



Ministry of
JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

Action
for Prisoners' Families

Supporting Prisoners' Families What Can Youth and Community Workers 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
- 2/3 of boys with a parent in prison are likely to become offenders themselves

Be aware of the issues

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

Information

Prominently display Offenders' Families Helpline leaflets and posters and other sources of support. One person should take the lead in keeping this information up to date.

Preparing for Visits

Visiting prison can be very difficult for young people, particularly teenagers and they may feel resentful or angry and may not want to visit at all. There are a number of publications that may be able to help (see overleaf). Visits can be very upsetting and there are some helpful websites which may help young people deal with stress.

Dealing with Change

Imprisonment can mean a lot of changes for young people. They may, for example, be expected to take over caring responsibilities for younger siblings or the remaining parent. Living arrangements can also be disrupted. It is important that young people have the opportunity to explore their feelings at this difficult time – the Prisoners' Families Toolkit and the magazine It's a Tough Time for Everyone (see overleaf) might be helpful at this stage.

Preparing for Release

Release from prison is a time of change for the family and may be greeted with both excitement and anxiety. A parent returning to the family home can also mean a change in care arrangements. Action for Prisoners' Families Outsider booklet, Preparing for Release, and the Southampton Council's Prisoners' Families Toolkit (see below) may be useful at this time.

Liaising with the family including the prisoner

As part of a multi-agency team around the child or family meeting, you may be able to further support the young person by engaging with the whole family, including the prisoner where appropriate, and with the young person's consent. The prison may have a family liaison worker to help facilitate this.

Useful Resources

Below are some resources to help you, if you have any queries you can contact Action for Prisoners' Families on 020 8812 3600 or email

info@prisonersfamilies.org.uk

The Outsiders is a series of booklets published by to help families cope with imprisonment. *Telling the Children; Sent to Prison; Preparing For Release; Living with Separation* (full text pdf on website/ paper copy)

'Finding Dad' a storybook for older children (7-11)

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

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

www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

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: www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk also has a Google map of services for families.

Gov.uk contains information about all the prisons in England and Wales, as well as information about visits and whether someone qualifies for financial help with travel costs from the Assisted Prisons Visits Unit.
www.gov.uk/browse/justice/prisons-probation

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

www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org

Get Connected is the UK's free, confidential helpline service for young people under 25 who need help, but don't know where to turn - 0808 808 4994. Website includes information about issues facing young people
www.getconnected.org.uk

YCNet offers support for young carers www.youngcarers.net

Young Minds includes downloadable podcasts with advice on various sensitive issues www.youngminds.org.uk

The Calm Zone encourages young men to open up and talk about their worries
www.thecalmzone.net