



Ministry of
JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

Action
for Prisoners' Families

Supporting Prisoners' Families What Can Probation Do?

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You may already be aware of the needs of prisoners' and offenders' families, but you may not be aware of the services which can support them, or the resources available. This briefing sheet is intended to give you that information. If you need any additional information contact Action for Prisoners' Families' Information Service on 020 8812 3600/ email info@prisonersfamilies.org.uk website www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk.

Key Facts

- 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year
- More children are affected by parental imprisonment than by divorce
- These children are more than twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems than their peers
- Two-thirds of boys with a parent in prison are likely to become offenders themselves

Be aware of the issues facing prisoners' families

Please see the publications below. Training is also available from Action for Prisoners' Families and its member organisations.

Establish an accurate picture of the needs of the family at the pre-sentence report, assessment and review stages.

The needs of the family should always be taken into account, not just when there is a safeguarding issue. It is important that you find out as much appropriate information as possible about children in the family and how the sentence will impact on them.

Signpost to family interventions and support services

Children's centres and voluntary organisations can help to support families in crisis.

Make sure you are aware of the support available in your area. There is a list of national helplines below.

Keep up to date publications

There are many publications that can help families to understand imprisonment such as Action for Prisoners' Families' children's books and its Outsiders practical guides for families.

Please see below.

Sharing Information

As you will know, it is your duty to share information with the relevant agencies if you feel a child is at risk. However, you can also share information with the family's consent if you just feel they need extra support. The common assessment framework (CAF) provides a way of sharing information and assessing children's needs to ensure the right support is in place. For more information please contact your local authority CAF coordinator.

Home Visits

Think about whether your conversation with adult family members is appropriate for children to hear. Could you arrange your visit for a time when children won't be present? Home visits might also be a good time to pass on information, such as Action for Prisoners' Families' 'Preparing for Release' booklet.

Useful Resources

Below are some resources to help you, but if you have any queries you can contact Action for Prisoners' Families on 020 8812 3600 or email info@prisonersfamilies.org.uk

The Outsiders Series Booklets to help families cope with imprisonment.

Telling the Children; Sent to Prison; Preparing For Release; Living with Separation (available in pdf as well as paper version)

'Danny's Mum' and 'Tommy's Dad' books for younger children about having a parent in prison

'Finding Dad' a book for older children

'It's a tough time for everyone' cartoon-style magazine for older children/teenagers

*** All of the above are available from Action for Prisoners' Families**

www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk 020 8812 3600

Inside Information contains information about [visiting people in prison](#); procedures, opening times, directions etc. www.insidetime.org

Prisoners' Families Toolkit is a very useful resource including worksheets to help children talk about their feelings www.youngsouthampton.org/workforce/

Training

Awareness training and **'Hidden Sentence'** one day workshops - information available from: www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/training

Helplines and Support Groups

Action for Prisoners' Families can tell you about local support groups 020 8812 3600. Its website is www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

Offenders' Families Helpline is a free helpline offering confidential support to offenders' families - 0808 808 2003. Website includes information sheets. www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org

Families Live -free helpline offering help and support to anyone caring for children 0808 800 2222 www.familieslive.org.uk

Prison Chat UK (PCUK) is an online community for people with a loved-one in prison www.prisonchatuk.com (requires registration for some parts of site)

The Ministry of Justice website contains information about all the prisons in England and Wales, as well information for visitors www.justice.gov.uk/global/contacts/noms/prison-finder/