





Head of Connections
HMP Millsike

Candidate Pack
October 2026

Forward

Tall Roots

Welcome

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming Forward Trust's new Head of Connections at HMP Millsike.

At the Forward Trust, we believe that anyone – whatever their history or circumstances – should have the opportunity and support to live a positive life that fulfils their potential, and to inspire others to follow the same path. At HMP Millsike, we put that belief into practice by helping men strengthen their relationships, build a positive sense of who they are and connect with the support they need to build a life beyond crime.

I am proud of the bold vision of Connections for Millsike and beyond, where our services are the latest in a growing criminal justice portfolio which includes one of the UKs largest portfolios of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services for people on probation. An integrated set of services that blend the powerful evidence base for what works in desistance, with the wisdom of lived experience. They create the opportunity for individuals to transform their lives and provide real benefit to the prison by promoting and facilitating a safer, connected prison community.

Our Connections Services represent one of our most adventurous and trailblazing approaches to helping people in a prison move away from reoffending. Partnering with Mitie and People Plus to deliver the One Millsike vision of excellence in custodial care and rehabilitation, we are proud of the pioneering nature, the bold vision and the potential for change that underpin these services. Together, we want to demonstrate what is possible when rehabilitation is part of the culture and daily life of a prison.

As our Head of Connections, you will be joining at an exciting time of impactful growth, and play a key role in building on the foundations that have already been established. A member of the Senior Leadership Teams at both HMP Millsike and Forward Trust, you will lead a team of 30 , providing strategic oversight of our services related to Family and Relationships, Visits, Drug Strategy, Recovery, and desistance through our innovative *More Than My Past* programme, which draws on the wisdom of the lived experience of those that have turned their life around, offering hope that change is possible.

We are looking for a warm, credible and experienced leader to tend to their development and success, and to showcase the evidence of their transformational effect to stakeholders and decision makers. Our staff need you to be consistent, coaching, and a protective champion of them and their expertise. Our partner Mitie needs you to be an active, collaborative member of the Senior Leadership Team, and to fully embrace and uphold the One Millsike vision.

This role is not simply about implementation; it is a platform for leadership, influence and genuine social change.

Over the following pages, you will find more about our work, the role and the experience we are looking for. We hope you will get a sense of both our ambition and the care that underpins it.

If you share our belief in people's capacity to change and are excited by the contribution you could make, we would love to hear from you.



Emma Stuart
Executive Director Criminal Justice Services

About Forward Trust and HMP Millsike

Our purpose

Forward Trust is a national UK charity and social enterprise supporting people to move forward from addiction, offending, homelessness, unemployment and poor mental health. We are transforming marginalised lives by creating opportunity, strengthening connection, and building a society that supports change.

Our work is grounded in the belief that anyone is capable of lasting change. People with lived experience of desistance and all our areas of work play an important part in shaping our services and showing others what is possible.

As a non-profit organisation, everything we do is driven by our core values. We deliver all our services with compassion and without condemnation. We are a safe place to start a changed life and we will be there for people for however long it takes, because change and recovery happens one day at a time.
Our nine core beliefs explain our values in more detail.

The opportunity at HMP Millsike

HMP Millsike is a Category C prison at Full Sutton, East Yorkshire, which opened in March 2025. Forward Trust partnered with Mitie, who runs the prison, and PeoplePlus, which delivers education and training. Together, we share the One Millsike ambition for high standards of custodial care and rehabilitation.

Connections Services have been mobilising and developing since the prison opened. This role offers the opportunity to build on those foundations, strengthen delivery and help realise the full potential of the approach.

What we mean by Connections

Connections helps people develop a better relationship with themselves, other people, services and their wider community. Through individual support, group work and family involvement, we help people build the motivation, relationships and opportunities that support a life beyond crime. This process of moving away from offending is known as desistance.

Building on our 30 years' experience proving what works in recovery, these services are about what works in desistance. We know it takes Connections. Our services are for those who want change and are ready to ask for it, and also support people who are isolated, disengaged, struggling with relationships or finding it difficult to take part in prison life.

Together, our services create the opportunity for personal and family transformational change, for good. In the prison, delivered at scale they will lead to a safer prison community.

Why this role matters

You will have a place on both HMP Millsike's and Forward Trust's senior leadership teams. Alongside leading services, you will influence the prison's approach to desistance, drug strategy, families and visits, and use evidence from Millsike to contribute to Forward Trust's wider criminal justice work.



Our Connection Services

The services work together so that support can be shaped around each person's needs. Desistance, family, relationships, recovery, wellbeing and personal development are connected parts of the same journey.

More Than My Past

Our More Than My Past campaign celebrates and promotes the stories of people who have overcome a difficult past to embrace rehabilitation & recovery, to pursue positive and fulfilling lives.

You can read more about our More Than My Past campaign here.

At HMP Millsike, we have taken the wisdom of More Than My Past journeys, and blended them with a 'Narrative Approach' (unpacking stories, writing new futures) to create a desistance approach and programme. Our More Than My Past practitioners work across the population, offering opportunities for change to all.

Our vision is to build a community of 'More Than My Past' men working their desistance in an Incentivised Substance Free Living (ISFL) environment. Forward's More Than My Past Ambassadors are regular visitors, sharing their stories of success, creating an environment of optimism and hope.

Families and relationships

Our practitioners help men build, maintain and repair relationships with family members and significant others. Relationships are key to success, and our work here includes supporting men to work well with others in the prison and to take up opportunities that will help them. Support includes individual and group work, Relationships Matter and M-PACT (Moving Parents and Children Together), which involves the whole family. Further priorities include developing a parenting programme and working with Forward Trust's specialist team on programme accreditation.

We are responsible for the establishment Family Strategy, and the HMPPS Family Services KPI.

Visits

A welcoming visitors centre and a positive visits experience help families stay connected. Our teams support visitors, including children and young people. We run special seasonal, age, and other interest events throughout the year.

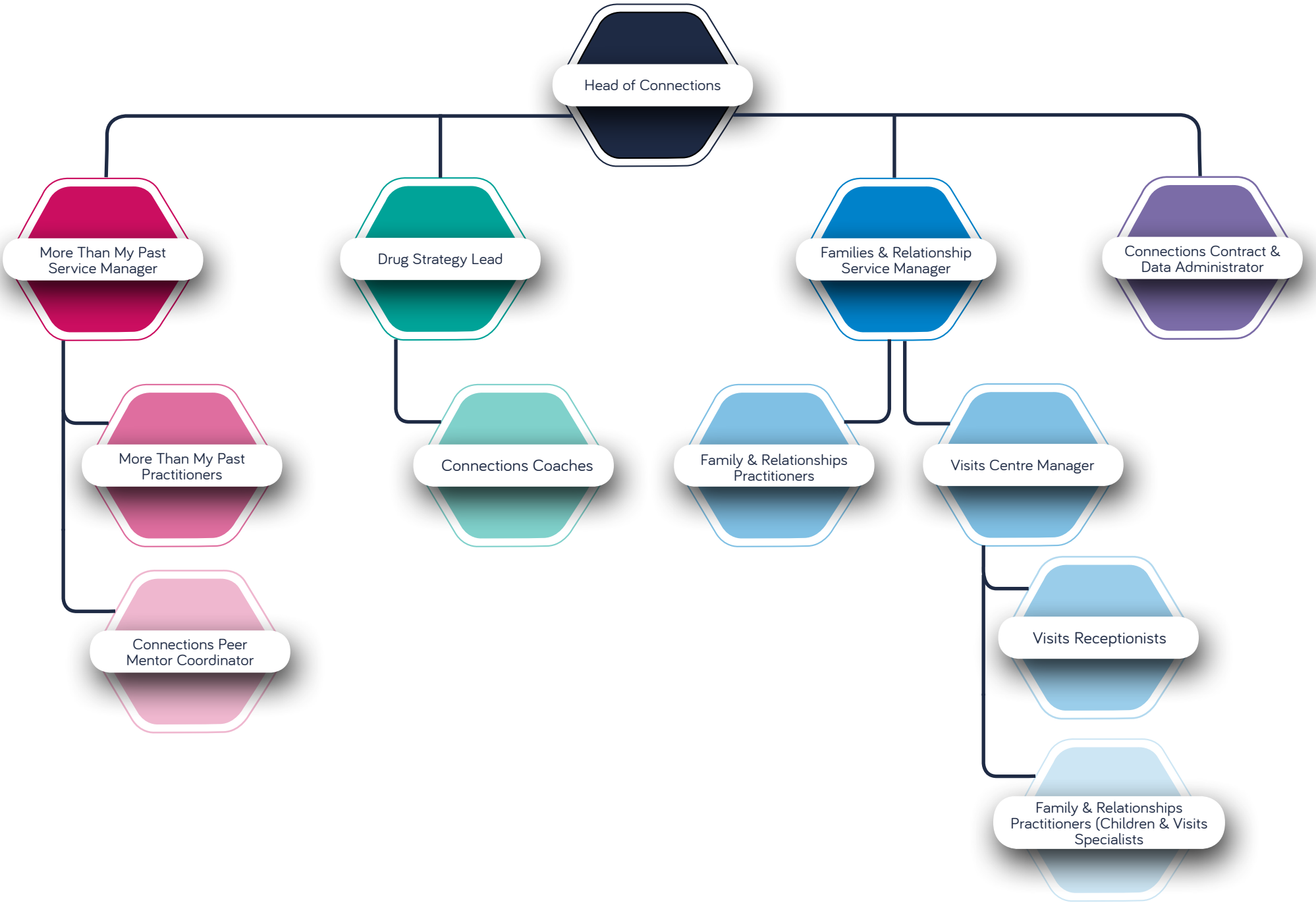
Drug strategy

Innovatively, Forward Trust leads the prison's drug strategy. The Head of Connections will oversee the expert work of our Drug Strategy Lead, ensuring a whole establishment approach to:

- Restricting Supply
- Reducing Harm
- Promoting Recovery
- Gold Standard Innovation

Connections Coaches help men build motivation and access appropriate support, including pathways into the establishments wider recovery services.

Head of Connections Team Structure



About You

Like what you see?
You could be who we are looking for.

We're looking for someone with leadership experience, who will build and maintain vital connections for prisoners, families and staff in HMP Millsike, with a view to scaling our Connections approach further in the future.

We're especially keen to hear from people who bring leadership experience within Justice, ideally in a custodial environment or another similarly complex environment, together with strong experience of contractual delivery, partnership-building skills and an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing prisons. Experience of matrix management and partnership working will be advantageous, as would experience in a privately managed custodial environment, and managing a seven figure budget.

The Head of Connections will have a business head and a social justice heart. They will capitalise on their leadership platform to deliver the deepest impact. This role is for someone who ensures we make effective connections with stakeholders, synthesising complicated ideas and communicating clearly, so that people get involved, excited and behind our approach. We are looking for a super connector, who embodies our theory and who will grow our community of people with living experience of desistance and success, people who can help our quest, and people who will be our champions.

We are seeking applications from leaders who bring infectious enthusiasm for desistance approaches which they understand really well. And we're looking for someone who is experienced at a senior level, and who is as motivated to ensure contractual and budget delivery, while meeting and exceeding standards, as they are by rehabilitation. The Head of Connections needs to be able to write strategies, policies or instructions, and impact reports that are as engaging to the reader as their compelling in person approach.

Our next Head of Connections is someone who can spot an opportunity, and knows when to hold boundaries, and who can cut through complexity and deliver. They need to be both a self-starter and a team player, and an excellent ambassador of the Forward Trust at all times. They uphold our vision and standards, creating healthy teams and a culture of excellence in delivery and approach.

It may be that you are already operating in a similar role and excited by the opportunity to join an innovative project with bold ambitions in the UK's newest prison. You will share our excitement for working with people in a compassionate and community centric way, and to not simply reduce reoffending, but to end it.

What matters most is your perspective, your skills, your values, your energy and who you are as a leader and as a person. We're really looking forward to recruiting our next Head of Connections. This is an opportunity to lead a unique project, while helping to shape the next chapter of 'Connections Services' at and beyond HMP Millsike. So, if what you read in this pack resonates with who you are, what you care about and the kind of impact your experience shows you have as a leader, we'd love to hear from you.

Job Description



Strategic Leadership

- Member of both Forward Trust and HMP Millsike Senior Leadership Teams, attending meetings, completing actions and overseeing project work as required
- Proactively contributes to furtherance and success of the establishment Annual Custodial Service Development Plan, as well as the Forward Trust mission, strategic and financial objectives as required
- Meets and exceeds HMIP expectations, risk and governance audit baselines, Family and Relationships Improvement Measure
- Maintains excellent working relationships with SLT and other operational / functional leads to ensure integration and successful delivery of Connections Services
- Maximises opportunities for business development / innovation through excellent relationship with Director, & holds boundaries avoiding contractual drift or mission dilution
- Ensure teams are well resourced with excellent behavioural, cultural and values alignment to Forward Trust and desistance and recovery approaches
- Achieves or exceeds workplan objectives, reporting progress quarterly effectively and accurately
- Act as a positive ambassador of Forward Trust at all times

Head of Connections

- Owner of, leads and delivers compliance against Drug Strategy, Family and Relationships Strategy, Visits Operating Procedures
- Sets vision and cultural tone for HMP Millsike Connections Services, ensuring Forward Trust is highly understood and promoted throughout establishment and especially by Connections staff
- Ensures high satisfaction of employee experience of leadership, being valued, and contributing to Forward Trust & HMP Millsike mission
- Ensures high degree of lived experience-led activity, co creation, review and participation in services at all times
- Ensures close relationship with and high visibility of More Than My Past Ambassadors in Connections Services
- Excellent relationship Management, creates and maintains partnerships and relationships with others to further, support, develop and enhance the Connections Services success

Families and Relationships

- Owner of establishment Family and Relationship strategy and Family and Relationship Performance Measurement
- Ensures quality and contractual delivery of Relationships Matter, Parenting Programme, and MPACT

Visits

- Ensuring the Visitors Reception innovates visitor's centre and visitors approach beyond current best practice
- Ensures Connections Services and Forward Trust are well known and understood by Visitors to HMP Millsike
- Manages contractual relationship and delivery, including compliance with regulations, of Café provider including open book reporting and sharing of profit from sales

Drug Strategy

- Owner of establishment Drug Strategy, exceed HMIP expectations and ensures demonstrably positive impact on supply, demand, harm reduction and innovation
- Ensures close relationship with and high visibility of Forward Connect & More Than My Past Ambassadors in Connections Services
- Ensures annual establishment participation in live streamed reunion events
- Ensures ISFL delivery to excellent standard

More Than My Past

- Ensures high-quality standards and contractual delivery of More Than My Past programme and interventions
- Owner of More Than My Past ISFL Houseblock operating procedures and quality of delivery
- Ensures close relationship with and high visibility of More Than My Past Ambassadors in Connections Services

Contractual Compliance & Impact

- Responsible for delivery of all contract deliverables / obligations between Mitie and Forward Trust
- Ensures payment penalty is minimised through excellent governance and service delivery
- Provides excellent accurate quarterly contract and impact report to Mitie
- Ensures deliverables are measured and reports impact accurately and compellingly
- Manages risk effectively

Criminal Justice Directorate

- Contributes to thought leadership, using evidence of impact at HMP Millsike & own knowledge and understanding of desistance
- Proactively contributes to furtherance and success of criminal justice directorate
- Leads prison-based business development opportunities
- Proactively promotes Connections, Forwards desistance approach and criminal justice work as required





Person Specification

Knowledge & Experience

- Significant leadership experience in a custodial environment, including custodial operational experience such as managing custodial visits, residential or therapeutic environments.
- Experience managing contractual service delivery in Criminal Justice settings, ideally of The Dynamic Framework, Privately Managed Prisons and/or Public Sector Prisons.
- Experience managing a significant budget, with knowledge of managing contractual payment dependency clauses.
- Experience of delivery in a highly regulated, audited and inspected environment, with a track record of delivering high standards, consistent compliance, and exceeding expectations.
- Knowledge of desistance theories and approaches, with a qualification a distinct advantage.
- Knowledge of Narrative Therapy / Theory / Approaches is highly beneficial.

Skills & Abilities

- Excellent leadership organisational skills including project, programme, budget and action planning and delivery.
- Excellent enabling skills, demonstrably able to provide stakeholders with the necessary understanding and resources to succeed, managing performance throughout.
- Excellent relational and relationships skills. Skilled in forming & maintaining diverse partnerships, alliances, and relationships, with many types of stakeholders. Excellent stakeholder management, including keeping people informed, making sure things happen, negotiating, and boundary management. Experience of managing subcontractor arrangements.
- Excellent skills in structuring case management and impact reporting, ensuring that we record and demonstrate completion of the work we are committed to, and can confidently report on impact, trends, and dependencies and make evidence led decisions and recommendations.
- Excellent communication skills able to simplify complexity, use data, and adapt approach according to audience and purpose of communication.

Terms of Appointment

Salary	Circa £70,000 per annum, dependant on experience
Contract	Permanent, full-time. We are open to a range of flexible working options within the requirements of the role.
Location	You will be based at HMP Millsike (Moor Lane, Full Sutton, York, YO41 1FZ). As this is a prison-based role, you will be expected to be highly visible within the prison.
Pension	Employer matched contributions of up to 6% in the first two years' service and up to 9% thereafter
Annual leave	25 days (rising to 30 with length of service), plus Bank Holidays.

Travel

You will be required to travel to other locations occasionally for meetings, training and activities that support the success of the Connections Services, HMP Millsike, Forward Trust, or you as an individual.

Meals

There is a staff canteen onsite providing a range of balanced hot and cold meals at lunch time, provided by Mitie and free to staff of HMP Millsike, including Forward Trust.

Attendance Pattern

You will be required to work 37.5 hours per week, with some weekend working. Connections Managers each work approximately one weekend in four. They share responsibility for providing managerial support and oversight to the Connections visits services. You will be part of and responsible for this rota. When working a weekend, you will take mid-week rest days to average 37.5 hours per week.

Core Hours

As part of the prison Senior Management Team, Monday to Friday you must be present in the prison for the 08:30hrs morning meeting and at least until 16:00hrs most days. You will be required to work occasional evenings as services may run in evenings, and one weekend in 5 as part of a rota with your managers to provide visibility and support to our visits services.

Additional Benefits

Training and development opportunities; Simply Health Cashback Scheme (optional); Season Ticket Loan Scheme; Cycle to work scheme; Crisis Loan Scheme; Electric Car Scheme; 3 x Wellbeing Days; Access to Blue Light Card; Death in Service Payment (2x annual salary); Critical Illness Insurance (subject to qualifying criteria)



How to apply

Tall Roots is acting as an employment agency partner to Forward Trust. Applications should be made online at https://www.tallroots.co.uk/forwardtrust-hoc and include:

- a CV
- covering letter (no more than two pages), explaining your motivation for applying for the role, along with how you meet the Knowledge & Experience section of the Person Specification.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 20th November 2026.**

Preliminary interviews with Tall Roots will be held virtually during **w/c 30th November 2026**.

Final interviews are expected to be held in-person in HMP Millsike during **w/c 4th December 2026.**

If you have any questions relating to the role or the process, or would like any adjustments made to accommodate your needs, please contact Mark Crowley at Tall Roots by email at mark.crowley@tallroots.co.uk.

Forward

Tall Roots

Recruiting exceptional leaders for inspiring organisations

www.tallroots.co.uk

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