

Families Outside

Voicing the needs of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland

Bulletin – April 2012



www.familiesoutside.org.uk

families
outside

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Recent progress on voicing the needs of children with a parent in prison

International bodies are focusing more of their attention on the needs of children with a parent in prison. Following the Day of General Discussion in September 2011 on children affected by imprisonment, the United Nations Committee on the Right of the Child released its [comments and recommendations](#) in February 2012. Recommendations included regular contact and visits with parents in prison, location of prisoners closer to home, and assistance for those who struggle to maintain contact eg. financial support and video links. The Quaker UN Office supplemented these recommendations with three additional reports:

[Collateral Convicts](#); [Children of parents sentenced to death](#), and a [revised draft framework for decision making in relation to children of \(alleged\) offenders](#). The Human Rights Council reinforced the message regarding the rights of the child through Resolution A/HRC/19/L.31, which contained substantial sections relevant to children with a parent in prison.

Together Scotland, with the support of the Cross Party Group on Children & Families Affected by Imprisonment, submitted evidence to the Human Rights Council with recommendations to support the 7,600 children every day in Scotland who have a parent in prison. While we await the outcome of the submission, we are happy to see a new focus on support for this often unseen and excluded group.



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ANGIOLINI COMMISSION REPORT

Launched this month, the Angiolini Commission Report made 37 recommendations including the replacement of Cornton Vale with a smaller prison for long term and high risk female offenders, and a visitors' centre to support children and families. It also recommended that short term and remand prisoners be placed in prisons closer to home, and more training for the judiciary. The report focused on the need to reduce the numbers of women in prison through support for mental health issues, substance misuse, and housing. Families Outside would have liked more emphasis on the relevance of children and families, but the recommendations offer a useful starting point for progress.

DVD FOR TEENAGERS – IT'S NO HOLIDAY

Families Outside is currently in the process of updating the training DVD that we produced in May 2006. This will include an update to a web based format as part of a larger e-learning package currently in progress.

As part of this development, we are looking for teenagers to participate in further discussion groups to ensure the material is as up to date as possible. Input is anonymous, with the voices of participants heard but the roles of the young people on the DVD portrayed by actors.

If you can help or know someone who may be interested, please contact us at admin@familiesoutside.org.uk.



PRISON, MY FAMILY AND ME

BBC 3 is currently airing a two-part documentary looking at four individuals who have each had their family lives dramatically affected by crime. Over eighteen months, it follows their lives and looks at the challenges of having a loved one convicted of crime.



FIRESIDE CHAT WITH HM INSPECTORS OF PRISONS



Families Outside is happy to report on the success of the recent Fireside Chat event to celebrate our 21st Birthday 'coming of age'. All four past and present HM Inspectors of Prisons for Scotland were in attendance to discuss the change in the focus on support for families affected by imprisonment over the last three decades.

With the event fully booked, a wide variety of issues were discussed including the founding of the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families (the precursor to Families Outside), the development of Standards for Inspections (including measures in relation to families), prison visitors' centres, and the rise in numbers of women offenders. The evening ended with a Q&A session and recommendation for further progress and developments that would like to be seen.

Streamed live, a recording of the event is on our website: <http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/fireside-chat-video/>

NO PLACE LIKE HOME – GOOD PRACTICE

Families Outside recently provided support to a woman who was being evicted from her rented home due to overcrowding as a result of her two teenagers returning to live with her; one teenager was an ex-offender. Through Families Outside's support and identification of the issues and needs, the client completed a housing application and was allocated a Housing Officer who was able to secure temporary accommodation for her and her children. The client and her children were then able to move directly into a new home without the need for hostel accommodation.

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 (now resuming) in Lothian & Borders secondary schools. In addition to these, training and awareness-raising this quarter has included the following:

- Extensive SPS training (College and establishments)
- Training for volunteers at HMP Low Moss
- Bishopbriggs Church 'Opening Doors' re: HMP Low Moss
- Family Induction sessions
- Scottish Community Safety Network National Conference
- Social work team training at HMP Shotts
- National Church of Scotland 'OneKirk' event
- Aberdeen Prison Visiting Committee special event on the new HMP Grampian establishment

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

- Scottish Government Consultation on the Mental Health Strategy for Scotland
- 'blog' response to an interview with Chief Adult Probation Officer Wendy Still, *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 24(1), October 2011, for the Vera Institute of Justice
- Equal Opportunities Committee consultation, *Having and Keeping a Home: steps to preventing homelessness among young people*
- Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending Action Plan
- Scottish Government Review of Third Sector Funding for Children, Young People and Families
- Scottish Government Consultation on Improving Advocacy for Children and Young People: Principles and Minimum Standards
- United Nations Universal Periodic Review: United Kingdom

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

- Ministerial Early Years Task Force (by invitation)
- National Parenting Strategy Group (Parenting Across Scotland)
- Children's Sector Forum (Children in Scotland)
- Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People
- Cross-Party Group on Learning Disabilities
- Chairmanship of the Glasgow CJA Women Offenders group
- Chairmanship of the Family Outcome Groups for the South West and Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authorities;
- Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending;
- local SPS Children and Family Development Groups;
- SPS National Suicide Risk Management Group;
- Interfaith Throughcare Forum;
- Joint Working Group: Criminal Justice Family Support;
- Faith in Throughcare Steering Group and Evaluation Sub-Committee;
- Prisoners' Week Planning Forum;
- Advisory groups for Visitors' Centres at both HMPs Edinburgh & Perth;
- Scottish Veterans Prison In-Reach Working Group
- Scottish Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum; and
- Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice

The work of the Scottish Government's Women Offenders Strategy Group is on hold pending the completion of the Angiolini Commission.

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PARENTING ACROSS SCOTLAND

A new collection of essays about parenting in Scotland has now been produced by Parenting Across Scotland.



Scotland: the best place in the world to bring up children? contains articles from a number of different contributors and highlights areas such as parenting under pressure, support for families during periods of transition, and parenting from early years to teenage years.

Families Outside would like to draw specific attention to the sections on "Prison & Parenting", "Young Fathers in Prison" and "Women in Prison."

This collection of essays can be found on the Parenting in Scotland website <http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org>

20TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE REPORT

Families Outside held its 20th Anniversary Conference at the beginning of November 2011 at the Falkirk Wheel. The final report of this conference is now available, reporting on the content and conclusions drawn from what was a very successful day. If you would like a copy sent to you, please contact us or click on the link below:

<http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2012/02/conference-report-2011.doc>

LOW MOSS SCOUT GROUP – DIB DIB DIB!

Families Outside is pleased to be working alongside HMP Low Moss as it develops its 'family friendly' policies and practices. One element of this has been involvement with the training of the 60+ local volunteers who have come forward to work in the Family and Friends Centre and Visits Hall.

Two of the volunteers attending the session were moved to consider how they could use their experience of the Scout and Guiding movement to support prisoners' children. And so, after securing funding, the Kelvin Scout and Guide group was set up, operating in the Low Moss Visits Hall.

Every Wednesday evening, children and young people can get involved in the same activities as that of a community group and then talk about what they have done with their dads.

Families Outside
Support & Information Helpline
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