

## Case Study



families  
outside

voicing the needs  
of families affected  
by imprisonment

### **‘If only I’d known about you earlier.’**

Pete and Jane have two young children. They live in a happy home where Pete is the main carer and earner.

In July 2016, Pete was sentenced to 3 years in prison.

Shunned by her community, friends, and family, Jane struggled to balance work and family life. She started to get into debt, her physical health deteriorated, and she began to suffer from anxiety and depression.

As Jane’s mental health declined, her family became more and more affected, especially her eldest son John, aged 7, who began to show challenging behaviour at home and at school.

At this point Jane wasn’t aware of what support was available to her and her family. She had accrued a substantial amount of debt and was so affected by her depression that she rarely left the house. It was only through the prison’s Family Contact Team that she was made aware of Families Outside.

She was referred to Families Outside, who worked directly with her to understand her specific support needs, creating an action plan that would help her and the rest of the family. This included meeting with John’s school to inform them of the family’s new situation. Despite Jane’s initial reluctance, the meeting was extremely productive and meant that both the teachers and Jane could monitor John’s behaviour and work together to improve it.

Families Outside’s Regional Support Coordinator also held 1:1 sessions with John, giving him time and space to talk about his concerns, fears and feelings. According to Jane, “The kids have had a lot of support from the school and from Families Outside. They are happy again, so I’m happy again.”

As the children’s behaviour improved, so did Jane’s confidence. Families Outside continued to work closely with her, encouraging her to speak to her GP about her health issues, enrolling her on money management courses, and identifying organisations who could provide transport for prison visits.

Jane also attended a parenting programme and peer support sessions run by Families Outside and her local authority. These sessions reduced her feelings of isolation and increased her confidence and resilience.

Jane is now able to manage her finances more efficiently, she is balancing her work and family life more effectively, and both her physical and mental health have improved. Her children are both happier and are performing well at school. Families Outside continues to work with the family as they prepare for Pete’s release.

As Jane explains, “My situation spiralled out of control; I felt isolated and alone. It was only thanks to Families Outside that I was able to get a handle on my situation – if I’d only know about them earlier, my situation might not have gone so out of control.”