



Ministry of  
**JUSTICE**

National Offender  
Management Service

**Action**  
for Prisoners' Families

## Supporting Prisoners' Families What Can GP Surgeries and Health Centres Do?

March 2013

## **Supporting Prisoners' Families What Can GP Surgeries and Health Centres Do?**

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](mailto:info@prisonersfamilies.org.uk) website [www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://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
- 2/3 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 on the reverse of this sheet. Training is also available from Action for Prisoners' Families and its member organisations.

### **Information for families**

There are many publications that can guide families through imprisonment. Prominently display Offenders' Families Helpline leaflets and posters and other sources of support in consulting rooms and surgery waiting rooms (please see the reverse of this sheet for a list of useful resources).

### **Identifying issues affecting families of prisoners and offenders**

Ensure your health support team are aware of how imprisonment may impact on families. Family need should always be taken into account, not just when there is a safeguarding issue. Find out if other agencies are working with a prisoner's family. Children's centres, schools and voluntary organisations can help to support families, and there is a growing remit to meet the needs of offenders' families. Ensure you are aware of national and local support and can tell patients and their families about it. Make sure that families affected by drug or alcohol abuse issues, domestic violence, or physical or mental health problems are aware of the services available to them. (see helplines on the reverse of this sheet).

### **Liaising with the prison health centre**

The imprisoned family member may be your patient. Liaison with the health professionals at the prison may be possible. The family may ask for advice on alcohol or drug issues in preparation for the prisoner's release. Refer families to ADFAM (see further on in the briefing).

### **Casework conferencing**

As families do not always want to be open about a family member being in prison, casework meetings are good opportunities for the families to share information with the health workers based at your surgery. Make sure your workers – e.g. health visitors and practice nurses are made aware of the information and support available (see next section).

## **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](mailto: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*

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

**'Finding Dad'** a for older children

**'It's a tough time for everyone'** cartoon-style book for older children

All of the above are available from Action for Prisoners' Families  
[www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk) **020 8812 3600**

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

**Prisoners' Families Toolkit** is a very useful resource including worksheets to help children talk about their feelings [www.youngsouthampton.org/workforce/](http://www.youngsouthampton.org/workforce/)

## **Training**

**Awareness training and 'Hidden Sentence' one day workshops** - information available from: [www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk) . Tel: 020 8812 3600

## Helplines and Support Groups

**Action for Prisoners' Families** can put you in touch with local support groups  
020 8812 3600 [www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

**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](http://www.justice.gov.uk/global/contacts/noms/prison-finder)

**Offenders' Families Helpline** - free helpline offering confidential support to offenders' families - 0808 808 2003. Website includes information sheets.

[www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org](http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org)

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

**Families Live** - free helpline offering help and support to anyone caring for children 0808 800 2222 [www.familieslive.org.uk](http://www.familieslive.org.uk)

**ADFAM** offers support for families affected by drugs or alcohol 020 7553 7640  
[www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

**Women's Aid/Refuge** are working to end domestic violence against women and children freephone 0808 2000 247 [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)