



voicing the needs
of families affected
by imprisonment

Families Outside

Family Support Team Annual Report

April 2013 – March 2014

“I just don’t know how I would have coped without this support - it’s been a total lifeline. Thank you.”

Introduction

Families affected by imprisonment face a wide range of issues; for this reason, Families Outside has provided a specialist one-to-one service since October 2008, supporting people affected at each stage of the criminal justice process and beyond.

The April 2013 - March 2014 financial year has been one of considerable change for the Family Support Team. The team is now managed by our Child & Family Support Manager, Sarah Roberts, and is comprised of:

Tracey Burns	Glasgow / North Strathclyde / South West Scotland	Full time
Hazel Anderson	Lothian & Borders / Fife & Forth Valley	Part time
Kerry Knox	Lothian & Borders / Fife & Forth Valley	Part time
Sarah McHardy	Lothian & Borders / Fife & Forth Valley	Part time
Dawn Henderson	Lanarkshire	Part time
Jacky Close	Tayside	Part time
Lindsay Jessiman	Northern / Highlands & Islands	Part time

Note: Sarah McHardy took up post to cover maternity leave. Subsequent to Kerry Knox's return, Sarah is now employed as part of the Family Support Team for the Lothian & Borders area, while Kerry will solely cover Fife & Forth Valley from July 2014.

Although working in very different contexts (some are based primarily within prison Visitors' Centres, for example, whilst others have a regular presence in Visitors' Centres and prison waiting areas), each member of the team offers holistic, solution-focussed support to meet families' wide and varied needs. This support is offered either by telephone or through face-to-face meetings which take place within Visitors' Centre, in people's homes, or in the wider community (schools and community centres, for example). Most support takes place while a prisoner is in custody, when families are faced with a range of issues such as a need for emotional support; family related problems; housing and financial difficulties; worries about the health and wellbeing of family members and prisoners; and prison-based issues including visiting procedures, help with claiming travel expenses, Home Detention Curfew (HDC), and moving to the Open Estate.



"I feel like he's in there all right and I'm out here paying the price for what he's done. It's a nightmare"

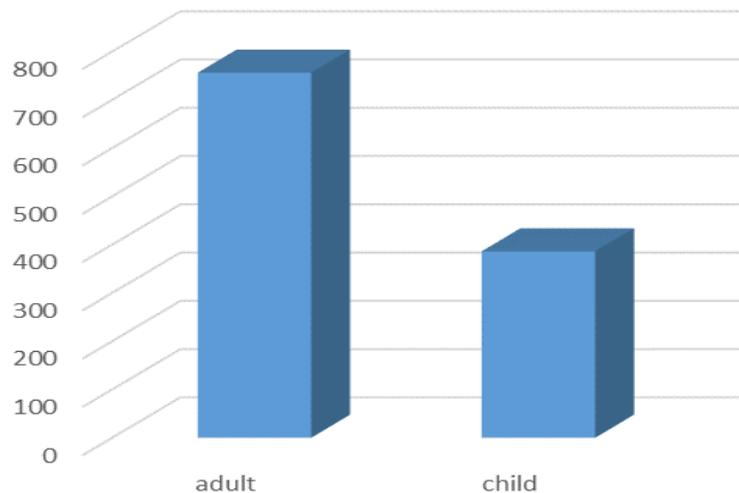


"It's now time for the family to heal; we've never had time for the family to heal ...and we need it."

Family Support Work in Numbers



The following statistics give a numerical overview of the work we do:



**In 2013/14, we had 458 referrals
(support for 1,142 family members – 756 adults & 386 children)**



**In 2013/14, there has been a 67% increase in the number of clients
we supported in 2012/13**

Family Support Work in Numbers (continued)



Most of our clients are aged between 41 – 60 (44%) or 26 – 40 (35%)



We have seen an increase in the number of children and young people we are supporting as clients in their own right



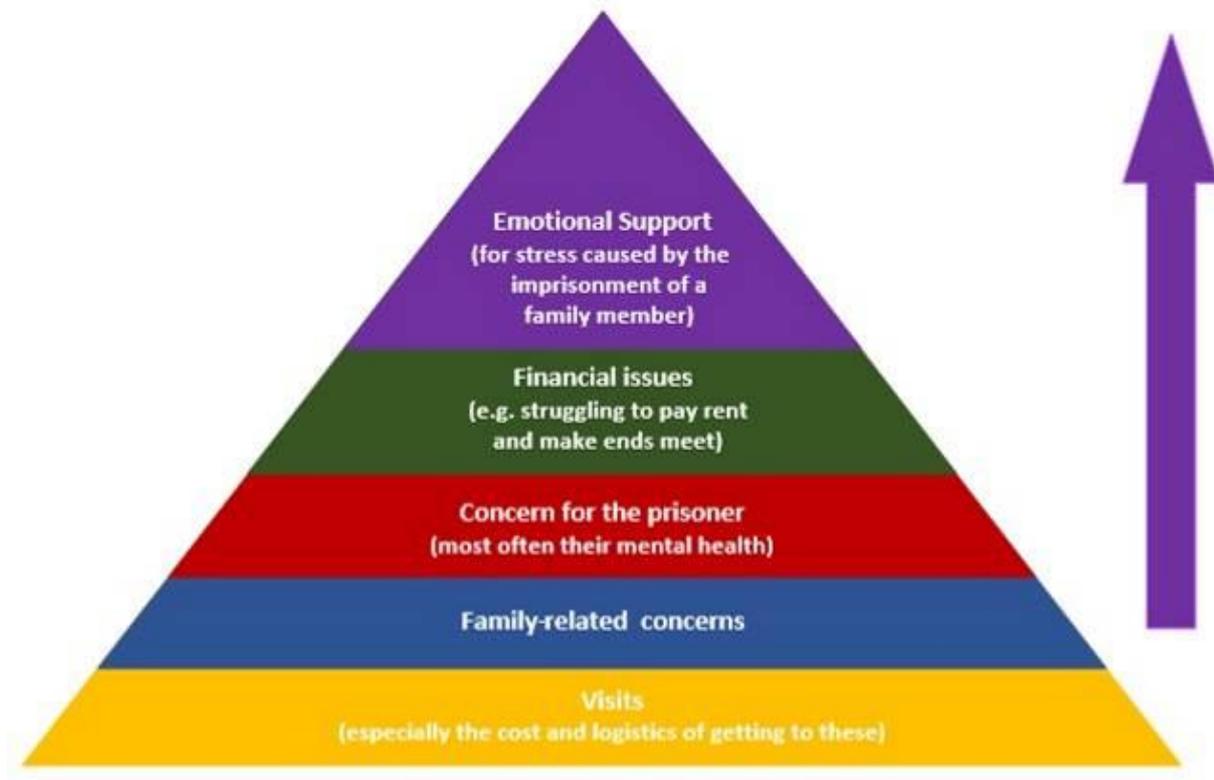
We support six times as many women as we do men

Family Support Work in Numbers (continued)

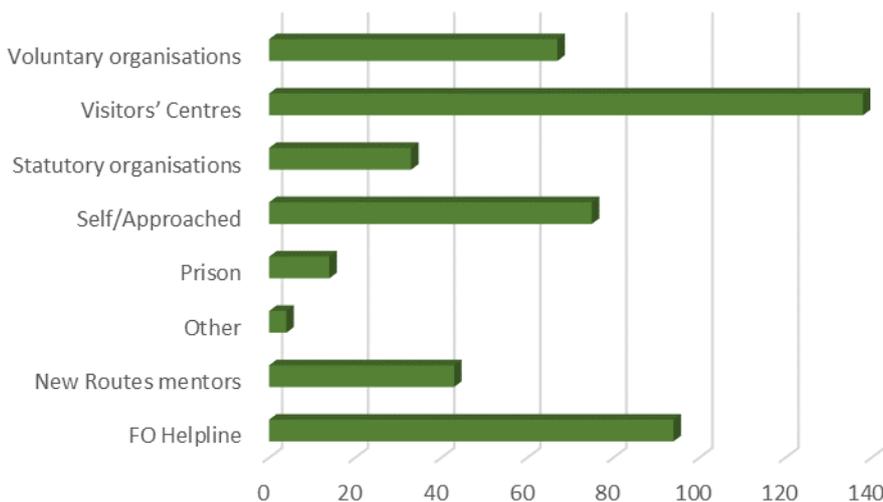


By far the main issue that our clients have is the need for emotional support at a time when they often feel that their whole world has turned upside down. Add to this their feelings of stigma and shame, and the fact that many families feel abandoned by their community, it is clear why stress and anxiety are so commonly experienced. In addition to their own emotional wellbeing suffering, many of our clients struggle financially, and this adds further strain to the family and makes visiting prison extremely challenging due to the costs of travel.

To summarise, the top 5 issues that clients report are:



Throughout 2013/14, our referrals have come from the following sources:



Most of our referrals come from staff in Visitors' Centres and our own Helpline. Where we have a regular presence in prison Visitors' Centres, we find that a high number of referrals come directly from clients through informal conversations, which may lead to one-off pieces of work or longer-term support.

Working Together

We work very much in partnership and collaboration with a wide range of statutory agencies and local and national voluntary services.

Whilst there are times when we signpost families on to a more appropriate service, for some families we take on the role of lead professional, coordinating a complex package of support for clients which involves drawing together a number of professional bodies and networks, as this case study demonstrates:

Anna was 15 when she was referred to us by Police Scotland's early intervention team. She was not offending but was identified as being at risk of offending and was failing to attend school regularly.

Anna hadn't seen her mum for over 12 years, and her dad is serving a lengthy prison sentence. She lived with an aunt but felt very excluded from the family and was not seeing her dad at all, as he was in a prison far from where Anna lives, making visiting very difficult. When Anna turned 16, she was asked to leave her accommodation. She tried to stay with another family member, but this did not work out. She ended up homeless, with no money, no belongings, and not one bit of paper to say who she was.

She remained on social work's books, but Anna and her social worker did not have a good relationship, and Anna refused to engage with any of the help being offered to her, as she said she felt uncomfortable with them. She consistently disappeared for days at a time, sleeping on sofas where she could.

A member of our Family Support Team gradually got to know Anna, and she started to trust our service. She would talk about concerns about her family and what she wanted out of life. We took on the role of lead professional, and when Anna's dad moved to the new HMP Grampian, we were able to help Anna involve him much more in her life.

Months of intensive work with police, education, social work, SPS, and housing have now resulted in Anna being settled in a supported flat and receiving income support. She has a housing support worker (helping her out with budgeting and adapting to independent living) and a college place from September to study childcare. We are currently seeking a bursary to cover her rent.

Anna's dad has started to build a much better relationship with her, and through his prison-based social worker, we send weekly email updates so he can follow her progress. Anna has also attended supported visits with dad to discuss her future. He didn't know he could still be a parent from prison, and so for both of them it has been a really important development.



"My home's been broken up, and I feel lost..."



"I was so shocked, I could not stop vomiting for days."

Working Together *(continued)*

Working closely with Scottish Prison Service (SPS) staff (including Prison Chaplains and Family Contact Officers) and prison-based NHS staff, we seek to alleviate families' concerns for prisoners' mental health:

Susie contacted Families Outside after her son was sentenced to Polmont Young Offenders Institution. Susie's son had a history of mental illness and received support from a psychiatric nurse (CPN) in the community. He had made a number of suicide attempts whilst at home, and the family had very high levels of anxiety about his mental health in prison. Families Outside was able to arrange a meeting with the Family Contact Officers in Polmont as well as with key mental health staff and hall managers. Susie was able to share a lot of the family history, and the CPN was able to share medical notes with the mental health team. The prison staff were able to allay a lot of the family's fears around the prisoner's safety by sharing the Act2Care policy (the suicide risk management procedure within the prison). This is very much a person-centred approach, adapting to the individual prisoner's needs. The staff also gave direct contact numbers to the family to call if they had any concerns. This two-way, face-to-face conversation meant that the family's anxiety was reduced, and care for the prisoner was at its best due to the sharing of information.

Having previously been part of the Routes Out Of Prison (ROOP) project, in May 2013 we joined the New Routes Public Social Partnership (PSP).

Led by the Wise Group, we are one of four specialist service providers alongside the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), Relationships Scotland, and the Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA) who receive referrals from our lead partners (Wise Group, Apex, Circle, Turning Point, and Sacro).

The overall aim of the partnership is to reduce reoffending, and strengthening families' ties through the support we provide for family members is a key part of this.

What happens when the main parental carer goes to prison? Often other members of the family step in and care for the children. Alice has cared for her grandson since he was a baby. Her daughter has been in and out of prison on drug-related charges and is now facing a longer sentence. Alice has worked really hard to bring stability and love into the life of her grandson but is still struggling to cope with her daughter's lifestyle. She is tormented by questions: when will her daughter phone? Will she just turn up at the door? Is she still using drugs? Is she okay? When is the court case? Will it be in the papers? What are people saying at the school gate? What do people think about her? Will her grandson be okay? How does he feel? Is she doing her best for him? What happens to him if she becomes ill? We can't answer all the questions, but we can walk part of the journey with people. Sometimes that is enough.

Working Together *(continued)*

Many organisations provided support to families affected by imprisonment, and we would like to thank them all. Here are just a few:

Care for the Family's 'Take a Break' Maidencraig Investments Limited

Holidays are a luxury many families simply cannot afford, and yet they provide essential respite from the stress of daily life. This is no truer than for families affected by imprisonment, and thanks to Care for the Family's 'Take a Break' scheme, and funding from Maidencraig Investments Limited, we were able to support a grandmother to have a holiday with four of her grandchildren.



Michael & Shirley Hunt Charitable Trust Fund

Through the Michael & Shirley Hunt Charitable Trust, we have been able to help families affected by imprisonment by purchasing essential household items such as bedding, furniture, and household equipment. One young person had returned to Scotland following her father's imprisonment abroad, owning only the clothes she was wearing; an award from the Michael & Shirley Hunt Trust Fund enabled her to purchase essential clothing for a Scottish winter.

Radio Clyde's 'Cash for Kids' 2013 award campaign

Eleven children from seven families (all of whom were affected by imprisonment, and all of whom were being cared for by a parent or grandparent) were each awarded £25 to allow them to have a present in time for Christmas.

Free Cakes for Kids Edinburgh

Everybody loves cake, and yet for some families, the provision of a birthday cake can be something that they just can't afford, leading to feelings of guilt and increased stress at what should be a time of celebration. Thanks to Free Cakes for Kids Edinburgh, our Family Support Team has been able to help twelve families have a cake for special occasions.

**"Just having her
there beside me made
a huge difference
– thanks!"**

EDI Communications

In February 2014, we were excited to receive a donation from EDI Communications that has enabled our Family Support Team to offer clients aromatherapy treatment. Aromatherapy is known to reduce stress and anxiety; this complements the input from our team and gives our clients something that is just for them (when their focus is so often on the prisoner). This makes a huge difference to people who would otherwise not have an opportunity to experience something like this.

A Day in the Life

When people ask us what the Family Support Team does, it can be hard to convey this fully and succinctly. Here's a recent day in the life of one of the team that demonstrates the breadth, depth and challenges of the role:

9am Arrive at the office going over new referrals and follow ups from last week.

9:15am Meet up with a family member before supporting them at their relative's Integrated Case Management (ICM) meeting in the prison.

11:45am Home visit with four family members whose relative is in prison for a high profile offence. They are overwhelmed coping with this devastating news, and all feel differently on whether, or how, to support him. The meeting focuses on individual support plans and finding common ground to reduce family breakdown.

1:15pm Back in the office to follow up latest family queries; liaising with the prison around a prisoner's health and transfer issues; and discussions with a criminal justice social worker about post-release family concerns.

Carry out a support session by text and phone to a 17-year old who is caring for her vulnerable mother following her dad's imprisonment. Arrange for Cakes for Kids to provide a cake for her younger sister's birthday.

1:45pm A new family member turns up unexpectedly at the office in distress because of her partner's imprisonment. Provide one-to-one support and contact another agency to provide complementary support.

2:30pm Case meeting with family member, CPN and social worker, looking at ways forward for a family in crisis.

4:30pm Finalise planning for a group complementary therapy session for several family members taking place the following morning.

5pm Last check of phone calls and emails before heading home!



Children and Young People

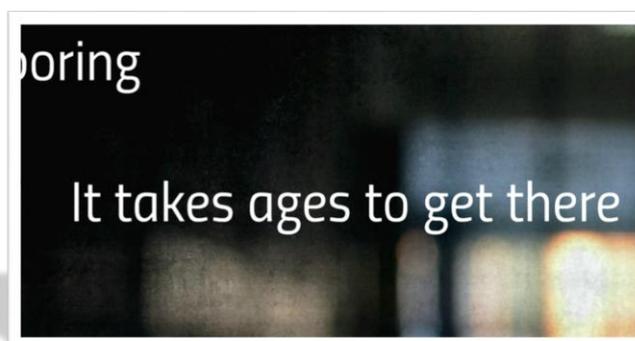
Over this last year, we have worked with an increasing number of children and young people as clients in their own right, and we are excited about this development. The challenges for children affected by imprisonment include bullying, shame, and loss, and it can be very difficult for them to hold different emotions together: “Mum has done something bad and is in prison, and I am really angry about that.” and “Mum is someone I still love.” We have found that when children and young people hear “This is not your fault, and you are not alone”, it makes a huge difference.

*“It was great being
able to sit beside my dad!”
(Following a special in-prison
meeting with a young person,
his dad, and his teacher)*

*“I think it’s helped C talk to us
more knowing that (mum) has
someone to talk to as well.”
(Head Teacher)*

Some of the work we have done with children and young people includes:

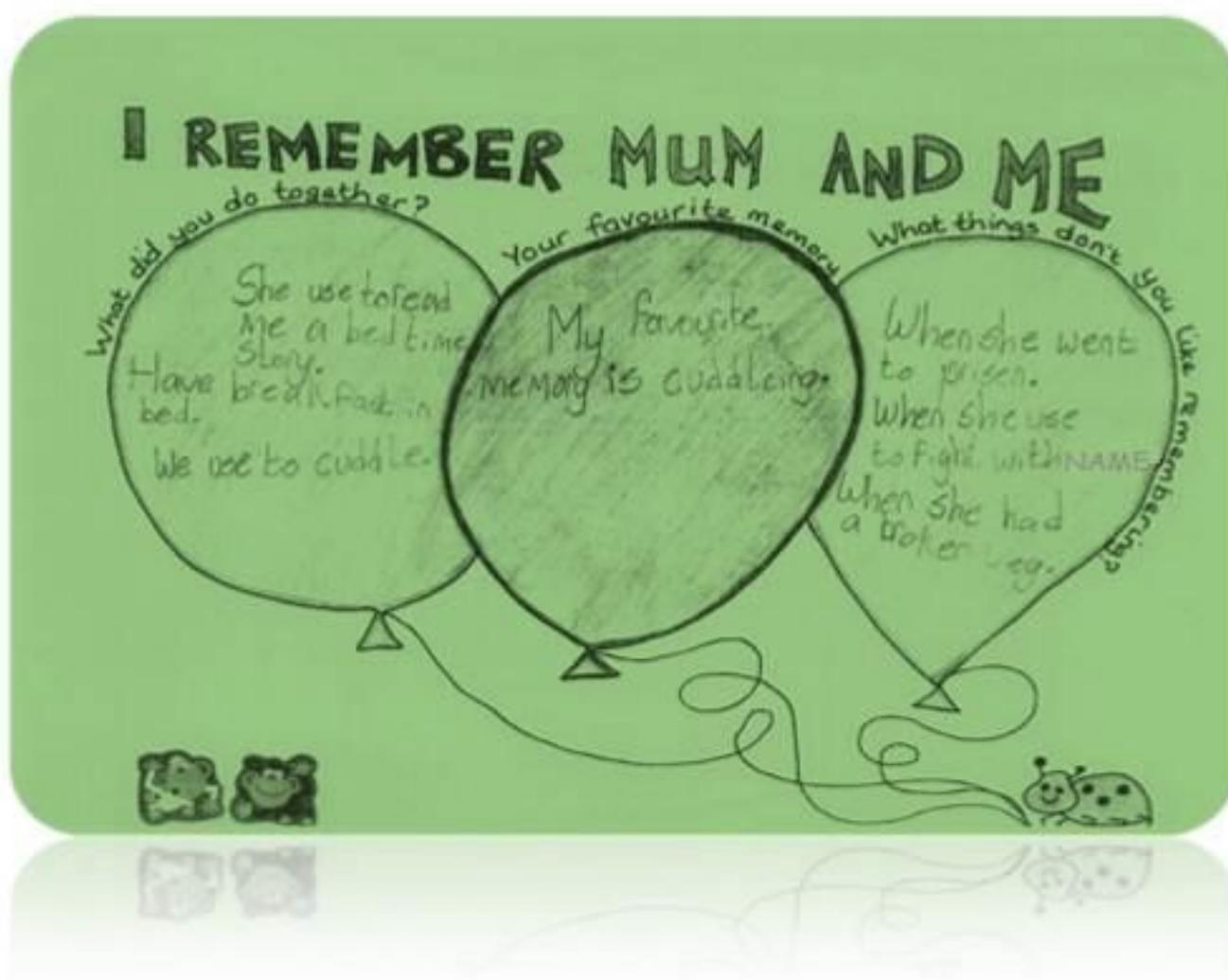
- ✓ Simply getting alongside and listening;
- ✓ Using bespoke materials from the i-HOP website (see below);
- ✓ Making a ‘Miss You Box’ in which to keep things to show their imprisoned parent;
- ✓ Using pop songs to talk about their feelings about their imprisoned parent or sibling;
- ✓ Facilitating in-prison meetings between pupils, teachers, and parents;
- ✓ Facilitating two focus groups, one of which resulted in our latest video, 27,000 Voices, available on our Vimeo website at <http://vimeo.com/96077929>; and



- ✓ Speaking at school assemblies and delivering awareness raising workshops to help all children consider the impact of imprisonment on families.

Children and Young People (continued)

A primary school head teacher contacted us regarding two children within her school. Their dad is serving a long sentence for a high profile crime which attracted a lot of media attention, and as a result, the family had to move, and the children had to change schools. Dad is imprisoned at a distance, and they are only able to visit him infrequently. We met with the head teacher to discuss the support the school was already offering. This meeting led to further support for mum from us, as well as more focussed support for the children from the teaching staff. The support has been around issues of coping with a long term sentence; how the children feel about their dad and communicate with him; and the nature of the crime (especially important given its high profile in the media). Recently, there was a meeting with mum, the head teacher, class teachers and our Family Support Team to discuss the support and make any appropriate changes. The children are now more settled in school and engaging better in classes, and mum is less stressed and coping better at home.



Tony is 18-years old; he had been living with his mum, but when she was sentenced to prison, Tony was not able to continue living in the family home, causing him to become homeless through no fault of his own. We were able to work with mum's in-prison mentor, a homelessness service, and a local council to ensure that Tony secured suitable accommodation. This had a significant impact on his wellbeing, as well as reassuring his mum that her son was being supported in the community.

The Power of Peer Support

In February 2014, we piloted a group relaxation session specifically for women affected by imprisonment who are suffering stress and anxiety (recognising that this is one of the main reasons for referral to us). Thanks to colleagues within the NHS, who provided us with relaxation oils, head massagers, and health promotion material (including a relaxation CD), this event was very much appreciated by participants, and we hope to develop this more in the future.



Table of relaxation goodies at group event

We are a small team covering vast geographical areas, so we are delighted to see local support groups for family members affected by imprisonment beginning to emerge. In November 2013, we attended the open day of a local support group on the west coast of Scotland. The founding member of what is now Inside Out in Oban gave this moving speech:

“Over the years, I have struggled with finding support; then I went to a (Families Outside) conference in Glasgow. Shortly after this this, I met someone at my granddaughter’s nursery who was also affected by imprisonment; we got talking one day, opening up about the problems we have faced.

We realised that if we felt alone, vulnerable, and stigmatised, there must be a lot of others (in our area) feeling the same way. Since May (2013), we have had weekly meetings for family members, designed our literature, had various meetings with different agencies, and attended training courses.

We offer emotional support to family members and also signpost to agencies that can help further. We feel as a group we could bridge the gap between agencies and people, so that there will no longer be a ‘them and us’ attitude.”

Support for professionals

Sometimes the best way of us helping families is to offer support to the professionals who are already involved with them; we might not even need to meet the family, but if we can help other professionals to meet their needs, it can make a huge difference, as this case study demonstrates:

An offsite education service contacted a member of our Family Support Team regarding 16-year old Ben. Ben had struggled with mainstream schooling but in recent years had worked hard in the offsite unit and had done really well. He was due for a final school review with his parents present before leaving to attend college. The weekend before the review, his dad was remanded in custody. Ben was devastated, as his dad had been a good support throughout this period. We were able to contact the Family Contact Officers within the prison, discuss the situation, and explore the options for supporting Ben. As a result, the FCOs contacted the school and arranged for the review to happen in the prison so that Ben's dad could also attend. This was positive for Ben, his parents, the prison, and the school staff, all of whom reported that the meeting made a significant difference.

Engaging the public

Because families affected by imprisonment are so often overlooked, we believe it is important to engage the wider public in matters of criminal justice and help raise awareness of the issues that our clients have to cope with. Mindful of the sensitivities, people's stories can be told in such a way that helps others enter into the challenges, pressures, and anxieties facing families affected by imprisonment. We contribute regularly to the UK-wide 'No Offence' blog and use this as a forum to highlight issues that our clients cope with. Topics over this last year include the pressures on grandparents, dealing with the media, and transport issues. We hope that, ultimately, this will lead to renewed policy and practice and improved support for families affected by imprisonment.

We were delighted to launch our new Family Support leaflet in March 2013 and find this to be an excellent way of explaining our service to clients and professionals who work with them.

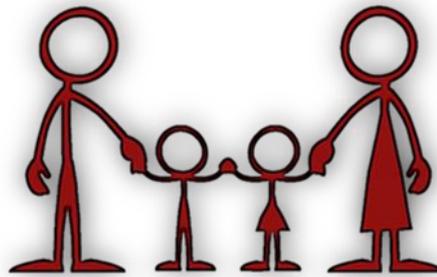


Measuring impact

Due to the complexity of issues that we deal with, and the fact that emotional support is the most widely identified need, it can be difficult to measure the impact of our service. We receive verbal (and occasionally written) feedback from clients who express an overwhelming gratitude for the support that we offer:

"You listened to me when I needed someone to talk things through with."

"You were the first person who asked me how I was feeling."



"It made a difference having someone who understood our situation."

"The most helpful person has been you. I can ask you anything, you're really approachable...I can speak to you on the same level."

Whilst we already know the impact of our service on those we support, we believe that it is important to be creative in how we gather and collate this evidence. To this end, we are currently undergoing training with Evaluation Scotland, looking at how to improve our measurement of the impact of what we do. We look forward to reflecting that learning in next year's annual report.

What families say...

The feedback we receive from families comes in the form of comments, texts, emails, and thank-you cards. The outcomes of our service are wide and varied but can be captured, by what clients have told us, within the following categories:

Families affected by imprisonment are better able to cope emotionally, and stress and anxiety are reduced because we have...

- ✚ Listened in an accepting, non-judgemental way and given people a chance to focus on their own needs
- ✚ Helped people work through issues surrounding the nature of a family member's crime
- ✚ Provided support to children who were experiencing behavioural difficulties following parental or sibling imprisonment

Families affected by imprisonment are better informed and connected because we have...

- ✚ Had a regular presence in prison Visitors' Centres
- ✚ Made our information leaflets widely available
- ✚ Introduced peer support opportunities

Families affected by imprisonment feel that their needs are better understood by other professionals because we have...

- ✚ Accompanied people to meetings (both in within prisons as well as in the community)
- ✚ Advocated on behalf of families to facilitate changes for the prisoner
- ✚ Helped people write letters explaining their circumstances to various agencies

Families affected by imprisonment have greater access to practical help because we have...

- ✚ Facilitated transport to attend the sentencing of family members at court
- ✚ Supported young adults to access appropriate housing following parental imprisonment
- ✚ Successfully applied to grants which provide essential household items

Families affected by imprisonment have stronger relationships with one another because we have...

- ✚ Helped people to explore their relationship issues and resolve conflict during the sentence and prior to release
- ✚ Enabled access to confidential spaces within the prison (in order to inform the prisoner of sensitive news)
- ✚ Facilitated special visits

Families affected by imprisonment have greater access to financial support because we have...

- ✚ Assisted with applications to Community Care Grants, Crisis Grants, and Foodbanks
- ✚ Linked people to the Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU) scheme
- ✚ Helped people access the benefits to which they are entitled

Looking ahead

Families Outside's Family Support provision has changed considerably over this last year. Expansion of our team has led to an increase in referrals, and we are looking to develop the team further in 2014/5. Other development plans include:

- ✓ A new database system that enables us to capture a fuller picture of the support we offer;
- ✓ A new 'lone worker' service that offers extended support to the Family Support Team during home visits;
- ✓ A Discretionary Fund which will help us meet some of the crisis needs that arise for our clients; and
- ✓ Increased training for the team, and more resources for families, to support those affected by crimes of a sexual nature.

Families of people who have committed an offence of a sexual nature are particularly isolated; they have often been the focus of media attention, are shunned by their local community and feel shame for something they have not done. We are supporting an increased number of families affected by these issues (as well as the professionals from statutory agencies involved) and are looking at developing further support for these families.

Conclusion

Families affected by imprisonment experience a wide range of practical and emotional difficulties, and the impact on families and children is significant, affecting almost every aspect of their lives – income, housing, social support, physical and mental health, and travel and transport, to name a few. In effect, families affected by imprisonment become victims in their own right of the result of a crime they did not commit.

This report demonstrates both the devastating impact on these hidden victims and the need for support and information to be offered to families at the earliest opportunity.

Family Support Team

September 2014

