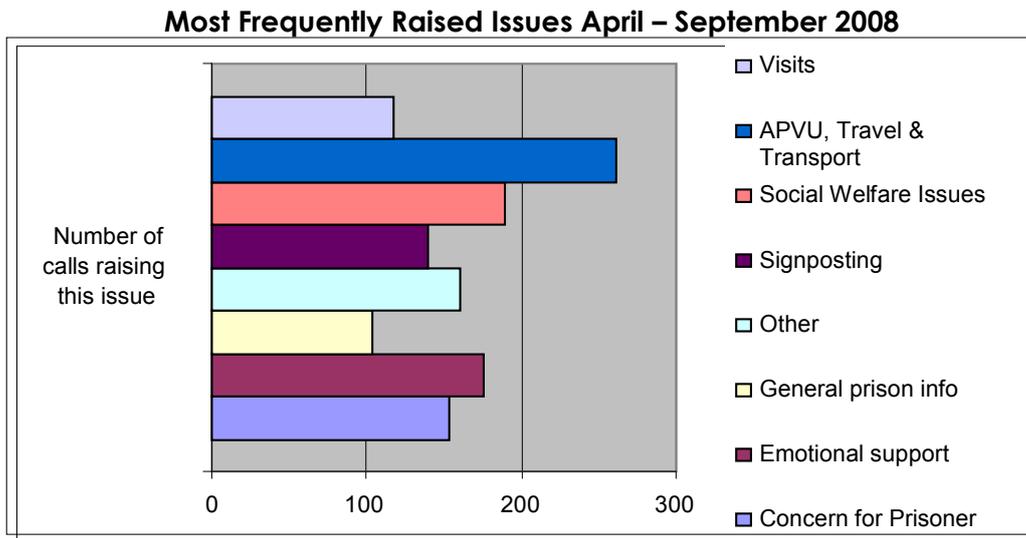


**Scottish Prisoners' Families Helpline
BI ANNUAL STATISTICS
April – September 2008**

Calls to the helpline cover a wide range of issues and as some issues are more frequently raised than others, it was felt it would be useful to focus on the most frequently raised concerns for callers for the 6 month period in question. The chart below demonstrates the frequency with which these issues were raised.



Information relating to the **Assisted Prison Visits (APV), travel and transport** continues to elicit the most enquiries (22%). General information about the APV scheme included eligibility, advance payments and the childcare component of the service. Frequently callers raised the fact that they had been visiting a prison for some time and had only just heard about APV assistance. This further highlights the need for the agencies involved to be more proactive in informing and supporting visitors to prisons. Travel and transport issues vary depending on a number of factors: the location of the prison, the location of the visitor, national establishments, which receive visitors from wide ranging locations and finally, the personal circumstances of the visitor.

In the last report, the links between the impact of imprisonment on families and **social welfare issues** were examined in detail. There continues to be a significant number of calls received around an increasingly wide range of social welfare issues, and this plays an important part in why callers contact the Helpline.

The immigration status of a prisoner, deportation, cultural difficulties, domestic abuse, unwanted or unfair media attention and licence conditions for released prisoners, are a snapshot of some of the **Other Issues** covered by the Helpline. The new database will allow staff to access this information in more detail.

Invariably there are situations where callers will be **signposted** to other agencies or organizations and the helpline has access to a substantial database of resources which allows them to be signposted appropriately. This includes a named contact at the prison, and in most cases this will be the family contact officer (fco).

Information about **visits** can be general – booking responsibilities, times and frequency. However, there are also requests for more specific information about closed visits, or around bonding, parent-child and more

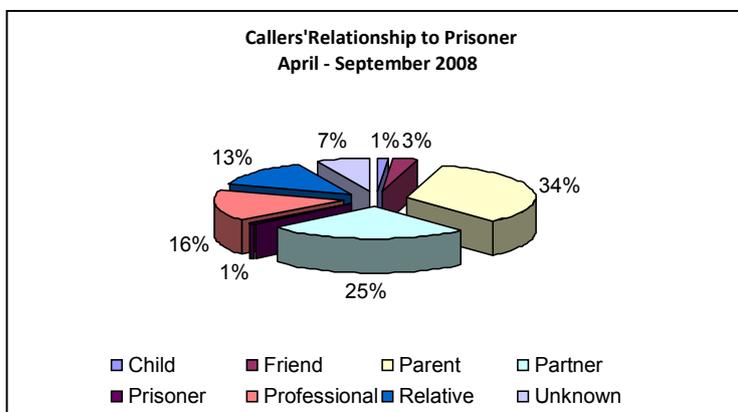
child-friendly visits. Callers are often anxious about the process of visits too and this can include appropriate id, search procedures for children and facilities available at the prison, particularly if travelling any distance.

Concern for prisoner and calls where **emotional support** is provided are closely connected. Concern for the prisoner can include issues about general welfare, coping levels, medical issues, drugs, suicide or self harm, anxieties and issues around mental health specifically and generally.

Calls by Prison April - Sept 2007		Calls by prison April-Sept 2008	
Prison	Calls Per Prison	Prison	Calls Per Prison
Aberdeen	21	Aberdeen	18
Barlinnie	61	Barlinnie	85
Open Estate	28	Open Estate	12
Cornton Vale	29	Cornton Vale	33
Dumfries	4	Dumfries	15
Edinburgh	65	Edinburgh	113
Glenochil	31	Glenochil	27
Greenock	28	Greenock	13
Inverness	6	Inverness	15
Kilmarnock	20	Kilmarnock	14
Perth	43	Perth	63
Peterhead	29	Peterhead	20
Polmont	55	Polmont	28
Shotts	8	Shotts	6

Traditionally calls relating to Barlinnie and Edinburgh form a sizeable percentage of the total calls. Call numbers were similar in 2007 but proportionally the calls for Edinburgh had risen significantly. Barlinnie showed a 39% increase whereas Edinburgh generated calls showed an increase of 73%.

Cornton Vale, Dumfries, Inverness and Perth all showed an increase in calls; whereas calls around Polmont demonstrated a significant decline. There are a variety of factors that can impact on call volume. For example, changes around prison population, prison numbers, availability of information for prisoners and their families, the FCO function within individual establishments or the introduction of a new scheme or initiative.



Traditionally parents and partners form the largest proportion of calls to the helpline and this is borne out again, with a combined percentage representing just fewer than 60% of calls. In comparison to 2007, there has been an increase in calls from children, prisoners and other relatives. Calls from professionals remain consistent and this would correlate with the awareness-raising training delivered by Families Outside.