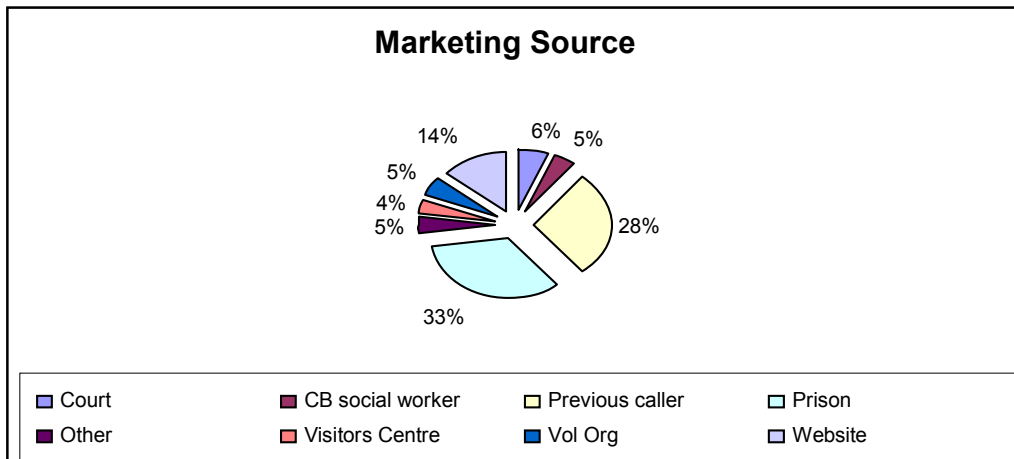


**Families Outside Support & Information Line
Bi Annual Statistics
Oct 2009 – March 2010**

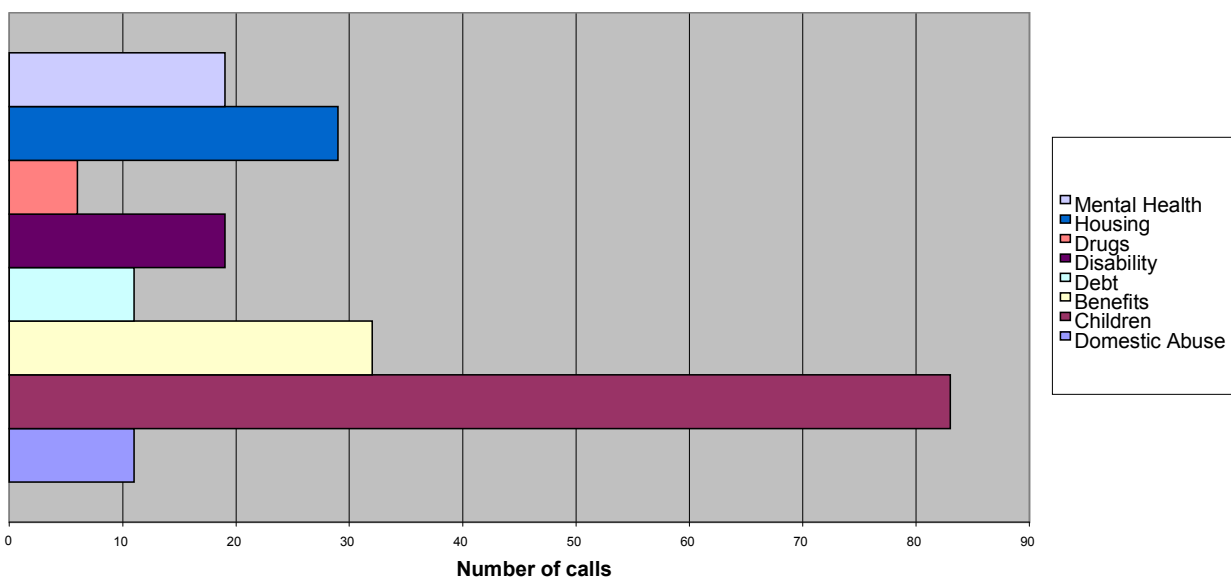


voicing the needs
of families affected
by imprisonment



Calls to the Support & Information line are recorded to inform the focus and distribution of Families Outside publicity material and factsheets. The snapshot above shows clearly that a third of callers were made aware of our service via prisons. This percentage is one which we would all like to see, if not increasing, at least maintained at this level. Whilst not having a large number of repeat callers, there are times when callers will make more than one call to achieve the support and information they require and this would be identified via the “previous caller” field on the database. In this 6-month period, just under a third were repeat callers. The updated Families Outside website is proving to be an increasingly popular source of information for families, which they can access without having to identify themselves as prisoners’ families.

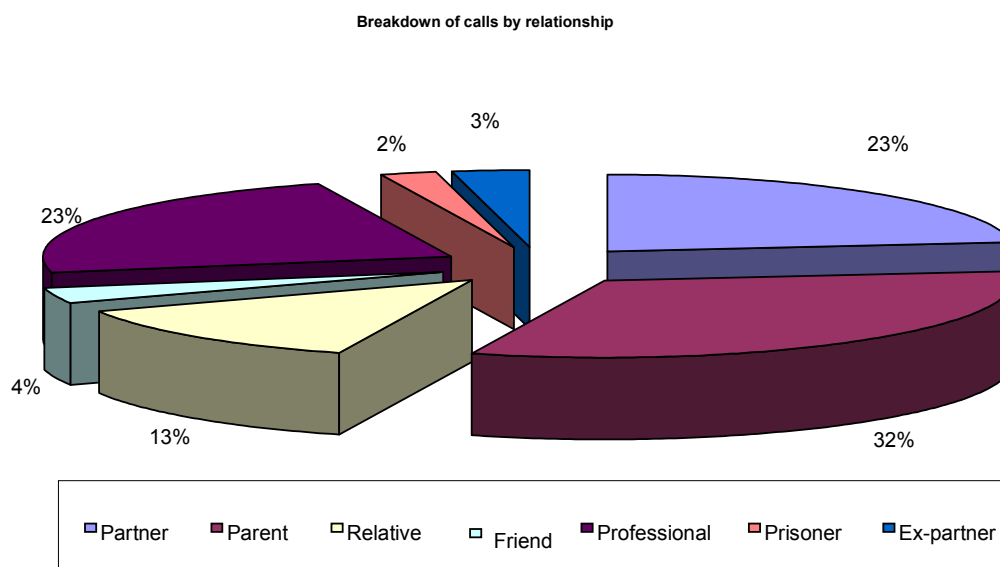
Social Welfare Issues



Social welfare issues are those that directly affect families and as you can see from the above, concerns around children form just under 40% of this group of call issues. Callers are often unsure when it comes to discussing imprisonment with children, and the effects of imprisonment, even for short periods of time, can have disproportionately harsh effects on them. As we know the children of female offenders often face bleaker prospects in terms of home arrangements and, in the absence of a willing and able adult relative, many face being looked after by social services. On behalf of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People and Families Outside, Tania Loureiro has compiled a report "Perspectives of Children and Young people with a Parent in Prison" which highlights the impact imprisonment has on issues around behaviour, physical and mental health and social and financial circumstances. The findings suggest a number of ways in which children and young people could be more central to the decisions that affect them, particularly around sentencing.

Housing and benefit concerns together form around 30% of social welfare issues and it is unsurprising that families' lives can fundamentally change as a consequence of imprisonment. Families sometimes need to move home due to financial constraints but sometimes it can be due to victimization.

There has been a marginal increase in the number of calls where domestic abuse is raised. This could be down to the increased general awareness of DA, but also may be for example, that when looking at the grounds for refusal of HDC, it becomes apparent that this issue has featured in their relationship at some point.



Parents still form the largest proportion of calls to the helpline and the reasons for that are self explanatory – parents (particularly of first offenders) are often very anxious and are lacking general information to help them deal with their son/daughter's imprisonment. Professionals still continue to use the helpline both as a resource and a place of referral. Ex partners who use the helpline usually have their children's welfare at the heart of the call. Dilemmas about maintaining contact with the imprisoned parent and who might accompany the child if they don't feel able to, are often areas of concern.