to other prisons: if it is to be delivered by Health Visitors or other external facilitators, then the prison would need to provide a support worker. Was it realistic to ask prisons to provide that support?

This question was explored with Foston Hall's Head of Learning and Skills. She acknowledged that this was a "stretch on resources", but she felt it was not a question of whether this was sustainable: if a prison wants to use external facilitators to deliver this course, it's *essential*.

I don't think it could work. ... the reason it wouldn't work is because of issues about keys, about rooms, about breaks, and about prison procedures. If the people coming in from outside didn't know about how the prison operates during the course of the day – like the lockdown for instance, like tallies, like keys, like smoking breaks, like any number of things that people from the outside wouldn't know about, then I really don't see how that could work.
Head of Learning and Skills

In Foston Hall, because of their commitment to the programme, they were willing to make a staff member available. As the programme is rolled out, then if Family Links intends to use the "external facilitator" model, they will need to negotiate with prisons to provide this internal support worker. As noted above, Family Links should also negotiate that the support worker is available to provide support to the women, if needed, between sessions.

This raises another question about who would be appropriate to take this role. In Foston Hall, they were selected for their skills set as much as their knowledge of the prison routine. This would appear important.

We looked at it more in terms of being a workshop, so it was probably better with someone like either a drama therapy tutor, or someone who's got experience with drama projects¹⁴.
Head of Learning and Skills

Other issues from having just external facilitators

Another question for the study was: is anything *lost* from having just external facilitators? One issue identified is that an internal member of staff can do a lot of effective behind the scenes work to keep the course running smoothly, and the women supported. For instance, the prison drama therapist who runs internal courses mentioned:

I did lots of talking to staff on the wings, trying to inform them, this is the kind of thing that's coming up, can you just keep an eye on them?
Prison drama therapist

Quite often I'm going round, visiting inmates myself ... it's something I feel I need to do.
Prison drama therapist

¹⁴ When reviewing the first draft of this report, it was also pointed out that another requirement for any member of prison staff allocated to support the programme is that they have experience in group settings.

By having only external facilitators, this internal networking and advocacy – with other departments, with officers, with prisoners – will be lost. This is particularly important with a course such as the Nurturing Programme: for the programme to work effectively, it needs to keep several different parts of the prison "on board" – to advertise the course, to recruit and escort the participants, to provide facilities, to support the participants between sessions, and so on, a point noted in Foston Hall.

I think Family Links are most definitely in the hands of the people working in the prisons.

Head of Learning and Skills

Hence, the pilot suggests that if the programme is run using only external facilitators, there will be no one to do the important "back room" work to keep the project on tracks. The difficulties in recruiting people in Week 1 may be an illustration of this.

To compensate for this, this may be another role that could be taken on by the internal support worker assigned to the programme.

The women's perceptions on having external staff

This was briefly explored in the women's focus group. Interestingly, they preferred having external facilitators: it felt safer.

You can say any stuff you like, because they'll disappear afterwards.

Course participant

While this is clearly a vote of confidence in the facilitators, it also highlights the potential for problems around confidentiality and disclosure. In situations such as where there is ongoing risk to children, facilitators may be in a position where they *have* to pass on details of what has been said to the prison, or to other authorities. If the participants do not understand this, they may disclose information that they otherwise would not. While this issue was not explored in the study, clear confidentiality and disclosure groundrules – with course participants and with the prison – will be important.

Classroom management

Another issue raised by the prison-based facilitator in Styal is that external facilitators may be "taken in" by the way some participants present themselves in prison. It was suggested that compared with community groups, prisoners are likely to push the training boundaries more, and may be more manipulative towards the facilitators.

This issue was explored in the pro formas that the facilitators completed each week. The facilitators' overall sense was that there were occasions where the women's behaviour was more challenging than would be expected in a community group. That said, the behaviour was always at a level that an experienced Nurturing Programme facilitator could cope with. Possibly the one exception to this was the afternoon of the first full session, the reasons for which are discussed above.

Related to this, one incident is perhaps worthy of note. Early in the course, one of the facilitators brought in a packet of biscuits for the course. She had to be advised by the prison staff that technically this was trafficking, and that it could cause problems. For instance, if there were women on other courses who did *not* have biscuits, this could lead to discipline problems.

While the prison handled this in a suitably low key way – and while it was a source of great amusement to the women on the course ("You're gonna be locked up with us!") – it's a useful

reminder that external facilitators will need to remain alert to the boundaries and regulations set by the prison.

5.5 Issues arising from accreditation

The final major change from the Styal pilot was the introduction of accreditation. This raised a number of questions: would it work in a prison setting, would the women engage with it, would they put in sufficient hours and get the range of experiences needed? It was also of interest to determine what demands accreditation placed on the facilitators. These questions are explored below.

How important is accreditation to the prison?

As noted, one of the reasons that Family Links was moving towards accredited courses was that it would be more attractive to organisations commissioning the Nurturing Programme. This was tested out in the research. In fact, for Foston Hall, it proved *not* to be a critical issue for the pilot.

It was important, but I don't think it would have stopped us doing it had it not been in place. The content of the course and the results for the women in more important for this type of intervention than the certificate.

Head of Learning and Skills

That said, the Head of Learning and Skills did believe that Family Links should be going down this route, as it would help in financial terms.

I think accreditation would be important in terms of trying to seek out funding. ... Things will be an awful lot tighter in the future in terms of what we can deliver and what we can't deliver, money-wise. So if the way round it is to attract money in, then with an accredited course, sometimes that's a lot easier.

Head of Learning and Skills

This therefore validated Family Links' move towards accredited courses. Nevertheless, the pilot was intended to test a range of issues relating to delivering accreditation in a prison setting, and the findings are outlined below.

The experience during the programme

While the prison did not see accreditation as critical, the fact that the course was accredited was seen as valuable by the women on the course, in terms of how they are regarded by the prison authorities.

They understand that they'll get a certificate. It also stands them in great stead in the prison, because if they're seen as doing courses, that's deemed as good stuff. They understand that to get a piece of paper is important, because it looks like they're trying and going through some sort of rehabilitation.

Prison support worker

One of the questions during the planning stages was whether women in prisons would be put off by the written work. There was evidence of this with one woman on the course, but also that despite her reservations, she rose to the challenge.

There's one girl who definitely doesn't like written work, but the facilitator will sit with her and go through it, and that's ok. I think that's going to be a source

of great pride for her, because at first she was all, I don't like writing, but she's actually producing some great stuff.

Prison support worker

It would appear, then, that with the support the women are receiving, the rigours of accreditation are actually building the women's confidence.

The written work was a particularly welcome activity within the sessions. After the first full session had proved too intense, the facilitators restructured the afternoons of the following sessions – to include some lighter material, and some time on the accreditation booklets. The structured nature of the booklets appears to have appealed to the women.

They're quite happy to do their accreditation books ... they felt they were doing something positive because they were getting their books completed.

Family Links facilitator

The women seemed to particularly appreciate that they could do the written work at their own pace:

It's not [off-putting], because you write as much or as little as you like – you can write one sentence or fill the whole bubble.

Prison support worker

What was less clear was how much accreditation work the women were doing back in their cells. This work included reflection and practice, and writing up these experiences. In total, they needed to do about 35 hours of this, so that with the 25 hours of session time, they would have done the 60 hours needed for accreditation. One facilitator expressed doubts about whether they would do the 60 hours.

That's really hard to say, I'm thinking probably not, because part of it comes from the actual practice, and I don't think they're doing that around the prison.

Family Links facilitator

This was acknowledged as putting some pressure on the facilitation team.

We've only got one more week to make sure the folders are up to at least level 1, so I feel a bit responsible to get them up to level 1. They're capable of level 1, I'm just not sure they're folders are capturing it.

Family Links facilitator

The interviews explored why the women were not doing as much accreditation work between sessions as hoped. The reasons were similar to the low levels of *Time to have a go* practice:

- the five week structure of the course did not leave many weeks between sessions. Because the first session ended poorly, this only left three weeks to do 35 hours of accreditation work – or over ten hours of practice per week. If the course had run over ten weeks, they would have needed to do around five hours per week
- in community courses, participants get reminded each week over ten weeks about accreditation. In the prison course, they only get reminders over five weeks – which may explain them not getting into the habit of doing their accreditation work.
- the accreditation work in the sessions all took place in the afternoons – and because these tended to start late, the sessions felt very rushed. The facilitators did not therefore have enough time to encourage the women to do their practice

[Fitting it in] has been really difficult – because we've left it to the afternoons ... because we keep losing this hour, it's difficult.

Family Links facilitator

For this reason, the facilitator most involved with piloting accreditation in the community felt strongly that prison courses should be extended to 10 or even 12 weeks. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

Given the women were not capturing as much accreditation as they needed, the facilitators were looking for ways to support them. Two partial solutions included:

- the facilitators themselves trying to capture some of the evidence during the sessions, noting down some of the women's observations and experiences

I have been doing little bits. But if someone's jotting notes all the time, it can be distracting, a bit oppressive. Our jigsaw bit is a good way, we keep that out and jot things down as they come up, normally it's finished with and put away.

Family Links facilitator

- using the family day that had been set up at the end of the programme to capture further evidence

Maybe we need a tutor's form to capture what they're doing on the final day.

Family Links facilitator

It was also pointed out that more use could be made of the prison support worker – as she could support and encourage the women with the accreditation work in the weeks between sessions.

[The prison support worker] provides a really useful link from Monday to Friday, she's got her own folder ... I think if people want to do it, there should be a prison person who can provide tutorial support at any time.

Family Links facilitator

This is perhaps a further task to be built into the role description for the prison support worker.

One final question explored was whether the women would see any conflict between the facilitators' roles of supporting them while at the same time assessing them for their accreditation. This did not, however appear to be a concern.

Not at all, I don't think the women have given it a second thought that they'll be marking them.

Prison support worker

I think they see us as on their side, whether they're doing their booklet or not doing their booklet.

Family Links facilitator

Recommendations from Chapter 5

Delivering the course at its full intensity appears to be beneficial in prisons, but if the course is to be delivered in full days, then the afternoon session needs to be lighter in tone. It would not seem useful to return to the videos used in Styal; rather, the afternoon sessions should involve group activities.

Family Links should keep some aspects of the course under review. For instance, this group felt that the programme was relevant to younger, but not older children; and there was strong resistance to the "warm and fuzzy" language of one exercise. Further piloting, particularly in a ten week course, would be useful.

Future courses should still ensure effective support mechanisms are put in place in the prison, in case the participants become distressed between sessions.

Further attention is needed about how to make *Time to have a go* more effective in prisons. This might be addressed in part by moving to a ten day course: it will be clearer what the participants are being asked to practice, and they will get into a "routine" of practicing. It may also be useful to hand out paper slips to the participants to make the practice task clearer.

In future courses, practicing skills and strategies with prison officers should not be encouraged: the perceived risks for prisoners would appear to be too great.

Some thought should be given to the feedback sessions, as the women in Foston Hall did not particularly engage with them. Again, a ten week course might be useful in bringing down some of the barriers, but it would be useful to think of other ways of encouraging feedback in the sessions.

If Family Links intends to use external facilitators to deliver the Nurturing Programme, then as they roll the programme out to other prisons, they will need to negotiate with prisons to provide an internal support worker. The support worker's skills will need to match the personal development and facilitative style of the programme.

Where the prison provides a support worker for the programme, it should be agreed that their role does not relate just to the course sessions, but that they are also there to provide support to the participants *between* the sessions, if it is needed.

A further role for the support worker may be to be the internal advocate for the programme, doing all the "back room" work with other departments needed to keep the programme running smoothly.

Clear confidentiality and disclosure groundrules – with course participants and with the prison – will be important.

Family Links should continue their moves towards accrediting the Nurturing Programme, as this may open up funding opportunities.

Accreditation will be far easier to achieve if the courses move from five sessions to ten sessions.

A further role for the prison support worker is supporting the participants through their accreditation work in the weeks between sessions.

6. Further key lessons from Foston Hall

This chapter considers the remaining three aims of the programme:

- Aim 2: lessons about the structure and duration of the programme
- Aim 3: reviewing how the prison context supported the programme
- Aim 4: examining the support needs for the facilitators

All of these provide important lessons in relation to rolling the Nurturing Programme out across other prisons. Again, the findings are drawn from the reports of the different stakeholders interviewed in Foston Hall, and the subsequent telephone interviews.

6.1 The structure and duration of the course

Aim 2 of the project refers to identifying lessons about the content, structure and timing of the Nurturing Programme in prison settings. The discussion in Chapter 5 has already reviewed the key lessons on course content; it also pointed to some lessons about course structure and duration. These are explored further here.

During the Styal pilot – and at the start of the Foston Hall pilot – two broad models were under consideration for running the Nurturing Programme in a prison:

- ten half days over ten weeks – closely mirroring how community course run
- five full days over five weeks – the model used in both Styal and Foston Hall

In Styal, on balance it felt that, while imperfect, the second of these models was an acceptable compromise in the prison setting.

The Foston Hall pilot, by contrast, has come down strongly in favour of running the course over ten weeks. Furthermore, a third model has emerged:

- twelve half day sessions, essentially the ten week model plus a pre- and post-week

The arguments relating to each of these models are explored below.

Five full days versus ten half days

The experiences in Foston Hall had strongly persuaded both facilitators that if the course is to be run in its "full" form, then it has to be delivered over ten weeks.

I am absolutely convinced about the ten week delivery, particularly because they're an emotionally challenged group.

Family Links facilitator

We've both come to the conclusion that the ten weeks are important for the content of the programme to be reflected upon, for relationships to build up even more, and for the women to be bright and ready to learn.

Family Links facilitator

This was true even for the facilitator who had been involved in the Styal pilot. There, she had accepted that the diluted version of the programme that had been run in Styal *could be* delivered over five weeks. But in the "full" version of the course at Foston Hall, which involved far more reflection and self-exploration, she felt strongly that five weeks was insufficient.

We would not recommend it as a model, because it's just not long enough to do the reflective work that's necessary.

Family Links facilitator

A range of arguments for a ten week course were identified, some of which have already been touched on in Chapter 5. The key arguments are outlined below:

- at the course's full intensity, a whole day is too tiring for the women to retain their concentration and work productively. As seen, in part this underlay the difficulties experienced in the afternoon of the first full session of the course
- the women were only just starting to open up and relax with each other and the trainers after four weeks. As discussed in Chapter 5, it was only at the end of the course that the women were able to let down their guard to try some of the relaxation exercises, and to start sharing their experiences with each other

We've all just got to a point now when we can be very open, the groups developed well, and we all trust each other, and it will all be over next week. I think ten weeks would have been far, far better.

Prison support worker

We've been with them five weeks, we're feeling comfortable and relaxed with them, we've got a good relationship with them. If we had another five weeks, I think we'd pick up some good momentum in terms of how they would be reflecting on things and developing their understanding.

Family Links facilitator

- ten weeks allows far more opportunity for the participants to practice their skills and reflect on them. As well as having more time, a ten week course can get them into the habit of doing the work, and they can start to see patterns in their thoughts and behaviours

I think all of them are struggling on the reflection bit ... they've had three reflections to do but they've only done one, because of the way the sessions have been put together. That doesn't help them to see that there's a pattern to it. With a ten week course it would be much clearer.

Family Links facilitator

- ten weeks would also support their accreditation work. They would have more weeks over which to do the required hours; and doing the course in smaller chunks would mean they could capture more of their experiences in their accreditation booklets

At the end of the session we could help them capture some of their thinking, to remind them, you mentioned so and so. So they could jot it down in pencil and reflect on it. [With a five week] course it feels as if they haven't a clue of what to put down.

Family Links facilitator

While the facilitators and the support worker held some strong views on this point, others in the prison also agreed that full days were too long.

I think that's another lesson that was learned: there's an awful lot to take on board [in a full day session].

Head of Learning and Skills

Some of the women here, they can't concentrate for very long, a couple of hours, that's it really ... you've lost them.

Prison librarian

Even the women on the course seemed to recognise the advantages of ten half days over five full days. When asked about this issue, they referred back to the session in Week 2 that had gone wrong: "it was too long." Even though the course had been restructured to make the afternoons less intense, there was still a feeling amongst the women that "it's a lot to take in in five sessions." Their recommendation was that it should be "just mornings for ten weeks – it would sink in more."

There was one further argument for ten half days: as prisons would have to provide a member of staff to support the course, it was suggested it may be easier to provide half day cover than full day cover.

From the library point of view, [ten half days] would have been better because you could have opened the remand centre library in the afternoon – whereas we've had to get relief staff in.

Prison librarian

Set against this, the only argument for five full days, mentioned by several respondents, was that over ten weeks, some women on the course might be moved on.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming sense from the people interviewed for this study was that ten half days was the much preferred option. Furthermore, in Styal the view was that a ten week course would be problematic. But in Foston Hall, this did not seem to be the case: for instance, the prison support worker had previously run a 20 week drama group¹⁵.

More to the point, even with any such problems in mind, the Foston Hall Head of Learning and Skills still preferred a ten week course.

In terms of population turnover, we're not quite as stable as we were. And of course there are other things on the horizon, like intermittent custody and all the rest of it. And space is always such a premium as well – where you actually run these things is quite important. But having said all of that, if it could be done over ten weeks, in half days, I think that would be better.

Head of Learning and Skills

Given this range of arguments, Family Links may wish to consider *prescribing* that the course should be run over ten weeks, and only consider running more condensed programmes in exceptional circumstances.

Five full days

While the arguments for ten day courses appear overwhelming, there may nevertheless be exceptional occasions where the course needs to be delivered over five full days. If so, a key lesson from Foston Hall is that sessions need to be structured to focus the heavy work in the morning, and to be more "chilled" in the afternoon (see Chapter 5).

This raised the question of whether material would have to be sacrificed from the course to achieve this – although one of the facilitators thought not, provided they were flexible with the material:

We've actually had to be very flexible. We've had to squeeze two sessions into the morning, which is actually what we did [in Styal]. So today, we've done two key bits in the morning. But then we'll also do some of the content in the afternoon, like the nurturing wheel or the nurturing game, or the relaxation. So we'll do some of the stuff that comes into the programme in the afternoon, but not those key strategies.

Family Links facilitator

¹⁵ This may reflect a difference between the two prisons in the stability of their populations.

The chilled afternoons were actually felt to be a valuable part of the course – particularly given the facilitators' aims of building in lots of relaxation and nurturing. This was perhaps the only other argument put forward for keeping full days:

My slight anxiety about doing ten mornings is that I wonder where the capacity for that kind of extra bit of relaxed feeling can come from, because we're trying to make the afternoons chilled out.

Family Links facilitator

So if the course is run over ten mornings, it will be important to find ways of building in this "chilled" relaxation time.

Another question in relation to five week courses was raised in the planning stages of this research. This related to "conscious incompetence" (which signals participants are really starting to reflect on their own parenting abilities). Would participants experience this on a five week course, and if so when? The reason this was important was that if it takes five weeks for a participants to get to this stage, as tends to occur in the community, then in a five week course, there would be no time to rebuild their skills and confidence.

According to one of the facilitators, the experience of conscious incompetence *did* occur in the Foston Hall pilot, though not as strongly as in the community, and it happened in Week 3. This suggests this experience was triggered by a particular session mid-way through the course, rather than by the length of time they were on the course. It also means it happened early enough in the course for the facilitators to do some confidence building work before the course ended.

I think it sort of happened when we did [a particular exercise] which was around Week 3. So we did get a touch of it.

Family Links facilitator

The final lesson from Foston Hall about full day sessions is that there *are* effective ways of running them *without* using videos: the chilled afternoons are an important and effective way of bonding the group.

A case for twelve weeks?

The final point on course timings was raised in relation to accreditation. In the accreditation pilots in the community, Family Links has identified it needs to build some extra time around the core Nurturing Programme to give people information about, and support them through, the accreditation process. One of the facilitators suggested that the same thing needed to happen on prison courses – meaning the course would run for twelve weeks.

The idea is, I'm thinking, the pre-week around accreditation, then a post-week. So it becomes a twelve week course. That seems fairly essential, that's what we realised in the community.

Family Links facilitator

It was proposed that a pre-week could be used for a number of reasons: giving participants information about the course, allowing the facilitators to get involved in the selection process, and starting to get the participants engaged in how accreditation works.

I'm thinking that if we're doing a ten week course, we should still meet them as part of the selection process, before the ten weeks. So we do some stuff in the pre-week around accreditation.

Family Links facilitator

Similarly, a post-week would parallel what happens in the community, where participants come together again a week or two after the course has finished to review their learning and

submit the accreditation work. (This is in fact one function of the family visit after the Foston Hall course has finished).

Finally, the facilitator noted that sessions in the prison were 2½ hours long compared with two hours in the community. She suggested that these sessions should run as two hours of course work, 15 minutes for a break, and 15 minutes supporting the participants around their accreditation work.

While this may need further consideration, such a 12 week model does appear attractive in a number of ways: it allows greater engagement with the participants before the course; it protects the core 20 hours of the Nurturing Programme; and it builds in ample time for accreditation support and follow up.

Some further reflections on a pre-week: recruiting course participants

As well as providing information about accreditation, another possible purpose of a pre-week would be to recruit women to the course. This would involve the facilitators in sharing information about the course and generating interest amongst the prison population; it would also give them a chance to be involved in the selection process.

As noted earlier, attendance in Week 1 of the course was very poor, leading to the course being restarted the following week. One of the reasons for this poor attendance appears to have been that the women on the wings had not really known about the course or what it was about. The Head of Learning and Skills noted that in the run up to the course, information had gone out to all the wings – but her experience was also that the women often did not read the materials that were put up on notice boards. This may go some way to explaining the women's lack of understanding of the course – and a pre-week face to face session would be one useful way to address this. Certainly, the prison support worker felt this would be useful:

Definitely have a recruiting day, where your facilitators go in and talk to the women about what it's going to be about. It could be open, just women popping in and out. Make it much more open to the whole prison population.
Prison support worker

In considering the need for a pre-week information session, it should be noted that the lack of knowledge amongst the Foston Hall women had some powerful consequences. In particular, as the women on the wings "filled in the gaps" in their understanding, the rumour went around that the course was run by social workers, and that they could take the women's children away.

[One of the prisoners] had been telling everybody - because what she didn't know, she made up. And what we couldn't tell her, she'd made up. So she was absolutely determined that these were social workers who'd come in to assess their parenting skills – and they were going to make sure that they didn't look after their children after they were released from custody, if they didn't come up to scratch.

Resettlement manager

Other prisoners on the wings also filled in the knowledge gaps, leading to further unhelpful rumours. One of the course participants reported that some of the other prisoners believed they were on the course *because* they were bad parents, and even that the reason they were in prison was because their offences related to their parenting. This was corroborated by one of the resettlement managers.

[When I was first asked to do the course] I thought, why do they want me to go on the course – do they think I'm a bad parent?

Course participant

The first week, hardly anyone turned up because of the gossip that had gone round – that it was child abusers that were being selected for the course.

Resettlement manager

It is easy to see how these rumours could explain some of the "no shows" in week 1. An advance information session by the facilitators at the recruitment stage would be one useful way to cut off such rumours before they take hold.

Another reason for the facilitators holding a pre-week session would be to get involved in selecting the course participants. In their weekly written reports on the programme, both facilitators noted that in Week 2, there had been a particularly dominant and challenging member of the group, who had not returned the following week.

More to the point, the facilitators both noted that the group dynamic improved considerably once this individual was no longer attending. It would appear doubtful if the group as a whole would have got as deeply into the course material as they did had she remained. This suggests the facilitators should play an active role in selecting the course participants: this would ensure the group *as a whole* got the maximum benefit from the course.

This is not just about assessing whether individuals are capable of engaging with the course. It is also important to consider the power relationships that can go on *between prisoners*; otherwise, there is a risk of putting some prisoners at risk back on the wings.

There can be a pecking order in a prison. It's not like Bad Girls, but some women can be intimidating. And you don't want to put other women in a position where they're going to cross them. That happened on one other course, one of them was a top dog type woman, and she told another prisoner to shut up because *she* was talking. And it's very difficult [as a facilitator] to say, no, let this girl speak, because you *knew* that back on the wing, she'd get in trouble for that.

Prison support worker

As the facilitators will not know about any prisoner "pecking orders", it appears important that the selection process involves the prison and the facilitators working together.

The mechanics of involving external facilitators in the selection process could be difficult, as one of the facilitators pointed out:

Practically, it's very difficult for us to be involved in the selection process.

Family Links facilitator

Nevertheless, there are precedents for this on internally run courses:

When I set up my course, I assessed each person individually, because the composition of the group is incredibly important.

Prison drama therapist

Consequently, when approaching other prisons to run the Nurturing Programme, it would be useful for Family Links to explore what role their facilitators can play in selecting the participants. A pre-meeting in the run up to the course might be one part of this process.

6.2 The prison context

Aim 3 of this review asks about how the prison context supports the Nurturing Programme. As in Styal, the facilitators in Foston Hall felt similar frustrations about the physical context of the prison – the locks, restricted movement, etc – together with an acknowledgement that that comes with the territory. It's not intended to revisit these issues here.

Rather, this section looks more at the "softer" aspects of the prison context, to try and understand what external facilitators might experience in terms of support, attitudes and expectations.

Supporting how the programme runs

As already discussed, Foston Hall provided a range of types of emotional support for the women, in case they became distressed between sessions. In addition to this, however, there was also the question of how well the prison supported the smooth running of the programme. One measure of this is the degree to which different departments took a role in supporting the programme.

Against this criteria, several departments came together for the pilot programme:

- the pilot came through the Learning and Skills Department, and the manager had invested in the programme from within her team – both in terms of the support worker she provided for the programme, and the relief budget made available to cover for the support worker's main role
- Resettlement Department and OASys (an in-house assessment team) engaged in recruitment, which had evidently taken some effort:

Trying to get people to nominate women who they thought would benefit from the course, that was actually more difficult than I'd expected.

Resettlement manager

- the Programmes Department had also provided appropriate room space for the Nurturing Programme; and they had also agreed to provide informal support, which was welcomed:

We've got officers based in Programmes doing the Enhanced Thinking Skills programme, and they're keeping an eye on the ladies.

Resettlement manager

[The Head of Programmes] was really helpful to us during the course of the day – we were on his patch, and he seems interested in our programme.

Family Links facilitator – debrief report

It's clear then that several departments in the prison had engaged positively in making sure the programme could run effectively.

Another issue where the Nurturing Programme needed support was in ensuring the women turned up promptly to the sessions. This had been a problem in Styal as the women had been delayed taking their medications – and so Family Links had tried to negotiate more consistent start times for this pilot. There was some positive news on this measure too:

- during the set up stages of the project, Foston Hall agreed to prioritise the medications for the Nurturing Programme women, so that the start time would not be delayed. And broadly speaking, the morning sessions started promptly
- the afternoon sessions were less predictable: on several weeks there were delays as officers were in staff meetings, and there was no-one available to escort the women.

We were pretty scuppered when they came in 45 minutes late. And the afternoons seem to be like that, they're much less tight. This is the third week running it's been like that. So you have to be flexible.

Family Links facilitator

- more positively, in Week 5, there was a lockdown in the prison (which should have meant all women in the prison were all locked in their cells). Despite this, special arrangements were made to escort the women to the Nurturing Programme

There had been a lock down, but the Programme Officer sought and gained permission from Governor for our 6 women to attend.

Family Links facilitator – pro forma

Hence, there was good evidence of support from the prison for the programme. This was also reflected in the weekly pro formas completed by the facilitators, in which they reported consistently that they felt well supported by the prison. In planning future courses, it would however be useful for Family Links to check out whether any days are consistently busy in terms of staff meetings, as this caused delays in escorting the women¹⁶.

Prison attitudes towards the programme

Another part of the prison context is the attitudes that staff hold towards the Nurturing Programme. Amongst the people interviewed during the pilot, the course was universally welcomed. This was based on a recognition that there are high levels of support needs amongst the women in the prison.

If there are issues around children, and around family, and around being separated from them, sometimes we have issues around self-harming. So anything we can do to ease the way of women in here, [while they're] apart from their families and children, then we think that's a priority. So we saw Family Links and the Nurturing Programme as a good road to go down with that in mind.

Head of Learning and Skills

It's huge. Within my own work, issues about parenting come out. There's a massive need. I regularly hear from women in this prison that they've given up, that their child is better cared for by someone else.

Prison drama therapist

I felt there had been this gap for a long time so I thought it would be a very enhancing thing for the ladies

Prison support worker

The course was seen as an important resource for addressing some of these needs.

One aim of all prisons is to assist with rehabilitation, and of course maintaining and promoting family links is a very important as part of this. So anything that assists in maintaining these links is important.

Prison librarian

It was not possible to interview wing officers during the study, so first hand evidence of their attitudes is not available. However, from the course participants' reports, the programme did not appear to be on officers' radar: when asked about officers' reactions, the women replied that "they don't ask us".

Prison expectation of the programme

The fieldwork also explored what Foston Hall *expected* from the Nurturing Programme pilot. It would be useful for Family Links to review these expectations, and consider whether they

¹⁶ It will also be noted that there were some internal communication issues around recruitment for the course. These are discussed in the next chapter.

match what the course can deliver. By understanding these expectations more fully, this will allow Family Links to:

- adapt the Nurturing Programme (where this is appropriate) to more fully meet the needs of the service
- market the programme to the prison service more effectively (discussed further in Section 7.1)
- work with the prison service to correct any unrealistic expectations they may have developed

Hence, understanding the prison service's expectations of the programme should help Family Links both develop and communicate the programme. This should help in rolling it out to other prisons.

In terms of *formal* expectations, the Head of Learning and Skills was very clear she was more interested in what could be *learned* from running the programme, rather than in setting measurable outcomes.

We went ahead on the basis of running it very much as a pilot. We didn't know really *what* to expect from it. ...In terms of hard outcomes, no it's not really a road we went down. It's: what we can do, where we can go with it, how we would adapt it. What could it be used *for*? ... Now it's been run, we can take it to pieces and ask, ok, now where can we go with it?

Head of Learning and Skills

Nevertheless, the field visit to Foston Hall identified that the staff across the prison had a range of views about what they wanted the course to achieve. In particular, a number of expectations were identified in discussion with the resettlement managers. These expectations included:

- improving the women's parenting skills

Part of the outcome is going to be judged on the basis of the children's visit and what actually happens with that.

Head of Learning and Skills

- reducing reoffending

It's not directly the prison service's focus, but by implication, certainly, with support for children, it's contributing to breaking the cycles of reoffending.

Resettlement manager

- meeting criteria for prisoner education

[The Learning and Skills] budget is obviously very tightly controlled though OLAS – that's Offender Learning and Skills – and has to meet very set criteria and targets.

Resettlement manager

- building the women's self esteem and confidence

A lot of these courses are very positive in developing prisoners' self esteem and confidence. If you're talking about relationships and parenting, that's critical.

Resettlement manager

- meeting specifically the needs of women prisoners

I'd be very interested to know if this is focused specifically around the needs of female offenders. I think there's probably a need for that, for mums as opposed to dads, because the role and dynamic can be different.

Resettlement manager

- that the women themselves enjoy it and find it beneficial

If the women tell us that they feel it was a positive experience for them, that they can then tell us what they feel they've got out of it, and if they tell us they think this is something other women should do.

Resettlement manager

The prison service therefore expects a course like the Nurturing Programme to deliver a range of benefits. Family Links needs to be alert to these expectations placed on the course. Where it is able, it will need to deliver on these expectations, so that the service continues to see the Nurturing Programme as valuable. Conversely, where the prison service holds unrealistic expectations, Family Links will need to manage these downwards, to avoid the service becoming disappointed with the programme.

A further crucial point, particularly as budgets appear tight, is that Family Links needs to continue building *evidence* of the benefits of the course.

If we can prove value, maybe we can find a funding stream. If we can say we've done this, this is the positive outcome, can we find funding elsewhere, that would be available to Family Links as a voluntary organisation?

Resettlement manager

Foston Hall was itself seeking evaluation data from a range of sources. Indeed, one reason for arranging the children's visit at the end of the course is that it would allow them to assess what impact the course had had on the participants.

[We will look at evidence] from your evaluation, from the feedback we get from the women, from the feedback we get from the personal officers, and hopefully to children's visit at the end of April. It would be mainly the feedback from the women themselves.

Resettlement manager

The Programme Officers are getting feedback from the people delivering the course, and they're seeing the women during the breaks and talking to them each week. ... And I'll ask the OASys officer to call the women up individually over the next week or so.

Resettlement manager

We decided to have the children's visit on the tail end of [the programme], because then, maybe they can put into practice what they've been learning, and maybe we can look at how comfortable they are with that and whether anything else is needed.

Head of Learning and Skills

If Foston Hall produces its own evaluation report on the pilot, it would be useful if Family Links could obtain a copy, and this will contribute to the evidence base about the programme.

6.3 Facilitator support needs

The final aim of this review was to examine the facilitators' support needs. This was with a view to identifying what training and support should be made available for facilitators going into other prisons to deliver the programme.

As noted previously, one of the notable things about the group was the high level of violent and abusive relationships discussed by the women on the course. For this particular group of women, none of these seemed more extreme than might be found in a community group. The difference was that in a community group, the facilitators would expect that only one or two parents would present such histories; here, such histories were shared by everyone.

These widespread experiences of violence appeared to have an affect on the facilitators. One noted that when she worked with community groups she didn't remember what the group had been talking about between sessions, and that it only came back to her just before the next session. In contrast, she found the experiences of the Foston Hall women stayed with her.

It doesn't leave me as easily. I notice I think about these women far more than I do in a normal group. These keep floating in and out of thinking. And a lot of it is about the level of violence [they've experienced]

Family Links facilitator

This highlights the prison based work can generate greater emotional demands than arise from community groups, and it's important that support and supervision structures for the facilitators are in place.

Both facilitators said that they felt the supervision needs were greater than arose in the community. Furthermore, there was a feeling that the supervisor should be very experienced, either in prisons or in the Nurturing Programme, so that they would be able to engage quickly and effectively in problem solving.

I'd say you need more supervision, either with someone who's experienced in prisons, or is dead familiar with the programme.

Family Links facilitator

In this context, it is notable that after the challenging first session of the programme, both facilitators sought support from the head of Family Links.

That week when we really struggled, it was really helpful to talk to [the head of Family Links] because she's so immersed in the content, she could quickly come up with ideas. We wanted two things, we wanted support and we wanted ideas, to feel confident going in next time.

Family Links facilitator

As well as the supervision provided, the facilitators also highlighted that it was essential to have experienced facilitators; and ideally, a pair who were used to working together. This was because the range of skills and awareness needed in the prison, and so that the facilitators could provide each other with effective peer support.

I think the facilitators need to be experienced in the programme, and I did think about whether they should have some kind of other background around training, or teaching or adult teaching or counselling.

Family Links facilitator

There's been a lot of peer supervision going on, and I felt we have worked though the feelings and needs and responses we've had, because it's been that kind of relationship.

Family Links facilitator

Finally, it should be noted that the support needs for the facilitators do not come just from the emotional content of the course. In addition, a large part of the emotional demands on the facilitators came from being outsiders in the prison environment itself, and the frustrations that came with that.

You know, why couldn't we go and talk to one of the officers on the wing to check out how things were? Even going to the loo, you have to have that

unlocked, and you think oh god. And everything's taken away from you as you go in, and you're anxious even to take some flowers in. It's weird, very weird.

Family Links facilitator

We feel so powerless that we don't have access to the people that we might justifiably need access to, I think that's a struggle for us.

Family Links facilitator

There was a realism on the part of both facilitators that this was part and parcel of the prison context ("I *know* it's for security"), but it does highlight another issue on which external facilitators may need support.

Recommendations from Chapter 6

Given the arguments for the course running as half days over ten weeks, Family Links may wish to specify that this is how the course should be run in prisons. While there will always be a need for some flexibility on this, more condensed courses should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This will particularly be the case once a network of locally based facilitators is in place to run the programme.

If the course is run over ten mornings, it will be important to find ways of building in this "chilled" relaxation time.

If accreditation is to become the norm, Family Links may further want to consider extending this to 12 weeks, to allow a week before the course to introduce accreditation, and a further week during or after the course to support the participants in producing their accreditation materials.

There would be advantages to the course facilitators holding a pre-course information session. This would be one useful way to cut off unhelpful rumours about the course before they take hold.

When approaching other prisons to run the Nurturing Programme, it would be useful for Family Links to explore what role their facilitators can play in selecting the participants. A pre-meeting in the run up to the course might be one part of this process.

The effort to engage different departments in assisting the delivery of the programme was certainly experienced by the facilitators as supportive. This model should be adopted in other prisons as the programme is rolled out.

Family Links needs to be sure it develops a clear understanding of what the prison service expects from the Nurturing Programme. This will help in developing the programme and marketing it to prisons. It will also help identify if the prison service has any inappropriate expectations of the programme; Family Links will need to manage these downwards, to avoid the prison service becoming disappointed by the programme.

Family Links should continue to build evidence about the effectiveness of the Nurturing Programme in prisons, as this evidence will be critical to securing funding for future programmes.

Linked to this, Family Links should seek a copy of any evaluation report produced by Foston Hall.

It's important to recognise the emotional support needs of external facilitators going into prisons to deliver the Nurturing Programme. Facilitators should be given access to sufficient high quality supervision, from people who are experienced in the programme and/or the prison setting.

In selecting facilitators to go into prisons, ideally they should have a range of broader skills such as training or counselling; and pairs of facilitators should be selected who work well together, so that they can provide each other with effective peer support.

7. Engaging with the prison service

As well as the four specific aims agreed with Family Links, this study also remained alert to any other relevant issues identified during the pilot. Three particular issues emerged that may be important in rolling out the Nurturing Programme, all of which relate to how Family Links engages with the prison service:

- how the programme is marketed to the service
- how to broaden the appeal of the programme within a given prison
- what other models might be considered for rolling the programme out across the prison service

These are explored below. As with the preceding chapters, the discussion is drawn from the findings of the fieldwork and subsequent telephone interviews. However, this chapter is more interpretative: these issues were not the central focus of the research; rather they emerged as themes and impressions as the interviews progressed. They are reported here because they pose some useful questions for Family Links.

7.1 Communicating and marketing the programme

The findings underlying this discussion have already been discussed in the earlier chapters. Chapter 5 noted that the course had to be extended by a week, after few people turned up in Week 1. Chapter 6 identified that one of the reasons underlying that was that the prisoners had not fully understood the programme, and that unhelpful rumours had started as a result.

The question examined in the following discussion is *why* this occurred. Family Links had provided a range of material about the Nurturing Programme to the prison service while the pilot was being planned – so what happened that resulted in the women on the wings not understanding the programme and spreading unhelpful rumours?

It seems likely from the study that the information provided by Family Links was not in a form that was readily useable by all the relevant stakeholders within the prison. The following discussion therefore considers how Family Links may communicate – or market – the programme to prisons more effectively.

Marketing the Nurturing Programme to prison staff

Prison staff will always have a range of competing demands. Some of these are statutory responsibilities, some are about the safe and secure running of the prison. In such a context, it will always be difficult to encourage staff to focus their time on other, discretionary activities – such as communicating about a parenting programme.

The challenge for Family Links, therefore, is this: how to make the Nurturing Programme relevant and important enough to prison staff *across a range of departments* so that they all make it a high priority within their workloads. This is critical if all the different sections of the prison are to come together to support the programme effectively.

It is suggested here that there are a number of prerequisites to achieving this. In particular, Family Links will need to make sure it has:

- understood the needs and agendas of the different stakeholder groups within the prison
- identified how the course can meet those needs and agendas
- produced materials that clearly state how the course is structured to meet those needs and agendas

In short, if Family Links wants to really build the commitment of prison staff, and get them to prioritise their roles in communicating the Nurturing Programme, they will need to produce materials that effectively *market* the programme to prison staff.

Importantly, in developing these marketing materials, it will be important to present the course in language that the prison staff can instantly recognise as relevant to their *own* agendas. So, picking up on the example noted above, this is *more* than explaining that the course includes a session on *Hurting Touch*; it's about translating this into what might be seen as "prison service language" – which might be, for instance, about building women's awareness that they do not need to put up with domestic violence.

Importantly, this is not just important when Family Links are presenting the programme to prison staff; it will also be helpful for prison staff themselves, when they are trying to advocate the programme up the management chain.

It's also about arguing and justifying within the prison setting [with] the senior management within the prison and at more senior level. And also therefore to justify why we need to work in partnership with a charity or organisation to access funding. It is quite important that people have a clear understanding of what this is aiming to achieve.

Resettlement manager

[The senior management team's questions] were: is it really what we're looking for, what purpose will it fulfil, what will happen afterwards?

Head of Learning and Skills

Hence, it would appear important to develop messages and materials that advocate and justify the Nurturing Programme in language that's instantly relevant to the agendas of different departments in the service. This, by itself, will not guarantee good communication between the different parts of the service – but it should help build service commitment and engagement in the programme, which all increase the likelihood that the "back room" will work effectively.

This, of course, is dependent on Family Links having a sound understanding of the objectives, agendas and expectations of different parts of the service, and it would be in their interests to immerse themselves in this, through discussions with the service. The discussion of prison expectations in section 6.2 should provide a useful starting point.

"Why this one?"

The Foston Hall pilot also identified some further lessons about marketing the Nurturing Programme. While not directly relevant to the communication problems outlined at the start of this section, they are reported here for the sake of completeness.

Another important area where Family Links should consider developing some stronger messages is in answer to the question "why this one?" In rolling out the programme across the prison service, it would be helpful to make clearer why prisons should commission the Nurturing Programme, as opposed to commissioning any other parenting programme.

It would be useful to know what is different about the Parenting Puzzle programme as opposed to, say, Family Man.

Resettlement manager

This will need to include key statements of the content and approach adopted by the Nurturing Programme – and possibly how these contrast with other parenting programmes on the market.

It was also clear that Family Links already has some very positive answers to "why this one?" Foston Hall mentioned a number of factors that were important to them when they decided to

commission the Nurturing Programme. Family Links were seen as meeting these criteria, which included:

- a track record in delivering this sort of programme

It was also important, not just about the issues raised, but do these people really know what they're doing?

Head of Learning and Skills
- a track record in working in prisons

It was probably that we knew it had been piloted in a prison already ... the Styal experience was important to us

Head of Learning and Skills
- the ability to be flexible and adapt the course, for instance, to the prison setting, or if the course was overly upsetting

If these people are going to come in, can we be sure that they're not just giving us what they've got, rather than what we need?

Head of Learning and Skills

[The Family Links facilitator] made it fairly clear that things could be changed as they went if people were experiencing any amount of discomfort or distress.

Head of Learning and Skills
- the ability to address the needs of a *female* prison

We needed to be sure that the focus would be on *women*. Because there are so many people in the male estate, a lot of the stuff that's produced is written around them and for them, with sort of a nod in the direction of what female offenders might need.

Head of Learning and Skills

Both the Learning and Skills manager, and one of the Resettlement managers mentioned examples of being offered family programmes that *didn't* meet these criteria, and which the prison didn't follow up. In contrast, the Nurturing Programme was seen as a good match with what Foston Hall needed. This is likely to be helpful in rolling out the Nurturing Programme, and Family Links should capitalise on this in how it markets the programme to the prison service.

7.2 Broadening the appeal of the programme

Another useful strategy may be for Family Links to *broaden* how they engage with the prison service. The aim of this would be, in effect, to try to embed their programme within the life and culture of the prison. The thinking behind this is that Family Links may be able to support the agendas of other departments in the prison – with the reciprocal benefit that those other departments become advocates for the Nurturing Programme.

One such example in Foston Hall was the library. The library had provided the member of staff who supported the Family Links facilitators, but other than that, there had been little contact between the library and the Nurturing Programme: the library had not played a role in promoting the programme, and the *Parenting Puzzle* was not available from the library.

This seems something of a missed opportunity as both the library and the programme could potentially benefit from working together. The library does a range of activities (distributing leaflets, doing quizzes, etc), partly to support other activities in the prison, and partly to get more women into the library.

We do promotions. I would love to produce more lists, it's a matter of time.
We support anything that's happening in the prison.

Prison librarian

The librarian would have welcomed the opportunity to run a promotion on the Nurturing Programme, and Family Links could have supported this by providing copies of the *Parenting Puzzle* and other leaflets about the course. In return, the library could have become an internal advocate for the programme, raising interest and awareness amongst the prisoners. The librarian also mentioned that several prisoners assist in the library, and they could be a source positive information about the Nurturing Programme.

A lot of what gets picked is word-of-mouth.

Prison librarian

This would have been particularly helpful in countering some of the negative rumours that had circulated amongst the prison.

Such opportunities for building links with internal departments will, of course, vary from prison to prison. However, this pilot has shown that such possibilities exist: if the programme reduces re-offending, it will be attractive to the Resettlement Department; if it promotes wellbeing, it will be attractive to the Mental Health Team. So, if Family Links can show how its programme is helping address the priorities of other departments, it may be able to develop some useful partnerships which will help in establishing the programme within a given prison.

7.3 Other models for rolling out the Nurturing Programme

A final issue to emerge from the Foston Hall study concerns how Family Links takes the Nurturing Programme into other prisons.

The preferred model for rollout to date has been to use health visitors based in Primary Care Trusts as external facilitators going into prisons to deliver the Nurturing Programme. This would mean there was a network of facilitators on the ground, which would be important in ensuring that the programme has a national reach.

However, what has emerged from the Styal and Foston Hall pilots is that each new pair of health visitors would have to learn, and adapt to, a considerable amount as they go into prisons: the physical constraints, prison craft, the characteristics of the client group and so on. Furthermore, they would have to learn about the culture and the structure of the prison, so that they could work with prison colleagues to keep the "back room" working smoothly.

Some of this can be learned, but some of it will remain a challenge for external facilitators. This therefore raises the question of whether other models might be more effective for taking the Nurturing Programme into prisons.

Two possible alternative models suggested themselves at Foston Hall.

Family Links could develop a dedicated prisons facilitator

This would be someone based in Family Links, who specialised in developing and delivering prison programmes. This would give Family Links someone with in-house expertise in how prisons work, who would develop experience in how best to address the challenges of working in prisons.

They would be able to build relationships with staff in the prison service, and particularly in the partner prisons where Family Links worked most. This would help them negotiate access for holding information days, engaging with officers on the wing, and so on. It would also help in making sure the programme was meeting prison expectations.

Problems with this model, however, would include providing a national reach; and managing peaks and troughs in demand.

Family Links could train and accredit prison staff to run the programme

It is clear from Foston Hall that at least some prisons have a range of individuals who might have the skills and qualities to facilitate the programme – as well as education staff, there are mental health workers, drama therapists, and so on. Another model might therefore be for Family Links to train them up to deliver the programme in prisons. This would mean that the facilitators would be based within the prison, and they could therefore be the internal advocate for the programme, making sure all the "back room" links were working effectively.

To ensure the programme was delivered in the same form and intensity as in the community, Family Links could take responsibility for supervising the facilitators.

This would achieve the desired national reach, although some prisons may not want to take on this role. A downside is that there might be a tendency for prisons to adapt the course, as happened in Styal. Family Links might counter that by playing a quality assurance role, and possibly accrediting the courses.

These may not in the end be appropriate models for rolling out the Nurturing Programme; neither are they the only possible models. The reason for noting them here is simply to prompt some discussion. It is also interesting to note that one of the Foston Hall facilitators also raised these questions.

That did make me think whether the right thing is to train people who are in prisons. If you've got magic people like [our prison support worker]. ... They know the system really well, and they don't carry all the baggage we do. But they need to be experienced in the programme.

Family Links facilitator

Even if Family Links continue with the current model of external facilitators going into prisons, one further question raised by this study concerns the "entry point" into prisons.

In Styal, Family Links engaged the prison through its Education department, and in Foston Hall, they did so through Learning and Skills – and these entry points have been useful. However, as identified in Foston Hall, *other* prison departments may be equally interested in the Nurturing Programme. For instance, in Foston Hall, the Programmes Department, the Mental Health Team and the Resettlement Department were all interested in what the Nurturing Programme was trying to achieve.

Different departments may be able to tap into different resources or networks. It may therefore be worth exploring the possibility of setting up the Nurturing Programme through other prison departments. This would broaden the range of contacts Family Links has with the prison service. It would also reveal whether, some entry points to the prison are more effective than others.

Our first step in was with [the Styal facilitator] and she's working with education and is a teacher. We never even gave it a thought of any therapeutic people. So we did go down that education model at first, and we're now moving from education into programmes¹⁷, it does feel like we've opened up a different way of looking at it.

Family Links facilitator

¹⁷ While this is a verbatim quote, it is more accurate to say that between the two pilots, Family Links moved from Education to Learning and Skills as an entry point. The general point remains, however, that accessing a prison through different entry points may open up different opportunities.

Recommendations from Chapter 7

It would be useful to develop marketing materials and messages that present the benefits of the Nurturing Programme in "prison service language" – in other words, clearly stating how the programme can meet the objectives and agendas of different stakeholder groups in the service.

To do this, Family Links will first need to immerse itself further within the prison service, to fully understand the objectives and agenda of different parts of the service. This will help them market the Nurturing Programme more effectively, targeting it at the most relevant parts of the service, using the most appropriate language. It will be particularly important to make a clear case for how the programme supports the prison service's aim of reducing re-offending.

To support rolling the Nurturing Programme out across the prison service, Family Links should ensure it has marketing material that answers the question, "why this one?" This will need to include clear messages about the Nurturing Programme's content and approach, and what distinguishes it from other parenting programmes on the market. They should also capitalise on the experience they have gained to date in prisons.

As Family Links seeks to establish the programme in other prisons, it will be useful to explore how it can support the agendas of different departments across the prison. By working with different departments, it should be possible to generate wider "buy in" towards the Nurturing Programme. This should lead to better communication between staff, and mean that the programme is advocated to prisoners more effectively.

It may be useful to Family Links to consider other models for taking the Nurturing Programme into the prison service. These might include direct delivery of the service rather than going through health visitors; or playing a training and accreditation role for prison staff to deliver the course. Other models should also be considered.

In addition, it would be useful to broaden the "entry points" Family Links uses for making contact with prisons. As well as Learning and Skills, there are other parts of the prison, such as resettlement and mental health teams, where there may be an audience that would recognise the benefits of the Nurturing Programme.

8. Conclusions and key messages

The breadth of issues raised and lessons learned in Foston Hall has been immense and complex. It is hoped that this report has done justice to the interplay between these issues. In this final chapter, the discussion attempts to briefly draw out some of the key messages from the pilot. The key messages include:

The programme

- it was definitely useful to do a second prison pilot of the Nurturing Programme in a different form. It is clear that delivering the programme in its full form resulted in some very different processes and experiences than occurred in Styal, and many new lessons have been learned
- it is also clear that, overall, the more intense version of the programme *works*: the women have enjoyed it and attended consistently; they have engaged in the material; and as the weeks have progressed, they have become more open to trying the exercises they have felt less confident about, such as relaxation. There is also evidence of them trying the skills and strategies, supporting each other in doing so, and praising each other for the work they are doing. They appear to have grasped some of the key messages of the course
- at the same time, the concerns voiced by the prison-based facilitator in Styal have been proved right: a full day with two full community sessions back to back *was* too much; and some of the language used in the Programme *was* rejected by the women.
- the response in the Foston Hall pilot to the first of these points was instructive: it demonstrated that the overload of a full day course can be addressed without resorting to videos. The solutions adopted – using games and relaxation to create a "chilled" afternoon – were far more in keeping with the original approach of the programme
- regarding the language the women rejected, several prison-based respondents, from both pilots, have suggested these are "hard" women. Some of the language used mismatches this prison culture, and before any future courses, it may be useful to reflect further on *when*, *how* and *whether* to use this language
- the women appeared to engage with the more reflective exercises that were reintroduced to the Foston Hall pilot, although appeared less comfortable sharing their experiences in group feedback sessions. In both pilots, the women appeared to "self-protect", not going into the material too deeply, and not needing the support structures the prison had put in place. Nevertheless, it will be important in future programmes to ensure these supports are still in place
- the women did try many of the strategies they learned between sessions, though this appeared to be done less formally than in community groups. While they practiced skills on each other and other inmates, the women perceived it as too risky to practice the skills with the prison officers, in case they got a poor reaction
- accreditation was well received: it is particularly valuable in a prison setting, because the women feel it demonstrates to the prison authorities that they are committed to rehabilitation. The women engaged in completing their accreditation booklets during the session, though they appear not to have been doing sufficient hours between sessions. This was at least in part due to the five week structure of the course

Delivering the programme

- perhaps the strongest message from the pilot is that, in its "full" form, the course should be delivered over ten half days, rather than five full days. This is critical to the

group having time to feel safe enough with each other to share their experiences. The group also need this time to get the benefits of reflection, to really engage with practicing skills and strategies, and to do their accreditation work

- for accredited courses, there is a strong argument for the course to run for 12 days. This would allow sufficient time for the core programme work and to support the women's accreditation work. It would also allow a pre-course meeting to introduce accreditation, and a post course meeting to review their accreditation booklets (as in community courses). A pre-meeting would also allow the facilitators to provide information to the inmates about the course; and to help select the course participants
- if the course is being delivered by external facilitators, it is essential to have a support worker from within the prison. This role can go beyond simply providing support *during* sessions; they can play an important role *between* sessions: providing participants with emotional support (if needed); coaching participants on their accreditation work; and liaising with prison colleagues to keep the course running smoothly
- external facilitators delivering this course in prison will need high quality supervision support, from someone with considerable experience of the Nurturing Programme and/or prisons. The facilitators should themselves be very experienced with the programme, and pairs of facilitators should be picked who work well together, so they can provide effective peer support

Rolling out the programme

- there may be a need for marketing materials for the Nurturing Programme targeted specifically at the prison service. These will need to explain the course content, structure and rationale – and be in language that prisons recognise as relevant to their own agendas and objectives; in particular, it will be useful to draw stronger links between the aims of the Nurturing Programme and the prison service's interests in reducing re-offending. Furthermore, given the wide range of parenting programmes available, these materials also need to answer the question, "*why this one?*"
- given the experience needed to run this course effectively in prisons, it may also be useful to consider different models for rolling the programme out across the service. These might include directly delivering the programme themselves, or providing training and supervision to prison staff to deliver the programme. It may also be worth engaging with other parts of the prison as well as Learning and Skills; for instance, mental health teams and resettlement departments may be receptive to the Nurturing Programme

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations from Chapter 3

There appear to be clear benefits from working with prisons that are actively committed to the programme. To build that commitment, Family Links should consider how it can present the Nurturing Programme to best appeal to the Prison Service.

It appears that negotiating access into a prison for the first time can be time consuming; sufficient time and resources will need to be allocated for this when rolling the Nurturing Programme out to other prisons.

Assuming two facilitators deliver the programme, it would appear most effective if one of them takes the lead in liaison with the prison during the planning stages. However, it also appears important that *both* facilitators have at least some contact with the prison during the planning stages, so that *both* are familiar with the prison environment. This will be particularly important for facilitators who have not previously worked in prisons.

Family Links should keep under review whether different prisons have different guidelines about what materials can and cannot be taken inside. This will give a clearer idea of what flexibility there is in how the course can be delivered.

When planning programmes in other prisons, it may be useful to negotiate with the prison to provide some storage between sessions.

Recommendations from Chapter 4

It will be important to keep a systematic record of how existing Nurturing Programme exercises need to be adapted in the prison context. This can be used to supplement the training materials provided to facilitators.

While the Nurturing Programme is still relatively new to prisons, it will be useful to keep a record of how different exercises have worked in different prisons. This will allow Family Links to identify whether any of the exercises require further adaptation in the prison context.

Where new exercises on issues such as self-nurturing and relaxation are introduced, it will be useful to record how these can best be delivered, and where they can best be integrated with the existing structure of the Nurturing Programme. Again, this could be developed into supplementary training materials for facilitators going into prisons.

When selecting Health Visitors or other facilitators to deliver the course in prisons, one selection criterion should be that they have experience in relevant areas that they can introduce to the programme, such as yoga, exercise and so on. When training facilitators to go into prisons, they should be encouraged to think creatively about how best these elements can be introduced to the course.

External facilitators in prisons will need more planning time together than for a community-based course, particularly if they haven't worked together previously. This is so they can jointly work out which additional exercises each will introduce, and how these can best be built into the course structure.

For external facilitators, it is important that they ensure there are clear groundrules in place for handling disclosure of sexual abuse and similar issues, including a clear understanding of what will and will not be kept confidential. The groundrules should be agreed with both the prison and the participants themselves.

It would be useful to record how the accreditation booklets needed to be adapted in a prison setting, as this will be useful for other facilitators delivering the course. Similarly, it would be useful to provide guidance on how facilitators can capture accreditation evidence for the women during the sessions.

Recommendations from Chapter 5

Delivering the course at its full intensity appears to be beneficial in prisons, but if the course is to be delivered in full days, then the afternoon session needs to be lighter in tone. It would not seem useful to return to the videos used in Styal; rather, the afternoon sessions should involve group activities.

Family Links should keep some aspects of the course under review. For instance, this group felt that the programme was relevant to younger, but not older children; and there was strong resistance to the "warm and fuzzy" language of one exercise. Further piloting, particularly in a ten week course, would be useful.

Future courses should still ensure effective support mechanisms are put in place in the prison, in case the participants become distressed between sessions.

Further attention is needed about how to make *Time to have a go* more effective in prisons. This might be addressed in part by moving to a ten day course: it will be clearer what the participants are being asked to practice, and they will get into a "routine" of practicing. It may also be useful to hand out paper slips to the participants to make the practice task clearer.

In future course, practicing skills and strategies with prison officers should not be encouraged: the perceived risks for prisoners would appear to be too great.

Some thought should be given to the feedback sessions, as the women in Foston Hall did not particularly engage with them. Again, a ten week course might be useful in bringing down some of the barriers, but it would be useful to think of other ways of encouraging feedback in the sessions.

If Family Links intends to use external facilitators to deliver the Nurturing Programme, then as they roll the programme out to other prisons, they will need to negotiate with prisons to provide an internal support worker. The support worker's skills will need to match the personal development and facilitative style of the programme.

Where the prison provides a support worker for the programme, it should be agreed that their role does not relate just to the course sessions, but that they are also there to provide support to the participants *between* the sessions, if it is needed.

A further role for the support worker may be to be the internal advocate for the programme, doing all the "back room" work with other departments needed to keep the programme running smoothly.

Clear confidentiality and disclosure groundrules – with course participants and with the prison – will be important.

Family Links should continue their moves towards accrediting the Nurturing Programme, as this may open up funding opportunities.

Accreditation will be far easier to achieve if the courses move from five sessions to ten sessions.

A further role for the prison support worker is supporting the participants through their accreditation work in the weeks between sessions.

Recommendations from Chapter 6

Given the arguments for the course running as half days over ten weeks, Family Links may wish to specify that this is how the course should be run in prisons. While there will always be a need for some flexibility on this, more condensed courses should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This will particularly be the case once a network of locally based facilitators is in place to run the programme.

If the course is run over ten mornings, it will be important to find ways of building in this "chilled" relaxation time.

If accreditation is to become the norm, Family Links may further want to consider extending this to 12 weeks, to allow a week before the course to introduce accreditation, and a further week during or after the course to support the participants in producing their accreditation materials.

There would be advantages to the course facilitators holding a pre-course information session. This would be one useful way to cut off unhelpful rumours about the course before they take hold.

When approaching other prisons to run the Nurturing Programme, it would be useful for Family Links to explore what role their facilitators can play in selecting the participants. A pre-meeting in the run up to the course might be one part of this process.

The effort to engage different departments in assisting the delivery of the programme was certainly experienced by the facilitators as supportive. This model should be adopted in other prisons as the programme is rolled out.

Family Links needs to be sure it develops a clear understanding of what the prison service expects from the Nurturing Programme. This will help in developing the programme and marketing it to prisons. It will also help identify if the prison service has any inappropriate expectations of the programme; Family Links will need to manage these downwards, to avoid the prison service becoming disappointed by the programme.

Family Links should continue to build evidence about the effectiveness of the Nurturing Programme in prisons, as this evidence will be critical to securing funding for future programmes.

Linked to this, Family Links should seek a copy of any evaluation report produced by Foston Hall.

It's important to recognise the emotional support needs of external facilitators going into prisons to deliver the Nurturing Programme. Facilitators should be given access to sufficient high quality supervision, from people who are experienced in the programme and/or the prison setting.

In selecting facilitators to go into prisons, ideally they should have a range of broader skills such as training or counselling; and pairs of facilitators should be selected who work well together, so that they can provide each other with effective peer support.

Recommendations from Chapter 7

It would be useful to develop marketing materials and messages that present the benefits of the Nurturing Programme in "prison service language" – in other words, clearly stating how the programme can meet the objectives and agendas of different stakeholder groups in the service.

To do this, Family Links will first need to immerse itself further within the prison service, to fully understand the objectives and agenda of different parts of the service. This will help them market the Nurturing Programme more effectively, targeting it at the most relevant parts of the service, using the most appropriate language. It will be particularly important to make a clear case for how the programme supports the prison service's aim of reducing re-offending.

To support rolling the Nurturing Programme out across the prison service, Family Links should ensure it has marketing material that answers the question, "why this one?" This will need to include clear messages about the Nurturing Programme's content and approach, and what distinguishes it from other parenting programmes on the market. They should also capitalise on the experience they have gained to date in prisons.

As Family Links seeks to establish the programme in other prisons, it will be useful to explore how it can support the agendas of different departments across the prison. By working with different departments, it should be possible to generate wider "buy in" towards the Nurturing Programme. This should lead to better communication between staff, and mean that the programme is advocated to prisoners more effectively.

It may be useful to Family Links to consider other models for taking the Nurturing Programme into the prison service. These might include direct delivery of the service rather than going through health visitors; or playing a training and accreditation role for prison staff to deliver the course. Other models should also be considered.

In addition, it would be useful to broaden the "entry points" Family Links uses for making contact with prisons. As well as Learning and Skills, there are other parts of the prison, such as resettlement and mental health teams, where there may be an audience that would recognise the benefits of the Nurturing Programme.

Appendix 1: Overview of the course run in Foston Hall

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a full description of the Nurturing Programme. Readers looking for this are referred to the Family Links website or to the book that accompanies the course¹⁸.

However, to make sense of some of the discussion in this report, it is necessary to provide a brief description of the course at Foston Hall. Key points are as follows:

- it was co-facilitated by two experienced Programme Directors from Family Links. One had been a facilitator in the Styal pilot; the other had no prison experience, but had delivered the Nurturing Programme in a range of settings, including a Children's Centre and a Drug Rehabilitation Unit.
- the programme was planned for five full days over five weeks – in contrast with ten shorter sessions over ten weeks when run in the community. In practice, the programme was extended by a week because of poor attendance in Week 1. The five week course therefore ran from Week 2 to Week 6
- a training day lasted nominally from 9am to 4pm, with a two hour lunch break in the middle of the day; in practice, the start times for the morning sessions were consistent; several of the start times in the afternoon were delayed because staff meetings meant there was no one to escort the women
- the course was delivered in a training room, with an adjacent room for breaks
- the aim of the programme is to develop parents' awareness and confidence with the Four Constructs of: self awareness and self esteem; appropriate expectations; empathy; and positive discipline
- the main methods for doing this include:
 - participants' reflection of their own experiences of being parented as a child
 - doing a series of exercises around specific parenting skills
 - nurturing and valuing the mothers through the course, so that they are better able to nurture and value their children
- the Styal pilot had placed less emphasis on participants' self-exploration, using videos to present a number of the key issues; in Foston Hall, the course was delivered closer to the community model. There were no videos, and there was greater emphasis on self-reflection and group work
- in a community setting, parents are encouraged to practice the skills they have learned with their children between each session; this leads to further reflections about their parenting which are explored in subsequent sessions of the course
- as there is limited opportunity in prison to practice these relationship skills with family members, the Foston Hall course encouraged participants to practice their skills with others in the prison, such as fellow prisoners and prison staff
- the programme was run as an accredited course. This meant participants needed to complete 60 hours of study, including the course work, practicing skills between sessions and written work, which was assessed by the two facilitators.

¹⁸ Course.participant.familylinks.org.uk/nurturing/; and *The Parenting Puzzle*, Candida Hunt (2003), ISBN 0-9544709-0-7

- about two weeks after the course had finished, a family visit was arranged so that the course participants could spend some time with their children. This did not feature in the present evaluation

Appendix 2: Overview of methodology

This review was conducted in February to April 2006, using the following methods:

Stage 1: pre-interviews

- telephone interviews were conducted with the two Family Links facilitators who led the Foston Hall programme. These took place during the planning stages of the course, prior to the course being delivered

Stage 2: debrief reports and feedback forms

- each facilitator produced debrief notes at the end of each session
- a brief weekly feedback form was also produced and completed by the facilitators to track particular aspects of their experiences delivering the course
- these documents were reviewed by the author while the course was taking place to identify emerging themes and issues. These shaped the interviews conducted in Stage 3
- the debrief notes and feedback forms were also reviewed to compare and contrast the experiences of the two facilitators. As these showed no substantial differences, these comparisons have not been reported

Stage 3: field visit

- a field visit to HMP Foston Hall was planned for the last day of the course. Because the course was extended by a week, and the fieldwork date could not be changed, the visit actually occurred on the penultimate day of the course. It is not believed that any issues of substance emerged in the following week
- interviews during the field visit were arranged by Foston Hall. They included interviews with:
 - the prison support worker who had been allocated to support the Family Links facilitators
 - the prison's head librarian
 - two Resettlement Managers
 - the prison drama therapist
- in addition, a 30 minute focus group was conducted with the women participating in the course
- a follow up interview was also conducted with one of the Family Links facilitators
- it had been hoped that interviews could be conducted with the prison's mental health team, the chaplain and wing officers, but this was not possible

Stage 4: follow up phone interviews

- a follow up telephone interview was conducted with the other facilitator
- a telephone interview was also arranged with the prison's Head of Learning and Skills
- further brief questions were emailed to two prison departments but there was no reply before the reporting deadline.

Stage 5: analysis and reporting

All interviews were recorded and reviewed against the themes identified with Family Links at the outset of the project. Illustrative quotes were selected and are included in the report.

The focus group was not recorded because not all members of the group would give permission. A note taker sat in with the group to keep a record, and these notes were reviewed during the analysis.

As is usually the case in qualitative studies, it should be born in mind that the sample sizes in this review were very small. Hence, while the findings present considerable detail about this particular case study, care should be taken when generalising these findings to other settings.