

# Families Outside

Voicing the needs of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland

Bulletin – January 2012



[www.familiesoutside.org.uk](http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk)

families  
outside

## SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN PRISONS

### *Wonderful Spirit Shown by the Scottish Prison Service for Children and Families Affected by Imprisonment*

Families Outside would like to thank the Scottish Prison Service for the wonderful Christmas spirit shown by many of the prisons over the festive period. Families were able to take part in Christmas lunches with their loved ones, while children were able to receive presents and take part in fun activities such as making reindeer food and joining in with a singing Santa! One prison also held a 'Gifts of Christmas Past' event where families where, thanks to Glasgow Life's Open Museum, families were able to take a nostalgic trip down memory lane, seeing the toys and games given as gifts in 'days gone by'.



As we at Families Outside are all too aware, many of the families who are affected by imprisonment struggle to afford Christmas presents for their children. So, in the run up to the festive period, we were delighted to receive over 180 gifts from Greyfriars Church in Lanark. We were able to give these gifts to children of the families we support; to the children supported by Circle; and to children visiting prisons for Christmas at HMPs Dumfries, Greenock, Inverness, Kilmarnock and the Open Estate. Many thanks to the parishioners of Greyfriars Church for their generous donation which, we hope in a small way, brightened the Christmas of some children in Scotland.

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/fo>

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Support Families Outside for free when shopping online with over 600 retailers including Amazon, eBay, Tesco, Argos, Next, M&S, John Lewis, Debenhams, HMV, Vodafone, Play.com, The Body Shop, Interflora, Comet, DELL and many many more...

### FIRESIDE CHAT – INSPECTORS ON FAMILIES

Families Outside will be hosting a special event to mark our 21st Birthday 'coming of age'. For the first time, the four current and previous Chief Inspectors of Prisons in Scotland have agreed to come together for a retrospective discussion of their views and experiences. Alan Bishop CB, Clive Fairweather CBE, the Very Reverend Dr Andrew McLellan CBE and Brigadier Hugh Monro CBE will focus on families affected by imprisonment from 5-7pm on 21 February 2012 at the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Spaces are strictly limited, though we hope to air the discussion via webcam.



For more information, email [admin@familiesoutside.org.uk](mailto:admin@familiesoutside.org.uk)

### LOW-COST ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN VISITING PRISON



Play activities in prison provide familiar activities in what can otherwise be an unfamiliar and sterile environment or stressful and boring experience, particularly for children. Play can offer the opportunity to do something fun and interactive with a parent or relative and be a positive shared experience to break down barriers and cope with difficult situations.

Children's Links have just published 'What can we do today in prison', which features 50 ideas for activities when time, ideas and money are in short supply. The pocket-sized pack is crammed with ideas for low cost activities and has been 'road tested' by the Children's Link play team and prison officers.

The pack costs £24.99. Download an order form here:

[http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/Holding%20Page%20docs/A5%20Prisons%20Flyer%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/Holding%20Page%20docs/A5%20Prisons%20Flyer%20(2).pdf)

### SAN FRANCISCO'S FAMILY-FOCUSED PROBATION

The Vera Institute of Justice blog recently reported on the [San Francisco Adult Probation Department's family-focused approach to probation](#), with a response from Families Outside. A more holistic, family-focused approach and the use of Family Impact Statements to inform sentencing offers a positive model for jurisdictions elsewhere. The approach recognises that judges will make a more informed and balanced decision when they have the information they need to do so.

A family-focused approach takes into account the rights and needs of all parties concerned - something that shows much wider benefits than a traditional offender-focused view. Offending and the responses to it extend well beyond the person who commits the offence and beyond the criminal justice process. Similar efforts are being explored in Scotland following the report in from Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) in 2008, which recommended the use of Child Impact Assessments for sentencing decisions in Scottish courts.

### KINSHIP CARE: AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Recently the Families Outside 'Routes Out of Prison' Family Support Coordinator has been working with a family from South West Scotland that shares the care of two children between the great-grandparents and grandparents.

Recognising both the emotional and financial pressures this was placing on the family as they struggled to manage, our Family Support Coordinator sought to link the family into local support and advocacy, referring them to the Lighthouse Foundation and Kinship Care Group. As a consequence, the family are now in receipt of Kinship Care Allowance, the amount for which has been backdated.

## TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Families Outside continues to conduct training for new recruits at the Scottish Prison Service and Lothian & Borders Police as well as awareness-raising as part of the Life/Time project in Lothian & Borders secondary schools (now on hold). In addition to these, training and awareness-raising this quarter has included the following:

- Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending/Scottish Consortium on Crime & Criminal Justice Round Table event
- NIACRO staff training conference
- Common Purpose RBS PACE Leadership course
- Routes Out Of Prison conference
- Families Outside national conference
- Special screening and discussion of *Winter's Bone* at the Edinburgh Filmhouse
- Training of Children's Panel members
- Scottish Trade Union Congress Women's Committee conference
- Children in Scotland's Parents as Partners Good Practice Seminar

This quarter has continued with requests for input to various reports, consultations and research:

- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion
- Justice Committee's Scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2012-13
- Angiolini Commission on Women's Offending
- Consultation on the Rights of Children & Young People Bill
- European Commission Green Paper: Strengthening trust in the European judicial area – Green paper on the application of EU criminal justice legislation in the field of detention
- Social Services Knowledge Scotland consultation
- FreshMinds' scoping exercise for Barnardo's UK on support needs for children of prisoners

New working groups include:

- Ministerial Early Years Task Force (by invitation)
- Nat'l Parenting Strategy Group (Parenting Across Scotland)
- Children's Sector Forum (Children in Scotland)
- Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People

We continue in our active participation in a number of relevant groups continue, including:

- Chairmanship of the Glasgow CJA Women Offenders group
- Chairmanship of Family Outcome Groups for South West and Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authorities;
- Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending;
- Consultation with the Glasgow and Fife & Forth Valley CJAs;
- local SPS Children and Family Development Groups;
- SPS National Suicide Risk Management Group;
- Interfaith Throughcare Forum;
- Joint Working Group: CJ Family Support Group;
- Prisoners' Week Planning Forum;
- HMP Perth and Edinburgh Visitors' Centres advisory groups;
- Scottish Veterans Prison In-Reach Working Group.

## BBC 1 DRAMA – PRISONERS' WIVES

New BBC 1 drama *Prisoners' Wives* tells the story of four very different women, each trying to cope with the imprisonment of a significant man in her life. Visit the link for more details:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/prisoners-wives.html>

## GIVING FAMILIES A VOICE

We are always looking for people who are willing to share their experiences of having a family member caught up in the criminal justice system. If this is of interest to you, please let us know; we are always ready to hear your story.

Tel 0131 557 9800 Email [admin@familiesoutside.org.uk](mailto:admin@familiesoutside.org.uk)

## 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE REPORT

Following the success of the Families Outside conference in November 2011, a report on the day's discussion will be available by the end of January. The report highlights issues raised during the day and the conclusions that were drawn from the discussion. Delegate feedback is already available at

<http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/20th-anniversary-conference-feedback/>

## CASH FOR KIDS – CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Cash For Kids appeal once again helped children of prisoners over the Christmas period. Families Outside distributed the donation for presents for the children of a number of families affected by imprisonment.



Further donations have also been received from The Michael & Shirley Hunt Charitable Trust and The St Clairs Trust over the last few months. These funds, given directly to families affected by imprisonment, have been used to buy everything from tumble dryers to nursery furniture. We thank both Trusts for this much needed support.

## PERTH PRISON VISITORS' CENTRE: AN "EXAMPLE TO THE NATION"

Rev David Arnott, the current Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and previously a Chaplain at HMP Barlinnie, made a special visit to the Crossreach Perth Prison Visitors' Centre in November 2011.

Staff provided presentations on their roles within the Centre and discussed available facilities for visitors and children, Adult and Child Protection procedures and ongoing training opportunities for staff. In addition, Families Outside's Family Support Worker provided a summary regarding her role and remit, case examples and feedback from families regarding their experience of support.

The Centre received positive feedback about this visit during a later church service at Letham St Marks and subsequent praise in an article in the local *Courier and Advertiser*, which hailed the Visitor's Centre as an "example to the nation".

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