



Supporting children and families affected by a family member's offending – A Practitioner's Guide

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i-HOP
Supporting all professionals to work with
offenders' children and their families


Department
for Education

**Believe in
children**
 **Barnardo's**

The i-HOP service, set up in 2013, is funded by the Department for Education to provide support and information to all professionals working with offenders' children and their families.

Visit www.i-hop.org.uk to find out more.

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- The children and families affected by family member offending without whom our services would not truly understand the lived experiences of families affected. We hope that this guide will help to support practitioners to work with you effectively.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why publish this guide?

Barnardo's has over twenty years' experience supporting children of prisoners through direct services, regional training and national strategic work. Since 2013, i-HOP has supported thousands of professionals across England to work with offenders' children and families through a national engagement and information service. This guide brings together the learning and expertise from all this work.

Using resources and tools from Barnardo's services and the i-HOP directory, we've produced a practical guide to inform all practitioners working with children and families affected by a family member's offending. The guide accompanies a practice workshop package delivered by Barnardo's (see Appendix 3 – Training).

Why do these children and families need support?

Though the number of children estimated to be affected by a parent's imprisonment is relatively high – two and a half times higher than the number of children in care¹ – they are often described as a “hidden” or “invisible” group. This is because they are not systematically recorded in England and there is no statutory response to their needs.

200,000 children see a parent go to prison each year in England and Wales (Williams et al. 2012)

Twice as many children experienced their parent's imprisonment than their divorce in 2009 (ONS 2011)

502,000 visitors to public prisons in 2014 were children (Barnardo's FOI request 2014)

Studies have revealed some of the effects of parental imprisonment on children: negative school experiences such as truancy and bullying (Clewett & Glover 2009), involvement in anti-social behaviour (Murray & Farrington 2008), and increased risk of poverty, physical ill health and housing disruption (Smith et al. 2007).

25% of prisoners' children are at higher risk of mental ill health (Jones et al. 2013)

65% of boys in one study who had a father in prison when they were under 10 went on to offend themselves (Murray & Farrington 2005)

The Criminal Justice System (CJS), however, is much larger than the prison system alone and each year many more children are impacted by a family member's arrest, court appearances, community sentencing and resettlement.

Furthermore, while much of the research to date has focused on *parental* imprisonment, many relationships are important to the wellbeing of children and to their development, not solely the relationship with their parents. The offending of another family member, such as a sibling or grandparent, can be equally disruptive. **An awareness of the range of relationships and experiences that affect children underpins this guide.**

Children and families affected by a family member's offending are a diverse group living in varied circumstances across every community. This guide provides support and direction so all professionals can use their existing skills and expertise to provide vital direct responses to these families.

1.2 Aim of the guide

Aim

To enable practitioners to support children affected by a family member's offending within a whole family approach.

By using this guide, practitioners will develop:

- Insight into the particular importance of children's rights, multi-agency working and safeguarding whilst delivering interventions with offenders' families
- A refreshed understanding of the impact of offending on children and families
- The ability to incorporate the needs of offenders' children and families into professional assessments and support plans

- Increased confidence, knowledge and skills to work directly with offenders' children and families
- Increased knowledge of resources and services available to support offenders' children and families

1.3 Using the guide

Who is it for?

This guide is intended for use by all practitioners with direct contact with children and families. We expect that social workers, early years practitioners, family support workers, health visitors, school nurses, pastoral workers, resettlement workers, prison-based family engagement workers and many others will find this guide useful in their practice.

How to use it

The guide combines information, tools and resources to address key issues experienced by families of offenders, as identified by i-HOP and Barnardo's. Colour-coding throughout highlights the practical elements of the guide and helpfully guides practitioners to act. Comprehensive resource lists in the appendices are categorised alphabetically by issue and referred to throughout the guide in purple boxes.

Key

-  **Practice point**
-  **Thinking point**
-  **Resource appendix**
-  **Tool**
-  **Practice example**

¹ In 2012, the Ministry of Justice estimated that there were 200,000 children with a parent in prison in England and Wales, whilst NSPCC reported that there were 72,775 children in care in England and Wales the same year.

The i–HOP Quality Statements & Toolkit

i–HOP’s Quality Statements & Toolkit (RiP 2015), developed with Research in Practice, supports all professionals to plan **service—wide improvements** to practice with offenders’ children. It is based around eight over–arching principles – the Quality Statements.

This guide is intended for use by **individual practitioners** with **direct contact** with offenders’ children and families. However, it adheres to the same over–arching principles as i–HOP’s Quality Statements & Toolkit and you will see the Quality Statements highlighted at the beginning of the chapters where they are most relevant.



The i-HOP Quality Statements

For all services to aspire to in their work with offenders’ children and families:

QS1. Awareness

We are aware of the impact that parental offending can have on children, and we recognise that they are potentially vulnerable children with particular needs.

QS2. Identification

We have systems in place to identify children affected by parental offending, both as individuals and as a group.

QS3. Children’s Voice

We always take into account the rights, experiences and perspectives of children affected by parental offending in developing and delivering our services.

QS4. Multi-agency Working

We work in partnership with the wider network of professionals around children affected by parental offending.

QS5. Stages of the Criminal Justice System

We recognise and aim to minimise the impact of parental offending on children at all stages of the offender journey [arrest, court proceedings, imprisonment, release and resettlement].

QS6. Support and Services

We provide, or provide access to, support and services to meet the needs of children affected by parental offending.

QS7. Challenging Stigma

We actively challenge discrimination and negative stereotypes about children affected by parental offending.

QS8. Building the Evidence

We monitor our interventions with children affected by parental offending and contribute to the evidence base.



2. Building the practice foundations

2.1 Ensuring a children's rights approach

Children affected by parental offending have been described as the 'forgotten victims' (Light & Campbell 2006) of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Rights-based practice empowers children as 'human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of...passive objects of care and charity' (UNICEF CRC) as means of countering the disadvantage they experience.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) sets out the universal rights that all children are entitled to. A number of these rights are particularly relevant to offenders' children (see pages 12-13).



Some local services in the UK have developed charters with offenders' children to guide rights-based work. Consider using these to inform your own practice or consult children and young people to develop one for your service.



**See Appendix 3:
Children's Rights**



The UNCRC and the Rights of Offenders' Children

Article 2: Non-discrimination

The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from (UNICEF Factsheet).

Offenders' families are stigmatised alongside the offender; stereotypes continue to feature in public and professional discourse.

For Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families, the effect of discrimination may be further compounded as BME people are disproportionately represented in the CJS (PRT 2016).

Due to the above, families report unequal access to services and can experience discrimination when services are accessed.



i-HOP's Quality Statements & Toolkit (2015) Chapter 7 – Challenging Stigma includes practice guidance in this area.

Article 3: Best interests of the child

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children (UNICEF Factsheet).

Children's best interests are still not routinely considered in court proceedings, for example where they might be separated from a parent (Epstein 2014). Sometimes the needs and wishes of the offender and remaining family members are put before the child's.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on exploring feelings and opinions with children.

Article 9: Separation from parents

Children must not be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child (UNICEF Factsheet).

In some cases, separation from an offending parent may be in a child's best interests. But for many children keeping in contact is vital for their wellbeing (Jones et al. 2013).



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on facilitating contact between children and imprisoned parents.

Article 12: Respect for the views of the child

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously (UNICEF Factsheet).

Though children have a right to a say in matters that affect them, they are often silent throughout criminal justice proceedings where public protection and justice take priority. Stigma further silences children in the community.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on keeping children's voice central in assessments and support provision.

Article 16: Right to privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life (UNICEF Factsheet).

A child's private, family and home life is significantly affected when a family member goes to prison. Some children lose contact altogether with their family member or only see them during open prison visits where behaviour is restricted. Some have to move home to live with an alternative care giver. Media coverage of offences may also identify a child's family member, sentencing details and home address, further compromising their privacy.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on facilitating contact for children and supporting them to cope with changes to home and family life.

2.2 Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System

‘You’re not going to be happy if they got arrested, but say they came out on bail, it’s not the same emotions...it’s different emotions through the whole thing...’
 – Young person

There are **six key stages** (including pre-arrest) to an individual’s involvement in the Criminal Justice System (CJS); each has different meanings and brings new challenges to the children and families of offenders. To offer effective support, practitioners need some understanding of this system and its implications.

See the diagram – **Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System** – on page 15 for a brief introduction.



Attending a **Hidden Sentence training** course gives practitioners an overview of issues that affect offenders’ families at each stage of the CJS. Some are held at prisons and provide the opportunity to walk through the prison visit process.

See Appendix 3: Training

The CJS is complex and often changing. As practitioners you will not always have the answers families need as and when questions arise. This is understandable, but seek advice before offering information if you are unsure.

1. Arrest

Agencies: Police, sometimes Social Services

Possible issues:

- Times of considerable worry for families. Some may have been expecting it; for others it could be the first time they’ve found out about the offences.
- Home raids can traumatise children and leave them with negative views of police.

2. Court proceedings

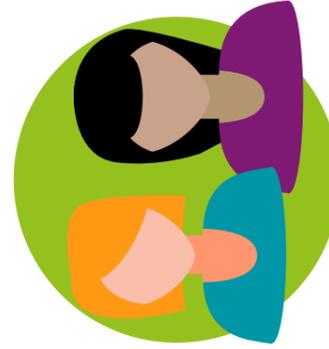
Agencies: Courts, solicitors, National Probation Service, Police, sometimes court support/volunteers

Possible issues:

- Confusing, intimidating processes and terminology.
- Can take considerable time and have implications for childcare and plans for the future.
- Uncertainty over what to tell people and whether to tell the children.
- The media may report on the proceedings and outcome.
- Various outcomes apart from prison with different implications, e.g. community sentences.

Agencies potentially involved throughout: school, children’s centre, health service, voluntary sector family support...

Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System



5. Resettlement

Agencies: Prison, National Probation Service (NPS) or Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)

Possible issues:

- Time of readjustment for families and offenders returning home which can be challenging.
- Various terms may be applied to an offender on licence or home curfew – new meanings for families to grasp.
- Anxiety around finding employment/support for addiction etc.
- Families may worry about the likelihood of reoffending.

4. Release

Agencies: Prison, National Probation Service (NPS) or Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)

Possible issues:

- Often a much-anticipated time of both worry and excitement.
- Support largely focused on the offender and not on the children/family.
- Some families fear release and don’t want contact at all sometimes due to abuse or being victims of offences.

3. Imprisonment

Agencies: Prison, usually voluntary sector visit centre provider and/or prison-based family engagement services

Possible issues:

- Phone calls and other contact is restricted and, in some cases, dependent on a prisoner’s behaviour.
- Families sometimes feel under pressure to send money to prisoners causing financial strain.
- Visit provision such as ‘family days’ and facilities such as play areas vary from prison to prison.
- Prisons can be long distances away from the family home and journeys are costly as a result.
- Prisoners are often moved, sometimes at short notice.
- Visits can sometimes be strained and emotional.

See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS for short, accessible learning materials for practitioners about each stage

2.3 Developing a multi-agency response

There is **no single statutory body or lead agency** with responsibility for children affected by a family member's offending, and **no national framework** for developing service provision. As you've seen, various agencies can be involved at each stage of the CJS.

Consequently, the support that is available is often disjointed, provided in the main by local voluntary and community sector organisations, with children and families vulnerable to gaps in available funding and geographical coverage. To provide a consistent and effective response to offenders' children and families, multi-agency working is essential.

PRACTICE EXAMPLES: MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Multi-agency working/steering groups

Some Local Authorities have developed working/steering groups focusing on Children Affected by Parental Offending (CAPO) which bring together key agencies:

Bristol CAPO Strategy and Action Plan

Bristol's Strategy sets outcomes for CAPO tied to the city's Children and Young People's Plan. The Action Plan then sets out how the steering group intends to achieve the outcomes, assigning responsibilities and timescales to particular professionals and organisations.

Recognition of children affected by parental offending in cross cutting strategy/guidance

Some Local Authorities have highlighted the needs of CAPO in strategy that underpins the agenda of key agencies working with children, families and offenders:

Wiltshire Neglect Strategy

Having a parent in prison is listed as a key child risk factor which increases the likelihood of neglect. The strategy sets out the role of Early Help in combatting neglect, with clear aims and objectives listed.

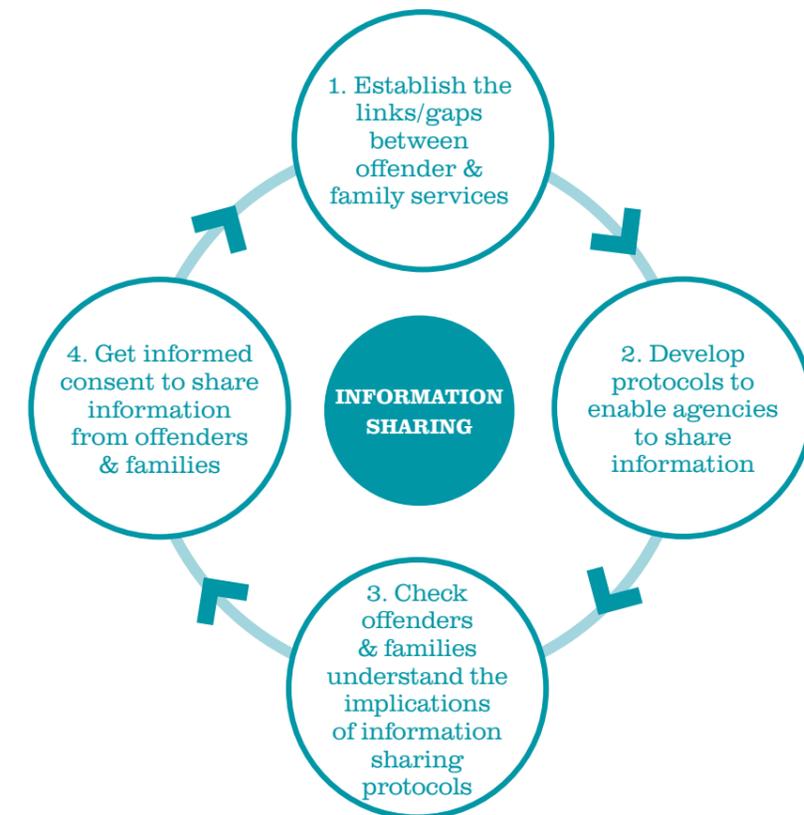
Partnership working

Agencies can develop partnership delivery models so that they can work more effectively to meet the needs of the whole family. For example, schools could work with prisons to send the offending parent copies of school reports and examples of children's work.

You could consider co-locating services; for example, appointments with Probation (where there are no child safeguarding concerns), including community-based assessments, could be undertaken in a local Children's Centre to help families of offenders to connect with the wider services on offer.

Information sharing

In order for multi-agency responses to be possible, information sharing is crucial but must be implemented in the appropriate way.



Some benefits of information sharing for families:

- Families are **more likely to access the support and information available to them** if they inform professionals of their needs.
- If agencies like schools are aware they **may be more alert to any changes in a child's behaviour** and ensure that they are provided with the support that they need as early as possible.
- It is important to ensure that children have **access to support and information as early as possible** after having a traumatic or upsetting experience. This enables them to ask questions and share their feelings early on, alleviating some of the anxiety, anger or upset that they might be feeling.



Consider why some families might be reluctant to share information about a family member's involvement in the CJS with other agencies.

2.4 Safeguarding children and families of offenders

Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility (DfE 2015). Offenders' children in particular can be vulnerable to poverty and physical illness (Smith et al. 2007) and mental ill health (Jones et al. 2013). See the following chapters on the **impact of offending** for a reminder of the ways it can affect children's wellbeing, health and safety and the implications this has for safeguarding.

Sometimes offenders' families' vulnerabilities are a direct result of having a family member involved in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), for example if an offence caused them direct harm, such as in cases of domestic or child sexual abuse, or where an offence leads to a backlash from other members of the community. In other cases, **pre-existing issues are intensified by the change in circumstances.**

Safeguarding and restricted contact

When working with children affected by a family member's offending, there are key safeguarding issues that could dictate whether they are able to have contact with the offender. Practitioners should consider:

- Some children are the **victims of the crimes** committed and in these cases they will not be able to have any contact with the offender.
- Where a child is **subject to a Child in Need/Child Protection Plan**, there may be restrictions placed on contact with an offender pending assessments by a Social Worker.

Other cases where contact could be restricted:

- Where an offence has been **committed against another minor**

- If a **serious assault against an adult** has occurred
- If a child is in care there could be logistical issues with **foster/kinship carers'** ability to take a child to prison
- If a **child is being adopted** following a parent's offending they will no longer be able to have contact with their parent
- If an individual has **adjudications while serving a sentence in prison**, there could be temporary restrictions on families visiting

See Chapter 5.4 if you are supporting a child where contact with an offending family member is restricted.

Safeguarding during imprisonment

Sometimes professionals think the imprisonment of an abusive or disruptive family member marks the end of the risk they have posed to their family but it is important to remember **that some prisoners still cause harm whilst in prison**, for example through coercive letters or pressure to send money.

For many children, it is deemed safe for them to visit a family member in prison, and for many it is important for their wellbeing and ability to cope with loss that they are able to (Jones et al. 2013). However, practitioners should still be aware of the safeguarding implications of children visiting prisons.

'For a child I think it's very intimidating and scary to have to go through'

– Parent discussing the prison search process

Children could encounter adults in prison (the person they are visiting or another visitor or prisoner) who pose a risk to them. Furthermore, visiting a prison can be an emotionally unsettling experience for children who will be searched and have to go through security processes. It is important to consider the impact of prison visits on children and check in with them about their experiences and feelings before and after the visit.

If you have concerns about a child who is visiting a prison, follow your usual safeguarding procedure. You should contact the safeguarding team within your Local Authority for advice if you are unsure of any concerns.

See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS (Imprisonment)

Look out for safeguarding thinking points throughout the guide.



3. Understanding the impact of offending on the whole family

‘It’s not just the prisoner that’s punished is it? It’s the whole family.’ – Mother

To provide effective, informed and empathetic support to children and families, it is important that you understand the potential impact of offending on a family and their ability to meet children’s needs

Adopting a whole-family approach recognises that an individual’s offending affects each child and family member in different ways and varies over time.

See the diagram on page 21 – **Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs** – to see how offending can affect a family’s ability to meet children’s needs.

 Consider attending some awareness-raising training, such as a **Hidden Sentence** course, to increase your understanding of the impact of offending on families.

 **See Appendix 3: Training**

 A custodial sentence can be a **positive thing** for families. It may result in the removal of a family member who has been violent, or whose behaviour has been disruptive and chaotic. This can create confused or conflicting emotions for children.



Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – Impact of key attachment offending on meeting children’s needs



 Consider **other needs** that could be affected by a family member’s offending and how **existing problems**, such as financial hardship or mental ill health, could be aggravated.

Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ is a motivational theory in psychology. Maslow believed that people are motivated to achieve certain needs, and that some take priority over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival which we must achieve before other needs can be met.

Safeguarding: consider where some of these needs, or a combination of them, could trigger a safeguarding referral.

3.1 Impact on parents and carers

‘I really miss him. I’m always in tears. He’s missing so much of (son)...I find it really sad... (Partner) was a really good Dad. He did half of it all. I find it really hard.’

— Mother

When a family member is imprisoned, a range of new challenges arise for those caring for the children in the family. Some partners become sole-carers; often family members, such as grandparents, take on new caring responsibilities resulting in a significant change to their lifestyle. Carers have to manage the emotional and practical impact of family member offending on themselves as well as the children in their care.

When a mother is imprisoned **25%** of children are cared for by grandmothers, **29%** by other family members or friends (Corston 2007)

Parents’ and carers’ support needs vary according to different factors:

- Emotional resilience
- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Culture, language or ethnicity
- Relationship with children and parenting skills
- Family/community support networks
- Relationship with offending family member
- Childcare responsibilities
- Level of independence: financial and practical
- Nature of the family member’s offence
- Stage at which the family member is at in the CJS
- Media coverage and community response

26% of the prison population are of Black or Minority Ethnic origin compared to 14% of the general population (PRT 2016)

14% of the prison population are Foreign National Offenders (MoJ 2017)

- 💡 Consider how **culture, language, ethnicity** and **nationality status** could intensify the impact of a family member’s offending on families.
- 💡 Remember to think about the impact each stage of the **Criminal Justice System** can have on parents/carers. The release of a prisoner back to the family home can create anxiety for some families.

PRESSURE



- Loss of income
- Rent arrears
- Media reports – everyone knows
- Children in trouble at school
- Stories of violence in prison
- Children not sleeping, anxious and clingy
- No support, coping alone
- Other family members not talking to me
- Isolated in community
- Benefit claims hard to grasp
- Long journey to visit a prison
- Pressure from prisoner to send money to them



3.2 Impact on children and young people

‘I’m so angry because you promised you would come back and take us and we would live with you. You left me having nightmares. I didn’t know if you were safe, and I was really scared.’

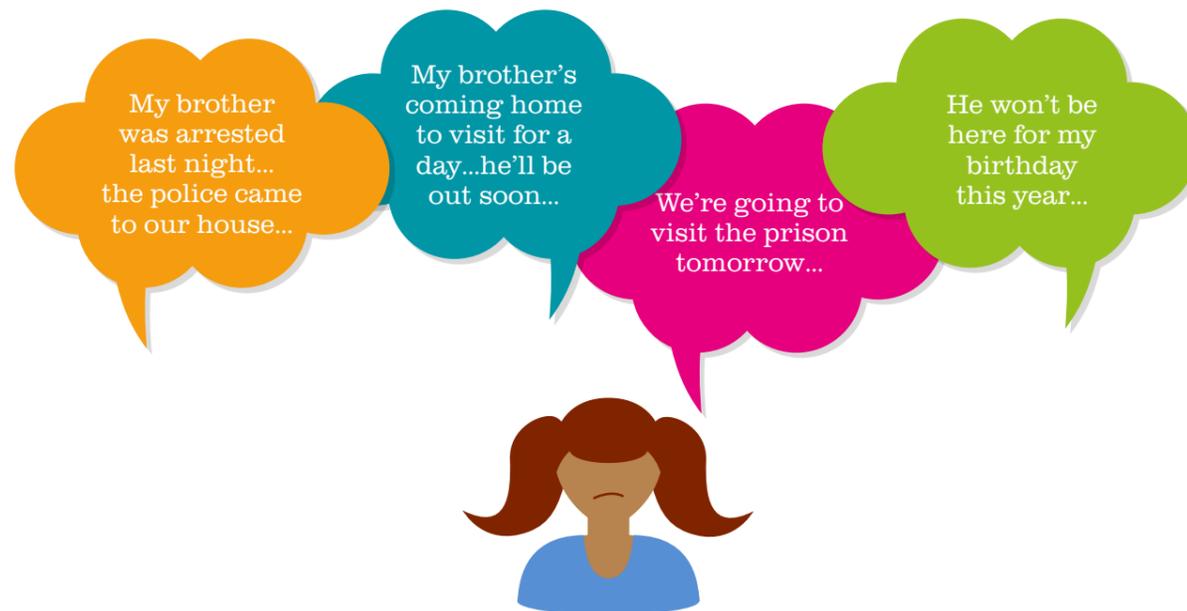
— Young person

The impact on children differs due to numerous factors including their **age**, whether the offender is a **key attachment figure**, the **nature of the offence** and a child’s **resilience**.

Children’s resilience, or their ability to cope, is again influenced by various things, including:

- Their innate qualities
- Family stability
- Quality of other close relationships, e.g. with siblings
- Ability to sustain a relationship with their family member
- Opportunities to openly discuss their situation (Jones et al 2013)

The impact of a family member’s offending is also likely to **change in intensity over time**:



Consider other **events** that could **trigger emotional or behavioural responses** in children affected by a family member’s offending, for example, parent’s evening at school.

‘It wasn’t our choice to be here...’

— Young person on having a parent in prison

Changes to family and home environment

A child’s home environment can change in many ways as a family member moves through the stages of the CJS from imprisonment to release and resettlement. Examples of this could include:

- **a change in care giver**
- **a new house, school and/or community** (some children move house because of the offence, due to financial restraints, or to live with another care giver)
- **change in family routine** (some carers have to take up additional work to financially support the family)
- **change in relationships** (children’s peers may treat them differently; relationships between siblings could be affected, particularly where children respond differently to their family member’s offending)
- **change in financial wellbeing**
- **a change in role within the family** (for example, older children sometimes take on carer roles if there are younger siblings or where a parent/carer is struggling to cope)
- **change in emotions and behaviour of carers** (children may not be able to immediately interpret these changes as the result of a family member’s offending)

Disrupted attachment

Only **5%** of children remain in the family home when their mother goes to prison (Caddle & Crisp 1997)

‘Parent–child relationships are undermined, disrupted and damaged by the court and prison systems.’ (Galloway et al. 2014)



Consider the difference in impact on a child when a **mother** or **primary care giver** is imprisoned.

Poor or disorganised attachment occurs when babies and young children receive inconsistent or poor responses to their desire for comfort and when there is an absence of warm, responsive and stimulating care giving. This can lead to negative developmental outcomes. For young children of offenders in particular, attachment issues are a risk.



See Appendix 3: Women Offenders

Relationships with care–givers are clearly disrupted when a parent is completely removed via imprisonment, but attachment can also be affected when offending results in inconsistent care giving, restricted

contact with family members or confused stories about their whereabouts (Murray & Murray 2010).



Consider other ways that offending could impact on attachment. Think: **pressures on lone carers** or **repeated changes in care giver** around imprisonment and release.

Imprisonment – loss and grief

Some researchers have considered the imprisonment of a family member in terms of **loss** and **grief** in order to understand its significance for children.

‘There is no closure in these cases; the challenge is in how to live with the ambiguity.’ (Jones et al. 2013)

‘Ambiguous loss’ describes a situation where a significant person is **physically absent but psychologically present** as in cases of divorce or migration. This concept of loss has been used to explain the particular experience of children with a family member in prison.

Children in this position often don’t know or understand the time period that will pass before their family member’s return from prison; circumstances are even more unclear when children are not told the truth about their whereabouts (London Bockneck et al. 2009, Jones et al. 2013).

Children who can find meaning in separation and who are able to maintain hope may be better equipped to cope with their loss; open communication about imprisonment contributes to this (Jones et al. 2013).

‘Disenfranchised grief’ describes a significant loss where **closure through mourning is not possible**. Because imprisonment is stigmatised, the process of openly coming to terms with it is not ‘socially supported’; children do not have

the chance to ‘mourn’ their loss. In this sense, the loss of a family member to prison has been compared to a death without the opportunity to mourn (Hames & Pedreira 2003).



Like bereaved children, children with family members in prison need support to:

- ▶ **accept** their loss
- ▶ **experience** the emotional pain
- ▶ **adjust** to their environment with their family member gone
- ▶ and **remember** their family member (Hames & Pedreira 2003)



See Appendix 2: Loss and Grief

Possible signs of impact on children will vary according to the various factors outlined above, but may include:

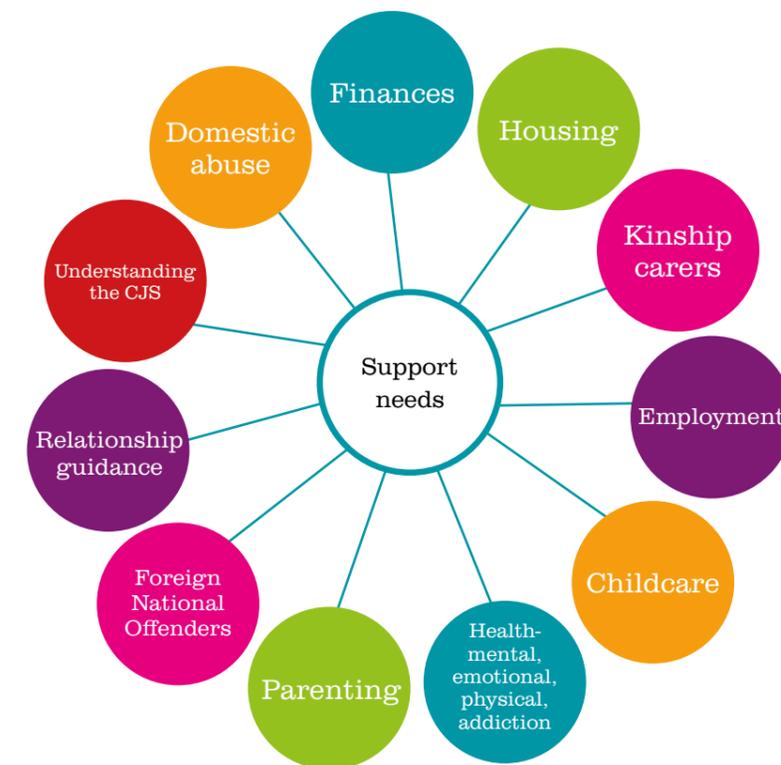
- Moodiness
- Aggression
- Chattering
- Bullying
- Difficulty with peers
- Appearing withdrawn
- Lack of concentration/tiredness
- Lack of interest in work
- Antagonism towards authority figures
- Bedwetting
- Separation anxiety
- Self-harm/suicidal ideation
- Substance misuse

4. Supporting parents and carers

‘All we want as a family is just to know what to do, how to go about things, because we don’t know. No one tells you anything.’ – Mother

4.1 Assessing needs, planning support and signposting

Parents and carers may need lots of different types of support around a family member’s offending (see diagram below for some examples). A common need is support to understand the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and this may initially be an unfamiliar area for practitioners too.



See Appendix 1 for lists of resources and services to signpost parents and carers to for each area.

Assessments – 5 dos and don'ts

1. It is important to remember that one family member's situation is wholly connected with that of the rest of their family; their needs will change as their family's do. **DO** take a **whole–family approach** to assessment and support planning to ensure the whole picture is considered.

2. Being **non–judgmental and understanding** is all the more vital to offenders' families who may have already experienced the effects of stigma as a result of their family member's offending. It may take time to build trust, so **DO** be **persistent** and listen to **their story** when they feel able to share it.

3. Depending on the stage of the CJS their family member is at, families may have different understandings to you about the significance of the offence and the likelihood of sentencing and/or release. Some families may be in a state of **disbelief or denial** so **DON'T** push them to accept a version of events they're not ready to.

4. DO recognise the difference between the information it is **essential to know** and the information you might **want to know**; many people are curious to ask about an individual's offences but this information often has little bearing on the family's needs.

5. Adding to the pressure on parents and carers is the last thing you want to do, so be sure to assist the carer and **DON'T** set **unmanageable or unrealistic goals** during support planning.



Consider any **safeguarding** issues throughout the assessment and on an ongoing basis during your intervention.



Asking the difficult questions – parents and carers

Sometimes professionals do not feel confident asking questions about offending and imprisonment. Here are some example questions to get you started approaching key areas of need.

<p>What would make things better for you? How do things feel for you?</p>	<p>These questions will generate a wide range of responses from the need for emotional support through to practical and financial help. These can also be used as prompts to aid thinking about the wider impact on the family if necessary.</p>
<p>What do you think the children want to do?</p>	<p>This can be particularly significant regarding visits and understanding the parents' wishes as well as the child's. Interventions planned around this question can ensure consideration is given to the children's views and opinions.</p>
<p>What have the children been told? How much do you think they know?</p>	<p>It is important that the second question here is asked after "What have they been told?" as it allows space for the carer to think about the perceptions the child holds. The knowledge and understanding that children have is often underestimated by immediate carers trying to "protect" them from difficult situations.</p>
<p>What has changed since (name) went to prison?</p>	<p>Remember: For some families, custody has a positive impact. This can create conflicting feelings in relatives.</p>
<p>Have you got someone that you can talk to?</p>	<p>This is a good opportunity to find out what professional agencies may be involved and how the carer feels about getting others involved, sharing information etc.</p>



See **Parent/Carer Support Wheel** on page 31 for one example of how the impact of offending on families has been addressed in assessments. You do not need to create a new assessment process in order to identify and support offenders' families. You could add a question to your existing systems.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: IDENTIFYING OFFENDERS' FAMILIES

Bristol Children's Centres amended their standard registration forms to include a question about having a family member in the Criminal Justice System. This helped them to identify offenders' families and trigger effective assessment and support planning processes. Posters and display boards in the Children's Centres break down stigma and encourage self-identification.

- **Keep discussions open-ended** to gain individual responses from children and families.
- **Be open about sharing information** to ensure they understand the benefits of information sharing for themselves and their family.
- **Be prepared** and have a range of information to offer, or make a clear offer of support if information is lacking. Asking questions without a practical response can leave people feeling let down.
- **Ensure that you fulfil your offers of support** so you are able to develop a trusting relationship with the family and/or child.

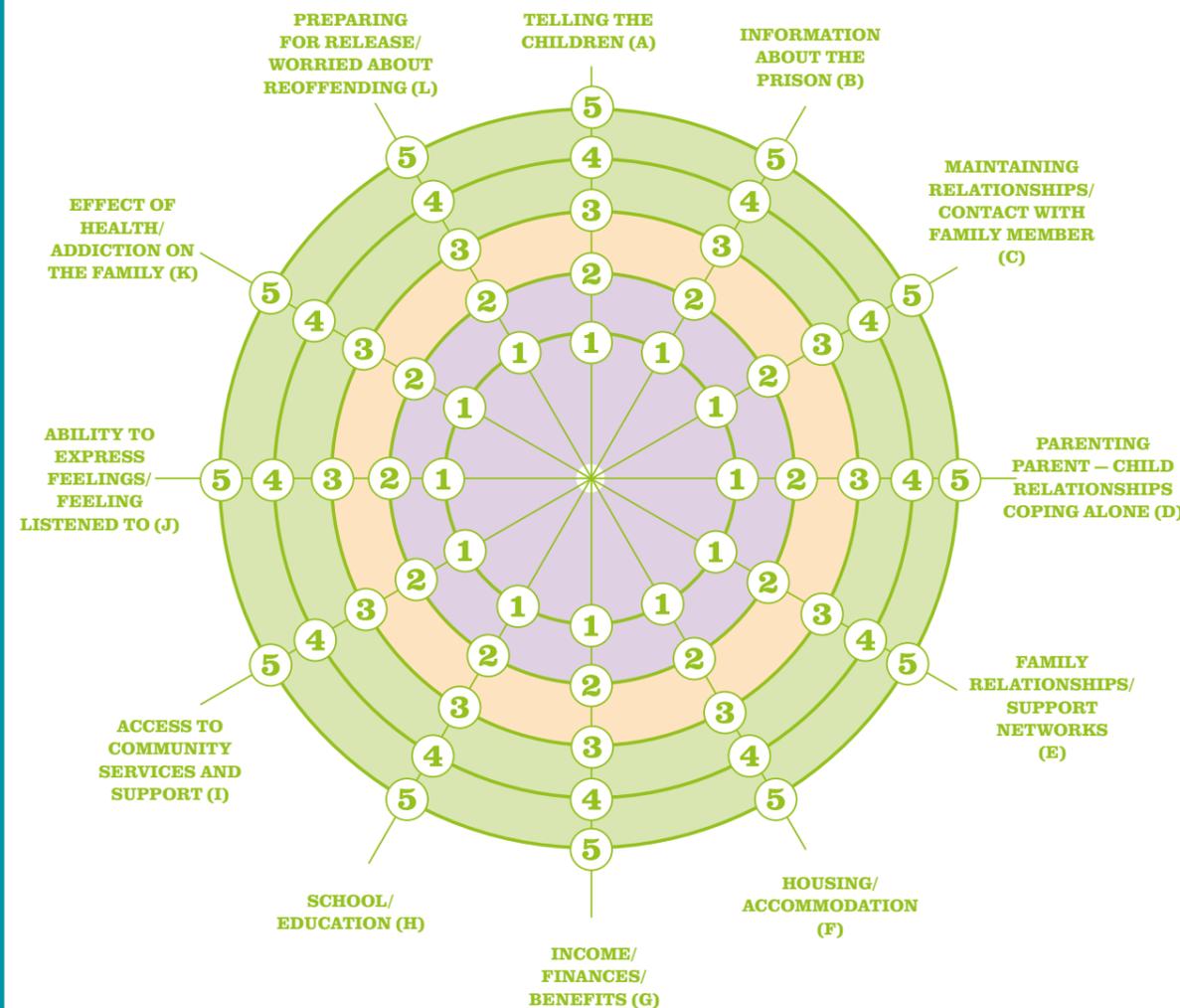
Example support plan for a parent/carers

Area of support	Outcome to achieve	Action/s	By who?	When/where
Information about the prison	Feel confident about what visiting my husband in prison will be like.	Mother to read Ormiston leaflet about prison visit process and follow links provided by worker. Note down any questions that she has.	Mum	At home this week
		Worker to find out who runs the visit centre at the prison and find out what they offer in terms of family support.	Worker	This week



**CAPi – Support wheel
Parent/Carer in the community**

Name Completed by



- 5** Crises I need help with
 - 4** Problems that I need to sort out
 - 3** Things I am generally not happy about
 - 2** Nothing needs to be sorted out
 - 1** I feel good about this
- Date completed
- Date of review

4.2 Telling the children

‘I didn’t know when he was going to prison. I saw it in the newspaper and came home and found out.’

— 14 year old girl

Whether to and **what to** tell the children about a family member’s offences is a very common issue that parents and carers worry about. It is vital to address children’s questions and anxieties with them quickly, especially when a family member has been arrested or imprisoned and suddenly removed from the home.

- They may notice that the adults around them are upset, angry or stressed, leading to confusion.
- Honesty teaches children that it is ok to be open with feelings and ask questions.
- Children might find out through playground chat, media stories, overhearing conversations, social media.
- Children may hear versions of the truth from others that are not accurate.
- Telling the truth reduces pressure on parents/carers to keep a secret and hide their feelings.
- Children may create their own stories (that could be much worse) about why a family member is no longer there.



■ **Parents and carers have the choice as to what they tell their children and when.**

- They may need support to understand why telling their children the truth is important.
- They might need your support to talk to their children or plan what to say.



Consider why parents and carers might find it hard to tell children the truth about a family member’s offending.



**See Appendix 1:
Telling the Children.**

Why tell children the truth?

- Once they have been told, they may be able to receive support and advice to cope.
- If appropriate, they could have a meaningful relationship with someone in prison.
- Knowing the truth may mitigate feelings of ambiguous loss or disenfranchised grief (see Chapter 3.2).

Chapter 5 offers guidance on exploring feelings with and providing information to children. These approaches are relevant whether or not a child knows the whole truth about a family member’s offending.





Parents' FAQs

Just as asking the 'right' questions can feel challenging, some practitioners worry about having the necessary answers to respond. Here are some common questions you may hear.



They've been arrested...what happens now?

This can be a very tense time for families, especially if the arrest happened at home and they witnessed it. For first time offenders' families this may be the first stage of an ongoing learning process about the Criminal Justice System. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources to direct parents to following an arrest.



What's the difference between remand and convicted?

If a prisoner is being held on remand, they have not yet been convicted. They therefore have more privileges than convicted prisoners, such as more regular visit allowance. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources on CJS processes.



How long will the sentence actually be?

Most prison sentences include periods of time to be served in prison and periods of time to serve in the community so a prisoner will not spend the whole of their sentence in prison. Some convictions carry minimum sentences in which case you may be able to help prepare a family for a prison sentence in advance. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources on CJS processes.



What shall I tell the children?

This is a common dilemma for parents and carers. See Chapter 4.2 for information on why it is often helpful to tell children the truth about offending. Appendix 1: Telling the Children lists helpful resources to guide conversations about offending with young people.



What if I think they're innocent?

It's vital to respect the story of the individual you're working with, regardless of your opinion on the guilt of their family member. It can take some families time to come to terms with a family member's offences. Encourage them to focus on aspects of their situation that they can change to help them cope.



What can I send into prison?

There are many restrictions on what can be sent into prisons. You can direct the family member to the Offenders' Families Helpline Property and Money webpage (see Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS) to find out more, or offer to look through it with them if they may struggle.



I'm worried about the safety of someone in prison, what do I do?

There are several ways to make contact with a prison if there is a serious or immediate safety issue and it is very important that families pass on concerns. For ongoing anxiety or less immediate safety concerns, helpline support for the carer could help. See Appendix 1: Concerned about the welfare of someone in prison.



How do we keep in touch?

See Appendix 1: Keeping in Touch for resources to pass on to parents and carers trying to make or sustain contact with someone in prison.



I need support with...where can I go?

See Chapter 4.1 for suggestions on how to approach support needs with parents and carers and identify ways forward in different areas. See Appendix 1 for some ideas on where to signpost carers to for particular issues.



I don't want to see them in prison but my children do...what can I do?

It is understandable that some parents/carers do not want to visit a family member in prison, especially if they have been the victim of a crime as in cases of domestic abuse. It may still be in children's best interests to visit. Other adults, including professionals, can accompany children on prison visits but any safeguarding concerns should be discussed with Social Care, the prison, or other professionals involved first. See Chapter 5.4: Prison Visits Flowchart for guidance on facilitating visits where a parent/carer cannot go.

5. Supporting children and young people

It's affecting you not them, they have to know how you feel not how they think you feel...' – Young person

- cope with **changes** to family/home environment and in relationships with peers (5.5)

- manage their own **behaviour** (5.6)

Asking the difficult questions – children

See below for some suggestions of questions you might ask children during assessments and support planning.



Remember: children have the right to have a say in all matters affecting them (See 2.1)

See **Child/Young Person Support Wheel** on page 37 for one example of how the impact of offending has been addressed in assessments with children.

5.1 Assessing needs and planning support

Children may need various types of support around a family member's offending, such as support to:

- identify, share and manage their **feelings** (5.2)
- receive appropriate **information** to address their anxieties (5.3)
- maintain **contact** with imprisoned or absent family members (5.4)



What has changed for you since Mum/Dad/name went to prison?

What would make things better for you?

How do things feel for you?

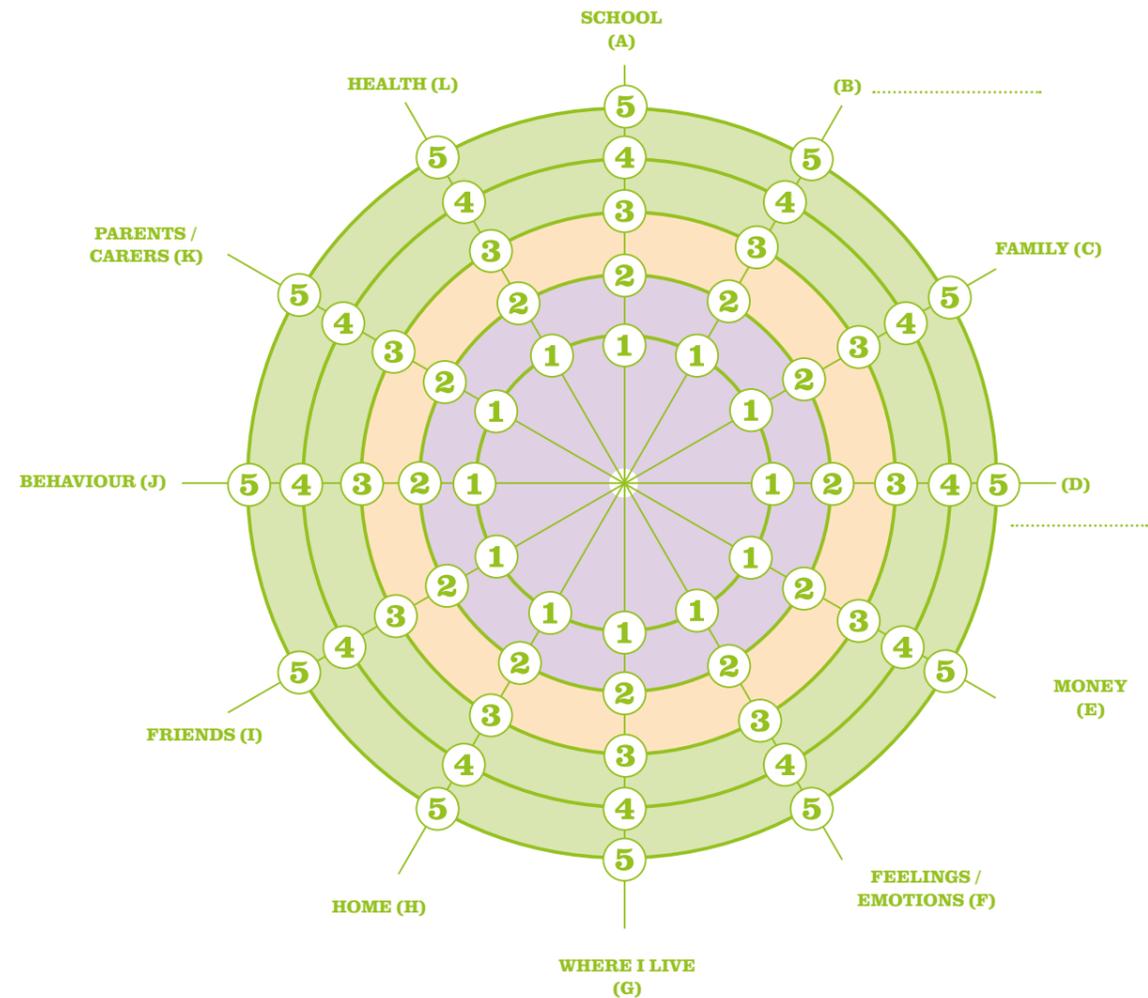


For some families, custody has a positive impact. This can create conflicting feelings in children around loyalty and guilt.

CAPI – Support wheel Child/Young person

Name

Completed by



- 5** Crises I need help with
- 4** Problems that I need to sort out
- 3** Things I am generally not happy about
- 2** Nothing needs to be sorted out
- 1** I feel good about this

Date completed

Date of review

Example support plan for a child

Area of support	Outcome to achieve	Action/s	By who?	When/ where
Remembering Dad	Have ways to think about Dad and feel happy.	Start to think about happy things I have done with Dad that I can put in my memory box	Sam	At home this week
		Find a box to bring to the next session that we can decorate as a 'memory box'	Worker	This week



5.2 Exploring feelings

'If you do nothing but strive for the deepest possible understanding of a child and if you communicate that understanding, that experience can be life-changing'
(Kahn, 1991)

All children need support to **identify, share** and **manage** their **feelings** and this is likely to be important around a family member's offending.

Professionals can play an important role in this by staying with and 'holding' a child's distress so it can be coped with, then 'giving back' their feelings in bite size pieces. This is termed **emotional containment** and can enable children to cope with feelings of upset and confusion, crucial in helping them to feel safe. Receiving this containment can help children to better tolerate difficult feelings later in life and become able to soothe themselves and regulate their feelings.

As a practitioner, you regularly draw on your communication skills as well as your training and experience to explore complex situations with children and/or families. These same skills can be used to broach the feelings associated with a family member's offending.

See the **Dudley the Dog tool** on page 40, and several more in the appendices, for practical techniques to explore feelings with children.

See Appendix 4 Tools: Three Islands, Faces, Three Houses

See Appendix 2: Exploring Feelings

5.3 Providing information

Answering children's questions as they arise is vital to ensure they feel secure and develop positive and trusting relationships with their care givers. This can feel challenging when the topic is something as stigmatised as offending.

When it comes to imprisonment in particular, evidence suggests that children deal more effectively with ambiguous loss if communication is open and they are provided with explanations for their parent's absence (see Chapter 3.2).

It's important to think through the age-appropriateness of the information you provide and consider how much the child needs to know and how to phrase it in terms they can understand. There are many resources to support you in this.

See Appendix 2: Age-Appropriate Information

See the diagram on page 44 – **Children's FAQs** – for some examples of questions children are likely to ask about a family member's offending and some pointers to assist you in planning a response, or supporting a carer to.

There are fewer resources designed specifically for pre-school children. Try using a storybook for an older child to guide you but follow the pictures, adapting and simplifying the story.

Tool: Exploring difficult thoughts and feelings with Dudley the Dog



Dudley the dog can help young children to talk about their thoughts and feelings.

All you will need is flipchart paper and pens, and a toy dog or picture.

Simply follow these 5 easy steps...

1. Introduce the child to Dudley the dog.
2. Ask them to draw Dudley nice and big in the centre of the flip chart paper.
3. Explain that Dudley's family member has gone to prison.
4. Ask the child to write down inside Dudley any feelings they think he may be experiencing.
5. Ask the child to write any questions Dudley may have in the space around Dudley.

This is a great way to get young children to talk about what's going on. By using Dudley the child will feel like 'I' is less intrusive and you are more likely to get positive engagement.

Now that you have opened up the subject of imprisonment you can ask the child if they can relate to any of these feelings and explore any questions they may have.

It's a great place to start.

5.4 Facilitating contact with someone in prison

Maintaining contact with a family member who has gone to prison is really important for many children's wellbeing; contact can remind children that they are loved and help them cope. Furthermore, it is a child's right to maintain contact with a parent they have been separated from if they wish to and it's in their best interests (see Chapter 2.1). However, contact is not always in a child's best interests and is sometimes restricted – see 'Restricted contact' later in the chapter.

Phone calls

Children can't phone someone in prison; incoming calls are not allowed. Prisoners can phone people on their phone call list but the time of day may vary and there may be limited phones to use at some prisons.

Letters

Convicted prisoners can receive unlimited letters and can post one per week for free (two for remand prisoners). Families are allowed to include stamped addressed envelopes with their letters to encourage prisoners to reply more often. Otherwise prisoners pay for replies themselves. Letters may be read for security reasons.

Children and young people of all ages can be supported to write a letter to someone they're close to who is in prison.

See Appendix 4 Tool: Letter Writing Template

E-mails

Children, families and professionals can contact prisoners by e-mail through the 'email a prisoner' service. Each e-mail costs 35p and is printed by the prison post teams and delivered to prisoners along with any letters. A reply service is available at some prisons (prisoners **do not** use the internet to send replies directly).

See www.e-mailaprisoner.com to sign up to use this service.

To contact an individual by e-mail or letter you generally need to know which establishment they are at and what their **prisoner number** is. If you don't have this information, use the online gov.uk Find a Prisoner service to request details of a prisoner. Or for a letter, if you know the establishment address, you could try putting it inside another envelope addressed to the Prison Governor explaining who you want it to go to.

See Appendices 1 & 2: Keeping in touch

Prison visits

Some people are apprehensive about taking children to visit someone in prison, yet it is not an uncommon occurrence:

10,000 children visit public prisons in England and Wales every week (Barnardo's FOI request 2014).

Many prisons have play facilities for children in the visit halls and visit centres where families are greeted and provided with information on arrival. But not all prisons have these facilities and it is worth preparing children and young people for the prison visit experience which can be challenging for some.

See our **Professionals' Flowchart** on page 46 — which outlines how to emotionally and practically prepare children and families for a visit.



Families are generally not allowed to take anything into the prison visit hall with them. Children should not be encouraged to bring drawings, presents, photos, etc. for the prisoner as these will be taken off them during the entry process.



See Appendix 2: Prison Visits

Restricted contact

Having contact with a family member in prison is not always deemed to be in a child's best interests and in some cases it is restricted, for example where a sexual offence has taken place against a child (See Chapter 2.4).



See Appendices 1 & 2: Partners/Children of Sex Offenders

If a child wants to have contact with a family member in prison, it can be very challenging for them to understand and accept when it isn't possible. Depending on the offence, it can also feel difficult for carers to address. In such cases, exploring emotions with children and supporting them to cope with the loss is all the more important. **It is vital that children are told that any restrictions are not their fault.**



See Appendix 2: Exploring Feelings; Loss and Grief

Where prison visits are not allowed, it may be appropriate in some cases (where rigorous safeguarding checks have been made) to explore other forms of contact.



You could try writing to the Prison Governor or supporting the young person to, **if appropriate**. It may be that letterbox contact could be an option where a third party reviews any correspondence. **Check any safeguarding concerns** with other agencies or Social Services first.





Children's FAQs



Where is Mum/Dad?

Work with the information children have been given by their carer and, where appropriate, encourage carers to consider the benefits of openness (see Chapter 4.2). Even if a child does not know the truth, e.g. thinks their family member is working away, you can still support them with their feelings around it.



Why did they do it?

A discussion with a child around this will depend very much on the circumstances of the offence. Sometimes responses such as 'good people sometimes do bad things' or 'people make mistakes' can be helpful.



What happens at court? Can I go too?

Children under 14 are not usually allowed to sit in public galleries without a Judge's permission and there are generally no child-friendly spaces or childcare facilities in court buildings. See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS to guide your answer with age-appropriate information.



When are they coming home?

Release dates are often not set in stone and younger children may not be able to understand the periods of time involved in a prison sentence. Bear this in mind when reassuring them it's normal to miss their family member and supporting them to cope with the loss, see Chapter 5.5 and Appendix 2: Loss and Grief. NB: For some children, release is a fearful time if their family member has been abusive, for example.



How can I speak to them?

See Chapter 5.2 for information and Appendices 1&2 for resources on keeping in touch. Phone calls from prison are limited; you could offer to support the child to keep in touch by other means like writing a letter or drawing a picture for their family member. NB: pictures in wax crayon are not allowed and children can't take anything into prison with them on visits but pictures can be sent in the post.



What's it like in prison?

Children and young people often have negative ideas and fears about what life in prison will be like for their family member. Media stories about violence in prison can make this worse. See Appendix 2 for sources of age-appropriate information on prison to share with children.



What will it be like visiting prison?

Watching a short video together with a child can be a great way to help them visualise what a prison visit might be like, see Appendix 2: Prison visits. It's ok if you haven't been to a prison and do not know the exact set up but you could consider going on 'Hidden Sentence' training which is sometimes held at prisons and attendees can walk through the prison visit process (See Appendix 3: Training).



Am I bad like Dad/Mum?

Children of offenders feel the effects of stigma which can impact on their self-image. Watch the short Families Outside video, 'Reversible Writing' (Appendix 3: Awareness-raising), to think about this further. Encourage children to think about things they are good at to boost their self-esteem and confidence.



Do they still love me?

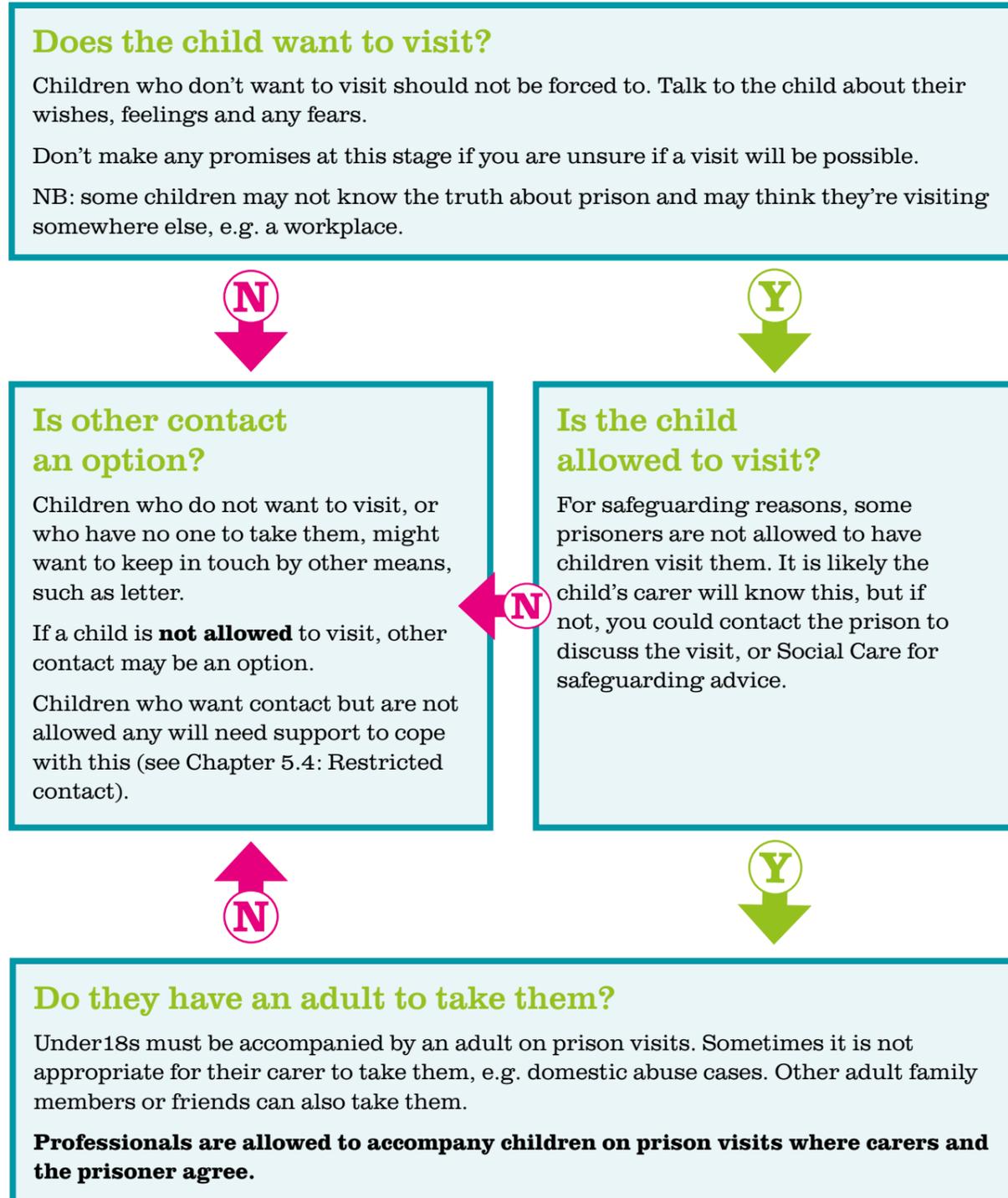
Some children worry about whether their family member loves them, and some experience feelings of self-blame and guilt. It must be made clear that the distance and restrictions on contact are not the child's fault or because they are unloved. This can be difficult if an imprisoned family member, for example, is not reciprocating efforts to keep in touch.



What will it be like when they come home? Will they leave again? Will it be different?

Release can bring new anxieties for children and families, as well as for the offender themselves. You cannot predict the future for a family, but you can support a child's ability to cope by talking through their feelings and concerns with them and exploring ways for them to cope with upcoming changes. NB: For some children, release is a fearful time if their family member has been abusive, for example.

Supporting a child to visit a prison A Professionals' Flowchart



Discuss the visit with the prisoner

They have to agree to it and **add all potential visitors to their visit list**, including children, before you can book.

If you are making first contact with a prisoner to discuss a visit, you can write to or e-mail them (see Chapter 5.4).

Book the visit

Most prisons allow you to book visits by phone or online. Different rules apply at different prisons and depending on whether the prisoner is convicted or on remand.

Use **www.justice.gov.uk - Prison Finder** to find the visit rules for different prisons. You must have the prisoners' details to book, including their prisoner number, and you must be on their visit list.

Organise the visit

Prisons can be difficult to reach on public transport – plan the journey in advance.

Use **www.insidetime.org/visits** to find addresses, public transport options & details of facilities e.g. food in prison visit halls.

The **Assisted Prison Visit Unit** covers travel costs for families on low incomes. Adults accompanying someone else's child can also apply (Appendix 1: Keeping in touch).

Inform the school

If the visit is in school hours, it is advisable to inform the school of the absence as they can log it as authorised. See **Oxford Schools guidelines** (Appendix 3: Education) for an example of this.

Prepare the child for the visit

Emotional preparation is important ahead of a prison visit. Talk to children about their expectations and any worries. It would be useful to prepare them for the security process.

See Appendix 2: Prison visits for worksheets, leaflets & videos to use with children.

NB: Families usually can't bring anything into prison visits with them, e.g. drawings done by children.

During the visit

Visit halls can be challenging places for children to sit for a long time. For young children, there may be play facilities but not in every prison. Older children can't bring their phones and might find it helpful to think in advance about things they'd like to talk about.

After the visit

Children often have emotional reactions to visits and may be tired afterwards. Schools might notice a change in behaviour around the time of the visit. Children may need a 'debrief' from a professional or carer who can check in on their feelings.

5.5 Coping with changes to family/home environment

As we saw in Chapter 3.2, a child's home life can change dramatically as a result of a family member's offending. While there are several ways to maintain contact with absent family members where possible, contact is still limited in frequency, proximity and, in many ways, quality. Supporting a child to **cope** with the distance and **remember** their family member until the next possible contact is a good way of tackling this reality.

Try making a memory box with a child where they can store significant items and make notes of events to tell their family member about when they next have the opportunity.

See Appendix 4 Tool: Making a Memory Box

Whether or not contact is possible, children and young people need support to cope with the possible changes to their home environment, relationships, responsibilities and routines that can arise following a family member's offending. Remember, this could be just as true when an offender is released back to the family home as it is when they are imprisoned.

As during other transitions, it may be helpful to:

- contain feelings of **loss** (see 5.2)
- **prepare** children in advance of further changes where possible
- support them to create new **routines**

See Appendix 2: Coping with changes to home/family environment & Appendix 3: Transitions

5.6 Managing behaviour

Some research has suggested that offenders' children are more at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and even in crime themselves (Murray 2005). This is understandably a common area of concern for carers and practitioners alike.

Identifying and exploring any feelings (5.2) behind a child's behaviour, such as anger, may help them to feel understood and could improve things. When misbehaviour becomes more serious, **early intervention** is key in preventing it from escalating.

Supporting children and young people with other needs in their life may make a difference to their behaviour, for example around their mental health, home environment, or academic life. Where behaviour is challenging, supporting parents with their parenting approaches and strategies could help them to manage it.

See Appendix 1: Parenting Support & Appendix 2: Exploring Feelings

If you are working with a young person who is at risk of becoming involved in crime you could find out about any Youth Crime Prevention programmes in your area that may be able to provide support or signposting:
<https://www.gov.uk/youth-crime-prevention-programmes/overview>

6. Conclusion

All practitioners can make a difference to children and families affected by a family member's offending, an often "hidden" and potentially vulnerable group. With your existing expertise and experience and, importantly, your empathy and understanding, you can provide interventions to counter some of the disadvantage this varied group faces.

We hope this guide provides a foundation for practitioners with little awareness of the impact of the Criminal Justice System on the whole family; we also hope it offers new approaches and suggestions to professionals who are more experienced in the field.

We thank you for your interest in and commitment to supporting children and families affected by a family member's offending.



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Note:

- Quotes throughout the document have been taken from the following:
- i-HOP 'Message for Professionals' children and families blog (2016)
- Gill, O. (2010) *She just cries and cries – Case studies of Devon families with a father in prison*. Barnardo's.
- i-HOP 'Quality Statements & Toolkit' consultation with Bristol young people's group (2015). Unpublished.

APPENDIX 1: A-Z of resources for parents & carers

Area of support	
Care/fostering arrangements	<p>A guide to adoption for women prisoners (Rights of Women/ Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Leaflet on adoption processes from the point of view of mothers in prison with real life stories: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p> <p>When Social Services are involved – A guide for women prisoners (Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Helpful booklet suitable for anyone trying to understand care proceedings when a mother is imprisoned: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p>
Childcare	<p>Find a registered childminder (gov.uk) https://www.gov.uk/find-registered-childminder</p> <p>Find a sure start children's centre (gov.uk) https://www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre</p>
Concerned about the welfare of someone in prison	<p>Prison Governor/Director Write to the Prison Governor/Director. They should reply within 30 days.</p> <p>Duty Governor and/or Chaplain Immediate concerns: phone the prison, explain the concerns, ask to speak to the Duty Governor or the Chaplain.</p> <p>Find prison addresses and phone numbers for the above at: http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder</p> <p>Family Engagement Worker Some prisons have Family Engagement Workers to work specifically with families and prisoners. They may be based in the visitors centre or in the prison itself.</p> <p>Worried about self-harm or suicide? (Pact) – Information sheet for families worried about a prisoner who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm: http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/info-advice/prisoners-family-and-friends-faqs</p>

Concerned about the welfare of someone in prison (continued)	<p>Pact Helpline – confidential helpline offering information, advice and support to the family and friends of prisoners: 0808 808 3444 (freephone) http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/info-advice</p> <p>National Offenders' Families Helpline 0808 808 2003 (freephone) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/</p>
Domestic abuse	<p>National Domestic Violence helpline 0808 200 0247 (freephone) www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk</p> <p>Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327 (freephone) www.mensadvice.org.uk</p>
Financial/ Employment	<p>Assisted Prison Visits Scheme – Apply for costs associated with prison visits: https://www.gov.uk/assisted-prison-visits</p> <p>Benefit information – Partner in prison (Turn2us) https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Benefit-guides/Partner-in-prison/Benefits-Partner-in-prison</p> <p>Citizens Advice Bureau https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice/search-for-your-local-citizens-advice/</p> <p>Job Centre Plus https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus/how-to-contact</p> <p>Child Poverty Action Group – Information about benefits and tax credits regulations: www.cpag.org.uk</p>
Finding out where a family member is in custody	<p>Prison Finder (Ministry of Justice) https://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder</p> <p>Find a prisoner (Prisoner Location Service) https://www.gov.uk/find-prisoner</p> <p>National Offenders' Families Helpline 0808 808 2003 (freephone) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/</p> <p>Please note: Families will not always be automatically notified and it may take some time for the offender to inform them (or they may choose not to). In addition, prisoners can be moved from one establishment to another and families may not always be kept informed.</p>
Foreign National Offenders	<p>Information and advice to Foreign National Prisoners (Migrant Help) http://www.migranthehelpuk.org/about-us/what-we-do/information-and-advice-to-foreign-national-prisoners/</p>

(continued)	<p>Single Parent's UK – Website for single parents. There is access to a Message Board where you can talk to other lone parents or go to groups to find other single parents in your area: 0845 450 0399 info@spanuk.org.uk</p> <p>Lone Parent Helpline – Free advice and publications on benefits, childcare, money, legal rights, work etc.: 0800 018 5026 (free from landlines) www.loneparenthelpline.org</p> <p>Young Minds For Parents – Free advice helpline and website for parents who are worried about their children's mental health, emotional wellbeing or behaviour: 0808 802 5544 (free for mobiles and landlines) http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/worried_about_your_child/behaviour_problems</p>
Relationship support/ guidance	<p>Relate – Organisation offering relationship support and counselling: https://www.relate.org.uk/</p> <p>The Outsiders – Preparing for Release (Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Booklet for families to prepare for someone's return home from prison: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p>
Release & resettlement	<p>Release and Resettlement Fact Sheets - Family, Finance, Housing (Pact) http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/info-advice/prisoners-family-and-friends-faqs</p> <p>Release (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Accessible information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/release/</p> <p>The Outsiders: Preparing for Release (Action for Prisoners' Families) – Booklet helpful for understanding the emotions and challenges involved when a family member is released from prison: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p>
Partners of long-term sentence offenders	<p>AFFECT – an organisation which supports families and friends of offenders who are facing a long or life sentence of imprisonment: http://affect.org.uk/</p>

Partners of sex offenders	<p>Picking up the pieces (Families Outside) – Information and advice booklet for families of convicted sex offenders: http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/picking-up-the-pieces/</p> <p>What Can You Do? - If someone you know has been accessing indecent images online (The Lucy Faithfull Foundation) – Booklet for families and friends: www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/651</p> <p>Parents Protect! (The Lucy Faithfull Foundation) - Website for parents with concerns about child sexual abuse: www.parentsprotect.co.uk</p> <p>Someone in my family has sexually abused children (Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Leaflet to be used by an adult family member or professional to guide a conversation with children about child sexual abuse: www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/34</p> <p>Help... someone I care about may be a sex offender (The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) – Booklet for concerned family members: http://www.ccpas.co.uk/Documents/HelpSomeoneMayBeOffender.pdf</p>
Telling the children	<p>The Outsiders - Telling the children (Action for Prisoners' Families) – Booklet with advice for families on how to and what to tell children about offending: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p> <p>Supporting a child with a close relative in prison (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information sheet with advice on issues that arise for children with family members in prison: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/information-sheets/</p> <p>National Offenders' Families Helpline 0808 808 2003 (freephone) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/</p>

Understanding the Criminal Justice System	National Offenders' Families Helpline – The website covers each stage of the CJS, including arrest, with helpful information sheets and a helpline operating 7 days per week: 0808 808 2003 (freephone) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/
	Pact Helpline – confidential helpline offering information, advice and support to the family and friends of prisoners: 0808 808 3444 (freephone) http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/info-advice
	Justice Website – Website with information on prisons, courts and probation, including the prison finder tool: www.justice.gov.uk
	Inside Time – Website providing information about prison regimes and life inside, including an extensive page of FAQs helpful for families and details of public transport routes to different prisons for visits: www.insidetime.org
	Court to Custody (Prisoners' Friends and Families Service) – Helpful leaflet designed to help defendants and their families prepare for the possibility of custody: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/195
	Going to court (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/going-to-court/
	The Outsiders – Sent to Prison (Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Booklet designed to help families cope when a someone is sent to prison: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/
	Prison Sentences (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information webpage and sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/sentence/
	Inside a Prison (Ormiston Families) – A short film from a prisoner Dad's perspective about daily life in prison: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rZ3dhPq7ok
	Community Sentences (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Helpful webpage: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/community-sentence/
Property and Money (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Helpful webpage explaining what prisoners can own and what families can send them: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/prison/property/	

APPENDIX 2: A-Z of resources for and to use in direct work with children and young people

Area of support	
Age-appropriate information re. prison	Inside a prison (Ormiston Families) – Short film from a prisoner Dad's perspective to reassure children and young people wondering what prison life is like: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rZ3dhPq7ok
	Child Diary (Families Outside) – Short film with cartoons on the experience of having a family member go to prison: https://vimeo.com/184659022
3 – 8 years	Childline – Parent in Prison (NSPCC) – dedicated webpage with information about the Criminal Justice System and a forum for asking questions: https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/parents-prison/
	Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration (Sesame Workshop) – Toolkit and app with stories, tools, videos and tips on communicating to young children about imprisonment: http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration
4 – 11 years	Honest – Emma's Story (Families Outside) – Booklet for an adult to read with a child about two children's emotions when their father goes to prison: www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2011/02/honest-emma-story.pdf
10 years +	When Dad was Away (Weir & Littlewood) – This illustrated storybook, one of many available to buy online, is about a girl whose Dad goes to prison and how she copes: See Amazon, for example.
	Are you a Young Person with a family member in prison? (Action for Prisoners' Families) – Young person's leaflet covering issues such stages of the criminal justice system, keeping in touch, telling friends/school: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/

12 – 16 years	<p>What's the story? What happens when a relative is sent to prison (Families Outside) – Booklet using the story of a girl whose Dad goes to prison to explore issues and challenges: www.familiesoutside.org.uk/whats-the-story-jennys-journey/</p> <p>My Own Prison (Fixers) – A short film about a 17-year-old whose parent is repeatedly in prison: http://www.fixers.org.uk/news/10865-11208/parents-in-prison-fix-on-itv.php</p>
Children of sex offenders	<p>Someone in my family has sexually abused children (Action for Prisoners' Families) – Booklet for adults to read with children to answer their questions about child sexual abuse: https://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/34</p>
Coping with changes to home/ family environment	<p>Change and loss activities (Partnership for Children) – Printable activities and resources to help children cope with change and loss and to deal with new circumstances. These can be adapted for situations where a family member's offending results in changes to home and family environment: http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/resources/resilience-building-activities/change-and-loss.html</p>
Domestic abuse	<p>The Hideout – Children's Page (Women's Aid) – Website with age-appropriate children's page providing information and support for children affected by domestic violence: http://thehideout.org.uk/children/home/</p>
Exploring / managing feelings	<p>Child's Journey Worksheets (Thames Valley Partnership and Young Southampton) – Worksheets for professionals to use with children to help them explore and understand their feelings and experiences about a family member's offending: http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/advice.page?id=aFVnGBzJLk&familychannel=9-12</p> <p>Childline – Parent in Prison (NSPCC) – dedicated webpage with links to resources for managing anger, frustration, anxiety and loneliness: https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/parents-prison/</p> <p>This is Me – series of worksheets for working on feelings with children available online: search for 'anger', 'feelings'...</p> <p>Books to be purchased: Starving the anxiety gremlin, Banishing your self-esteem thief, Starving the anger gremlin (Jessica Kingsley Publishers) – series of CBT therapy resource books to teach children aged 5-9 about emotions and to how to manage them: Available at www.jkp.com/uk/</p> <p>Adolescent Volcanoes - Helping Adolescents and their Parents to Deal with Anger (Pudney & Whitehouse, Jessica Kingsley Publishers) – resource book with practical exercises for practitioners to help adolescents manage their anger and parents to understand it: http://www.jkp.com/uk/adolescent-volcanoes.html</p>

Keeping in touch	<p>Doodle Cards (Sussex Prisoners' Families) – Illustrated postcards specially designed to help children stay connected with a family member in a fun and visual way. Created by children's illustrator Guy Parker-Rees: http://www.sussexprisonersfamilies.org.uk/product/doodle-cards/</p>
Loss and grief	<p>A range of resources have been developed to support children and young people to deal with bereavement. Some can be adapted to use with children who have lost a family member to prison:</p> <p>Winston's Wish – UK charity for bereaved children: http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/</p> <p>Cruse – Leading bereavement charity in England, Wales & N. Ireland: http://www.cruse.org.uk/children</p>
Mental health	<p>Childline – Parent in Prison (NSPCC) – Helpline plus dedicated webpage with links to resources for managing anger, frustration, anxiety and loneliness: https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/parents-prison/</p> <p>Young Minds – Organisation promoting young people's mental health and wellbeing with lots of online advice for young people on looking after themselves: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people</p>
Prison visits	<p>Prison Visits Booklets (Barnardo's) – Booklets for children to explore their feelings regarding visiting an adult in prison, with space for doodles and drawings: https://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/660</p> <p>Visiting our Dad in Prison (Ormiston Families) – Short video shows a prison visit through the eyes of a young child to be used to help children and families prepare for a visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQkEgmKz9u0</p> <p>Child's Journey Worksheets (Thames Valley Partnership and Young Southampton) – Worksheets for professionals to use with children to help them explore and understand their feelings and experiences about a family member's offending and visiting someone in prison: http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/advice.page?id=aFVnGBzJLk&familychannel=9-12</p> <p>My Visit (Pact) – This booklet explains the experience of visiting a prison to children using illustrations and easy-to-understand words. Spaces for children to draw pictures with parents, carers, family members or professionals: http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/shop/my-visit-100-copies</p>

APPENDIX 3: A-Z of resources for practitioners

Area of support	
Awareness-raising	<p>It's no holiday (Families Outside) – Short film featuring the voices of young people with experience of a family member going to prison: http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/itsnoholiday/</p> <p>Reversible Writing (Families Outside) – Video/poem from a young person's perspective about stigma and how having a parent in prison impacts on self-esteem and life chances: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGOB3QhGqtA</p>
Children's rights	<p>i-HOP briefing for advocates (i-HOP) – Briefing introducing offenders' children's rights, suitable for all professionals: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/802</p> <p>“Because it's our right” (Children of Prisoners Europe)– Awareness-raising video for professionals on children's right to have contact with imprisoned parents: http://childrenofprisoners.eu/awareness-raising-videos/</p> <p>Bristol Charter for Children of Prisoners (Barnardo's & Bristol City Council) – Charter of rights written by young people with experience of a family member going to prison: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/354</p> <p>Isle of Wight Charter for Organisations/Services to Support Children and Families of Offenders (Barnardo's) – Comprehensive charter and supporting documents for organisations getting organised around offenders' families and their rights: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/794</p> <p>Our Voice: Children and Young People's Charter (Pact) – Charter of rights written by young people with experience of a family member going to prison: http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/get-involved/our-voice-children-young-peoples-charter</p> <p>Office of the Children's Commissioner – Agency providing information, advice and publications aimed at improving lives of children in England, with a central focus on children's rights: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/learn-more/childrens-rights</p>

Education	<p>Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member: A handbook for schools developing good practice (Barnardo's): https://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/26</p> <p>Academic Resilience (Young Minds) – Free, practical resources to help schools support disadvantaged pupils' academic resilience: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/academic_resilience</p> <p>Guidelines for Working with Children who have a 'Family' Member in Prison (Oxfordshire County Council 2009) – Policy including information on recording prison visits as 'authorised absences': http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/158</p>
Health	<p>Children of Prisoners – Guide for Community Health Practitioners (Barnardo's) – Practical handbook for health visitors, community nurses, midwives and school nurses working with offenders' children and families: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/767</p>
Stages of the Criminal Justice System	<p>Guide to the Criminal Justice System (Clinks) http://www.clinks.org/criminal-justice/guide-criminal-justice-system</p> <p>Glossary of Legal Terminology (Offenders' Families Helpline) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/information-sheets/</p>
Arrest	<p>Collateral Damage (Jo Tilley-Riley, Clore Social Leadership Programme) – Report on the impact of arrests and home raids on children: http://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk/Collateral-damage</p>
Court proceedings	<p>Going to court (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/going-to-court/</p> <p>Court to Custody (Prisoners' Friends and Families Service) – Helpful leaflet designed to help defendants and their families prepare for the possibility of custody: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/195</p>
Imprisonment	<p>Prison Sentences (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/sentence/</p> <p>Locked Out – Children's experiences of visiting prisons (Jane Evans, Barnardo's) – Accessible research with clear recommendations: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/locked-out-report.pdf</p>

(continued)	<p>i-HOP: Assisting prisons to safeguard children with a key attachment figure in custody (i-HOP) – Briefing highlighting safeguarding implications of children visiting prisons and how to mitigate risk, particularly useful for prison staff or anyone facilitating prison visits for children: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/868</p>
Release	<p>Release (Offenders' Families Helpline) – Information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/release/</p> <p>The Outsiders: Preparing for Release (Action for Prisoners' Families) – Booklet helpful for understanding the emotions and challenges involved when a family member is released from prison: http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-and-offenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p>
Resettlement	<p>Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of imprisoned fathers with their families (Friedrich Losel, Cambridge Journal of Criminology and Ormiston Children's Trust) – Research article considering different factors involved in positive and negative resettlement outcomes: http://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/fathers_in_prison/</p>
Transitions	<p>Wellbeing Resources – Transitions (Young Minds) – Information from leading children's wellbeing charity, Young Minds, aimed at schools but relevant for all practitioners looking to support children going through changes: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/training_and_consultancy/for_schools/wellbeing/transitions</p>
Training	<p>Hidden Sentence training (Action for Prisoners' & Offenders' Families) – Awareness-raising training for all professionals on the impact of a family member's involvement in the CJS on families. Delivered by various charities and Local Authorities nationally, and in some prisons: https://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/list/c/608/search/1</p> <p>Practice workshop for professionals working with offenders' children & families (Barnardo's) – A 4hour workshop which accompanies this guide, delivered across various regions by Barnardo's: https://bookwhen.com/capotraining</p>
Women Offenders	<p>i-HOP briefing on children of female offenders (i-HOP) – Briefing covering issues relevant to supporting female offenders and their children: http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/607</p> <p>Women's breakout – National umbrella organisation for professionals working with vulnerable women in contact with the Criminal Justice System. Website includes a directory of services for female offenders: http://www.womensbreakout.org.uk/</p>

APPENDIX 4: Tools for working with children to explore feelings, maintain contact and secure memories

Three Islands



The Three Islands technique helps gain an insight into a child's life without having to rely on question and answer interviews which can be intimidating for some children.

The technique was developed by Kate Iwi, young people's services officer at charity RESPECT, UK. We are grateful to Kate for giving us permission to use the example.

What resources do I need?

A large piece of paper (A3 or bigger) and some pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, you can use toys and models instead.

How do I do it?

Draw two islands near the top of the piece of paper and a third island towards the bottom. Draw a bridge between the first two islands and a gate in the middle of it. If it helps, name the islands i.e. the 'Island of Always', 'The Island of Sometimes' and the 'Island of Far-Away'.

Three Islands (cont.)

Explain to the child that this is a game and that they live on the first island. Ask them to draw themselves or use one of the toys to represent them. They can then draw anything else they want to be on this island with them (which could include people, animals, activities, objects).

If you do not have the exact toys / models to represent what a child wants to show, just pretend (for example, a toy plane could represent going on holiday).

On the second island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to see but not all the time. Explain they have the only key to the gate on the bridge, so anything on the second island can only cross when the child lets them.

On the third island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to be far away from them or never see again.

As the child is drawing or putting toys on the islands, make sure you ask them who or what they are and why they have put something on a particular island

What am I looking for?

Anything in the drawing or model that seems odd or worrying, as well as anything that makes the child happy.

Warnings

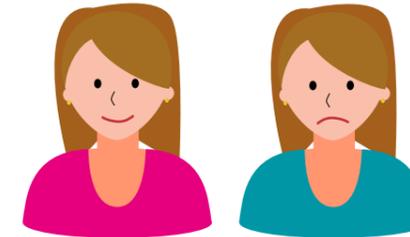
You should be careful about interpreting what is drawn or shown too literally. For example, if they draw a picture of a man and a woman fighting, this would not necessarily mean they have experienced domestic violence. Drawings / modelling are a way for the child to express an emotional state or process something they have seen or experienced.

You should avoid questioning where the child places things. For example, you can ask why they have put their mother on the second island but you should not say: 'Oh, but I would have thought your mummy should be on island one?' The child may end up trying to please you (or displease you.)

There may also be immediate reasons why a child has put something on either the second or third islands – for example, they may put their pet cat on island two because the cat scratched them earlier in the day.

As you can see from the picture above, the child has drawn things such as brothers, sister, my heart and love, my brain, godfather, friends, a peace sign and a baby blanket on island one. On island two, they have drawn their cat, cousins, aunt and uncle and some other children. On island three, they have drawn sadness and their father being handcuffed by two police officers (this may not be immediately obvious from the actual drawing- it came through discussion with the child of what she was drawing). They have also decorated the islands by drawing the sea and some jagged rocks around the third island.

Faces



What is this technique?

The faces technique consists of asking a child to pick from a range of different facial expressions and assigning them to members of their family. It is a useful method for discovering how a child perceives their family. It is more likely to appeal to younger children or those at an earlier stage of development.

What do I need?

A large piece of paper, pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, it is useful to have some pre-prepared facial expressions such as happy, laughing, angry, hatred, sad, bored, aggressive, relaxed faces etc.

What do I do?

Explain to the child that you want to know more about their family. Show them or draw some pictures of different facial expressions and make sure they understand each expression and the emotion it relates to. For more developed children, you might use a wide range of expressions; for those at earlier stages of development, you might decide just to use two or three (i.e. happy, sad and angry).

Ask the child to draw you pictures of everyone in their family or the people they live with and then explain to the child that each family member needs to have one of the facial expressions. If they say something like 'mummy is sad and happy' ask if they can pick which one she is most like. Some children cannot choose and may decide to draw more than one head. This is OK and still helpful.

What am I looking for?

You are not only looking for which expressions the child draws but their explanation as to why – what is their thought process behind picking a particular face for one person and another face for someone else?

Three Houses (sourced from Community Care)



What resources do I need?

You need three large pieces of paper (A3 or bigger), one for each house, and pens, crayons or pencils.

What do I do?

You, or the child, should draw three houses on each sheet of paper (one house on each piece of paper)

Label the houses:

- House of vulnerabilities (for younger children it could be house of worries or fears)
- House of strengths
- House of hopes and dreams

1. Start inside the houses. Inside the first house, the child or family should write down anything internal that worries them such as self-perceptions, values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. Inside the second house write down anything internal that makes them feel positive and happy.

2. Continue outside the houses. Around the outside of the first two houses the child or family should write anything external that makes them scared or makes them happy and positive such as wider family members, peers, school...

3. For the house of hopes and dreams, you could ask the miracle question – what would life be like if there was a miracle overnight and you woke up in a perfect world?

4. When the drawings are finished, talk about what is needed to address the fears, bolster the strengths and achieve the hopes and dreams. Start with resources available within the family, as this will increase their motivation

Letter Writing Template

Dear

Last weekend I...

This weekend I hope to...

My favourite thing in school this week was...

My least favourite thing was...

I felt happy about...

I didn't feel happy about...

I'm looking forward to...

I would like to ask you...

Look forward to hearing from you soon

From

Making a Memory Box

Making a memory box can be a useful way for a child to record memorable things that happen in their daily life. Items placed in the memory box can then be shared / discussed later with an imprisoned family member. This can help both the child and family member to feel part of each other's lives.

Step 1 – Find a box

Find an empty box. You can decorate this box if you like.



Step 2 – Collect your memories

If something has happened during the day that you want to share with your family member, just pop a reminder in the box. This could be a receipt from something you bought, a joke you heard, a photo of you and your friends, a note or a toy.



Step 3 - Share with family member

When you next have telephone, letter or email contact with your family member then you can look in your memory box to remind you about what you want to share with them.

Supporting children and families affected by a family member's offending – A Practitioner's Guide

A free PDF download of
the Practitioner's Guide
is available from
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Supporting all professionals to work
with offenders' children and their families



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