

**Report of the
Cross Party Group on
Children Affected by
Parental Imprisonment**

2016

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Foreword

Christine Chapman AM

Every child in Wales should be able to enjoy their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), without discrimination. There also needs to be support for the wellbeing of children and young people, so that they can achieve good outcomes, which should be at the heart of policy and practice.

We know that some children and young people face particular barriers to realising their rights and enjoying good wellbeing, because of their circumstances. We recognise the need to provide additional or targeted support to many groups of vulnerable children and young people, particularly those affected by issues such as; caring responsibilities, experience of the care system, disability, or additional learning needs. However, to date, the specific needs of children affected by parental imprisonment have not been robustly considered in policy or practice in Wales.

A number of specialist services have been established by the third sector, often working in partnership with the secure estate to address this issue in Wales. However, there is no official measure of the number of children that are affected, and our understanding of the scale of the issue is based on estimates for Wales and England.

Despite clear evidence that the imprisonment of a parent or close family member can have a direct impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, there has been no specific, national work undertaken to consider this issue in Wales.

The reasons above are what prompted me to establish the Cross Party Group on Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment. We have taken evidence over five thematic evidence sessions; in addition members have visited HMP Parc and, importantly, members have had the opportunity to directly meet children and parents who are affected by imprisonment.

This report makes a number of recommendations and presents the evidence gathered through the work of the Cross Party Group that has informed them. I hope that this report will lead to recognition of the specific needs of children affected by parental imprisonment and to support for policy and practice responses which will meet those needs for children and young people in Wales.

I am pleased that guidance recently issued under Part 11 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, includes provision for

children with a father in the secure estate. Those who have a care or support need are to be referred for an assessment of their own needs. This is a promising development, but there is still much work to be done to ensure that these children can realise their rights and enjoy good wellbeing in the same way as their peers.

Christine Chapman AM (Chair)

February 2016

Cross Party Group on Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Members	Party	Consistency or Region
Christine Chapman (Chair)	Labour	Cynon Valley
Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru	South Wales East
Suzy Davies	Welsh Conservative	South Wales West
Aled Roberts	Welsh Liberal Democrats	North Wales

Secretariat

Laura Tranter	Barnardo's Cymru
Dr Sam Clutton	Barnardo's Cymru
Elaine Speyer	Barnardo's Cymru
Esther Brinkers	Barnardo's Cymru
Tim Ruscoe	Barnardo's Cymru

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, **whatever their family background.**

Article 9 (separation from parents)

States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests. **This includes children separated from their parents because of imprisonment.**

Recommendations

Assessing the level of need:

Processes should be put in place to ensure that services working with offenders, families and children monitor and capture the data on the number of children affected by parental imprisonment.

Local authority population assessments, carried out under Part 2 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, should include an assessment of the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment.

Family support:

Family support policy, programmes and practice should include guidance and training to ensure that the children of offenders are identified, that their needs are understood and that they receive appropriate support for their wellbeing.

Information, advice and assistance services established under Part 2 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 should be promoted in courts and prisons.

Education:

Education policy and practice should include guidance and training to ensure that the children of offenders are identified, that their needs are understood and that they receive appropriate support, as part of wider work to support pupil wellbeing and educational attainment.

Women in prison:

Training and guidance across sectors should support an understanding of the particularly significant impact on the wellbeing of a child when a mother is imprisoned, and provide appropriate support. Measures should be put in place to ensure that children separated from their mothers through imprisonment are able to maintain contact with their parent.

There must be urgent action to further develop community based alternatives to imprisonment for women who are sentenced, and to ensure that the devastating impact on children, of the imprisonment of a mother, is given due weight in sentencing decisions.

Child poverty:

Policy, programmes and practice in relation to tackling poverty should provide targeted support within prisons and the community for children and families affected by imprisonment.

Children affected by parental imprisonment: impact on wellbeing

Children with a parent in prison are¹:

- Twice as likely as other children to experience conduct and mental health problems
- Less likely to do well at school
- More likely to be excluded from school
- More likely to be arrested and imprisoned as young adults
- Three times more likely to be involved in offending activity themselves
- 65% of boys with a convicted father will go on to offend themselves

In 2007 a Ministry of Justice review into children affected by parental imprisonment reported that²:

'It is clear for multiple reasons that children of prisoners are at higher risk than the wider child population and are likely to require extensive support. Parental imprisonment thus presents an opportunity to identify children at risk of poor outcomes and to offer support to mitigate the effects of both parental imprisonment and circumstance.'

How many children in Wales are affected by parental imprisonment?

There is no specific evidence available in relation to the extent and impact of parental imprisonment, on the children of prisoners in Wales. However:

- Data obtained from NOMS (National Offender Management Service) Cymru on predicted numbers of Welsh male prisoners held in Welsh prisons who are fathers, (based upon the assumption that 59% of male prisoners have children under 18³), suggests that the number of children affected by a father's imprisonment in Wales, is in the region of 2000
- Figures obtained from NOMS Cymru estimate that there are approximately 250 women from Wales in English prisons at any one time (there are no female prisons in Wales). Research suggests that up to 55% of women interviewed in prison custody, are mothers of children under the age of 18
- 7% of all children will experience a parent being imprisoned during their school years

Provisions contained in guidance issued under Part 11 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, provide for identification of the children of men in the secure estate in Wales, who are assessed in relation to their care and support needs. The authority, in which the prison is based, will refer children identified in this way to their home authority, so that a consideration of their needs can be made. This will provide some data on affected children that can be locally monitored, but will still not provide us with a picture of the full extent of need. There is a need to develop a system for the identification of children who experience the imprisonment of a parent.

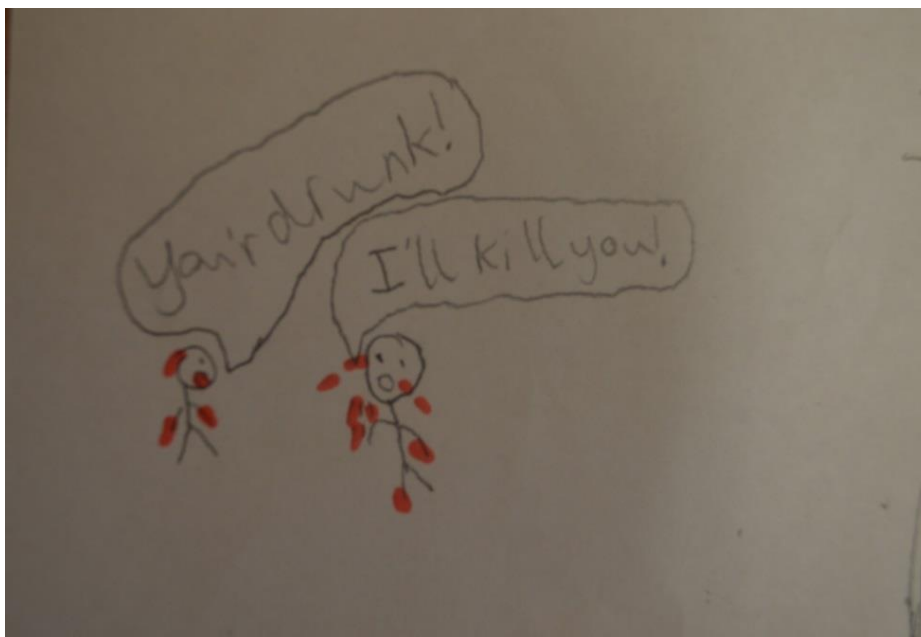
The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 also requires that local authorities and local health boards undertake and publish population assessments, to include the extent of care and support needs in the population, the range and level of care and support services required to meet those needs, and the range of preventative services needed. Children affected by parental imprisonment should be given proper consideration as a distinct group, in need of preventative services and care and support in such population assessments.

Family support

There is clear evidence that the wellbeing of children can be negatively impacted upon by the imprisonment of a parent. Family relationships are placed under strain as a result of the imprisonment of a family member. At the same time, strong and supportive family relationships are associated with a reduction in reoffending.⁴

Offenders and their families are often affected by social and economic deprivation. The parent, who is left coping with supporting the family at home following the incarceration of a partner, is often put under considerable stress. The parent left at home may also struggle with telling children what has happened, and face stigma and isolation in the community. The imprisonment of a parent is a worrying event for a child and can also be traumatic - 84% of children witness their parent being arrested.

Many families will already be in touch with services, but not all will tell mainstream services that a family member is in prison. Parental imprisonment is also likely to be correlated with a range of additional issues including, alcohol and substance misuse and domestic abuse.⁵ Where families are already receiving support, a whole family approach needs to recognise the role of the imprisoned parent in the family and assist at crucial points which have a particular impact on families, such as the points of entry and exit from prison.



There are a number of services in Wales that provide specific support to families affected by parental imprisonment. These services each provided evidence to the Cross Party Group.

Prison Advice and Care Trust - PACT Cymru - family support

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) provides services in prisons and communities across the UK. The organisation delivers a variety of recognised interventions including, visitor centres, catering, prison-based play, family engagement work and volunteering projects.

In Wales PACT Cymru offers support through a number of projects funded by the Big Lottery Wales, in conjunction with the prison service, listed below:

HMP Swansea:

Family engagement workers provide family casework support to men at HMP Swansea and their families. They also run interventions such as parenting courses, relationship courses, family days and baby groups.

HMP Cardiff:

Casework is undertaken with prisoners and families through three full-time family engagement workers. They provide interventions such as family days, literacy projects, relationships courses and baby groups. They also run a PACT lunch service in the prison visiting hall, which ensures that families are able to eat and drink together at every visit.

HMP Usk & Prescoed:

PACT have a family engagement worker who works across both Usk and Prescoed prisons, providing casework, information, advice and drop-in sessions for prisoners and families, as well as running family days and other interventions.

Invisible Walls Wales

HMP Parc:

Invisible Walls Wales is a Big Lottery funded project delivered through a partnership led by G4S, HMP Parc and Barnardo's Cymru. The project seeks to integrate the support and interventions offered to specific men in custody. This is delivered through the prison's family intervention work with support, treatment and advice to the whole family. The range of services is tailored to individual families and includes; parenting programmes, individual support for family members, support for prison visits, support for integration of prisoners back into their families and communities, and advocacy work on behalf of families, so that they can get support from mainstream services. Barnardo's Cymru also provides family support workers in the HMP Parc Visitor Centre, to provide information, advice and assistance to children and families visiting a family member in prison.

Barnardo's Cymru Community Support for Offenders' Families service (CSOF) – family support

Children affected by parental imprisonment are a priority group for support for Barnardo's across the UK and services are provided in the secure estate and community in a number of areas. Originally part of a pilot project jointly funded Barnardo's and NOMS, CSOF services were offered in three locations including South Wales. Current service provision covers the areas of South East Wales, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot. The service now operates as a Barnardo's voluntary funded service, to support professionals working with children and families who are impacted by a family member's imprisonment or offending. The service provides family support to affected families and consultancy/advice to professionals and agencies who are working with children and families, to enable them to manage the emotional and practical difficulties that arise when a family member becomes involved in the criminal justice system.

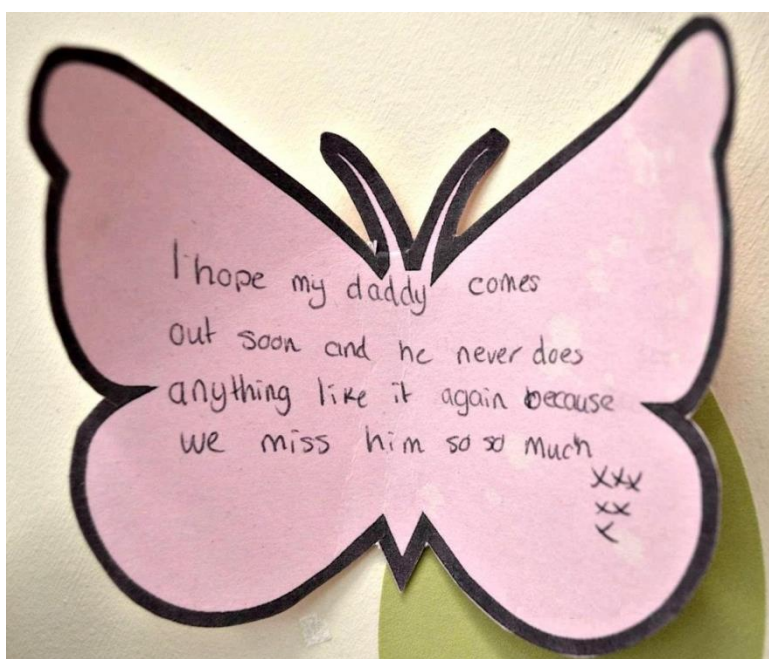
From April 1st 2016 the remit of the service will change. The first phase of the CSOF work has involved direct service provision in addition to training and consultancy to mainstream services. The second phase of the CSOF work will focus on the provision of

training, consultancy and capacity building work across family support, education and the criminal justice system.

Each of these services provided evidence to the Cross Party Group on the specific practical and emotional support needs of the families they work with. There was evidence that families struggle to get the information, advice and assistance they need, to support their children through the experience of parental imprisonment. Concerns were also raised during the evidence session that provisions would need to be made to ensure that consideration is given to the development of 'through the gates' family support services, in the new North Wales prison in Wrexham, due to open in 2017.

The organisations who provided evidence have also been working to support a better understanding of the needs of children and families affected by imprisonment, and to facilitate appropriate responses from mainstream services and community based family support programmes. The evidence suggests that more work is needed, to assist mainstream community based services in identifying families affected by imprisonment, in fully understanding the impact of imprisonment on families, and in equipping services to provide appropriate support so that families, and in particular children are adequately supported.

The UNCRC sets out that parents should be provided with support, to fulfil their parenting role (article 18); this right should be delivered without discrimination (article 2). Policies and programmes should recognise children affected by parental imprisonment as a distinct vulnerable group and should offer guidance on practice to support their wellbeing.



Education

Research has shown that parental imprisonment has a direct impact on children's academic attainment, socio-economic development and behaviour and that this can lead to higher rates of school exclusion or truancy.⁶ The stigma of having a family member in prison can mean that the partner in the community is reluctant to let a school know about a change in family circumstances, at a time when children and young people are coming to terms with the loss of a parent at home.

The prevalence of issues such as poverty, substance misuse, domestic abuse and risk of offending, can also mean that children are already coping with circumstances that have a negative impact on educational experiences and outcomes. These disadvantages are compounded when a parent goes into prison. Children and young people may not feel that they are able to disclose to a teacher what has happened at home, or may have been told not to talk about it. This leaves them coping with difficult emotions related to their family circumstances without additional support in school.

Children who attended the final evidence session of the Cross Party Group recorded their experiences about being in school and having a parent in prison:

'School needs to know. Then they know that means your Dad can't pick you up from school'

'I told the teacher myself that my mum was in prison. She didn't say anything, but now I have a journal in school about how I'm feeling'

'My friends say nasty things about my dad'

'Because no other of my friends' dad is in prison, I feel left out'

'My school doesn't know'

The Annual Report of the Children's Commissioner for Wales in 2013-14⁷ highlights the importance of supporting pupil wellbeing:

The evidence that has been presented to me suggests that by failing to address learner wellbeing, we will fail to support some of our most disadvantaged children to attain the grades they are capable of.

(Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2014)

There is strong evidence from Estyn,⁸ that supporting pupil wellbeing has a direct impact on the capacity for children and young people, to realise their potential and educational attainment. Schools and other education settings need to be equipped, to identify children affected by parental imprisonment, to have in place processes to support affected children and young people in identifying themselves, and to have support in places that recognises the impact of parental imprisonment on pupil wellbeing and educational engagement.

Effective schools in challenging circumstances understand the relationship between wellbeing and standards and often restructure their pastoral care system to deal more directly with the specific needs of disadvantaged learners.

(Estyn, 2012)

Families may also need support to help them with letting school know what is happening at home. The partner, who is left in the community, may feel embarrassed and anxious about letting teachers and the school know what has happened. The Cross Party Group heard that PACT Cymru and the Barnardo's Cymru CSOF service support families in approaching schools, to tell them that a pupil's parent is in prison.

The children who gave evidence to the Cross Party Group identified the important role that schools can play in providing support when they are aware that a child or young person has a parent or family member in prison.

'Speaking to the teacher about my dad makes me feel better'

'The support that the teacher and school has given me has made me very happy and deal with it better'

'The teachers and staff are always there for me'

'My mum told my teachers; they said 'Are you ok? Don't worry about anything we are there for you''

It is clear that, where schools and teachers are aware of the issues and can identify affected pupils, they can be an important source of support for children and young people. In turn, support for their wellbeing will improve the prospects for these children to access an education which allows them to achieve their full potential in line with the UNCRC (article 29). Poor educational experiences and outcomes are associated with an increased risk of offending behaviour. Evidence suggests that 42% of the adult prison population were excluded from school, 59% were regularly truant and 47% have no qualifications.⁹

The Cross Party Group evidence session on education included evidence on a number of examples of good practice. They include: work to engage fathers in prison directly in their children's education, as well as examples of work in schools, to ensure that education settings are equipped to identify and support affected children and young people.

It is essential that policy and practice guidance supports a consistently good offer, to support the wellbeing of children affected by parental imprisonment in every education setting across Wales.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Attendance and Wellbeing Service

Vulnerability profiling was developed in 2012 by the attendance and wellbeing service. This serves as a means of early identification of those children and young people at risk of disengaging from learning, as a result of barriers they face outside of the school environment. It utilises a range of data held by the local authority of known factors that are deemed to increase the risk of disengagement. Work is on-going to build the necessary data sets to cover factors known to contribute to disengagement. But where official data sets are not available, including children affected by parental imprisonment, the profiling is used to identify children and young people who may require additional wellbeing support, in order to engage and achieve educationally.

As part of work to support the wellbeing of disadvantaged learners, the service has purchased from Barnardo's Cymru the guide, *'Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member: A handbook for schools and developing practice'* for all 131 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. They have also signed the Invisible Walls Accord and provided training via the accord and Barnardo's Cymru CSOF service to staff across education settings.

'Whilst increasing levels of wellbeing for all children is a priority, we have placed particular focus on narrowing the gap for children and young people who face specific barriers to attending school and getting engaged in learning. Children affected by parental imprisonment are included in this action plan. We feel it is important to recognise these children as particularly vulnerable and the plan raises the profile of their needs across services and schools.'

Zoe Lancelott, Head of Engagement and Participation, Rhondda Cynon Taf

Invisible Walls Accord, HMP Parc

The Invisible Walls Accord is part of a Big Lottery funded project, and has the specific aim for each school to actively participate in the process of offering support and guidance to pupils who have a parent or close relative in prison.

Head teachers are being asked to sign the Invisible Walls Accord and to identify a single point of contact (SPOC) within their school, who can be supported by the Invisible Walls Wales team at HMP Parc. The team will provide the SPOC with information and resources, to assist in the identification of, and support for affected children and young people. SPOCs are offered a quarterly event at the prison where they can go through the visiting experience, ask questions and get information on the impact of the imprisonment of a family member on children and young people. The SPOC becomes a person that affected children can turn to for advice and support within the school.

As part of the family interventions work undertaken at HMP Parc, there is a focus on family learning and the engagement of fathers in prison, in the education of their children. This includes a homework club in the prison, where fathers can help their children with homework, as well as parents' evenings which allow for teachers, children and mothers to come into the prison, so that fathers can be included in discussions about their child's educational progress. In partnership with Bridgend Local Authority 'number and play' and 'language and play' sessions are also provided in the prison for younger children.

The Cross Party Group heard that the opportunities offered in prison, provide some fathers with the first experience of engaging in their child's education and that this supports engagement once a parent is back in the community upon release.

'I have seen a marked difference in him (dad) and mum is happier too. They now do a lot as a family, they both come to school to support (daughter) together, everything just seems more positive. I think a big part of the change has been down to whatever intervention they have been receiving.'

School Teacher

Barnardo's Cymru Community Support for Offenders' Families Service (CSOF) – Work with schools

The CSOF Service includes a support offer in relation to schools, providing advice and consultation to them, supporting families in working with schools and keeping them informed of home circumstances, as well as taking referrals from schools, in relation to affected children. The overall aim is to support strong home-school links and to reduce stigma for affected children and young people and their families.

The service provides support to schools in understanding and responding to children and young people through provision of the Barnardo's Cymru handbook, 'Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member: A handbook for schools and developing practice' and provides Hidden Sentence training to support implementation.



Women in prison - the impact of having a mother in prison

Mothers are more likely than fathers to be the main or sole childcare provider in a family. As a result, the impact of the imprisonment of a mother, on the care and living arrangements for a child, is likely to be greater. Research suggests that when a mother is sentenced, only 5% of children remain in their own home.¹⁰

Women from Wales who are sentenced to custody serve their sentence in prisons in England, as there is no female custodial establishment in Wales. Figures obtained from NOMS Cymru, estimate that approximately 250 women from Wales are in English prisons at any one time, those serving longer sentences are held further afield from Wales. Therefore the impact on children and families is increasingly significant by virtue of distance, with long travelling to visit, and accessing Wales based services a challenge.

Research suggests that up to 55% of women interviewed in prison custody, are mothers of children under the age of 18. Only 9% of children, whose mothers are imprisoned, are then cared for by their fathers; 12% are taken into care and the remainder will stay with family members or friends. Half of women who had lived, or were in contact with their children prior to imprisonment, had not received a visit since going to prison and at least 20% of mothers in prison are lone parents compared to 9% of the general population.¹¹ There is also evidence that women in prison are more likely to have a complex set of additional problems, related to experiences of abuse, violence, alcohol and substance misuse and mental health difficulties.¹²

The Cross Party Group took evidence based on research from Robert Jones of the Wales Governance Centre at the University of South Wales, about the considerable impact of the distance that families have to travel to visit women in prison, because they are placed in the secure estate in England. The cost and the distance that needs to be travelled in order to visit a mother in prison, has an impact on the level of contact that children can have with their mothers once they are imprisoned. Robert Jones also set out evidence on similar difficulties for families from North Wales in visiting fathers in the secure estate in England.

Evidence gathered through focus groups by the 'Visiting Mum' project that is provided by PACT and Sova, identified distance from

home and costs of travel as well as the lack of an appropriate adult to accompany a child to visit their mother in prison, as the two main barriers to parental contact.

It is clear that the imprisonment of a mother may have a particularly damaging impact on children. There are very real practical barriers to sustaining regular contact between children and mothers from Wales, who are sent to prison in England. The barriers to contact come at a point in the child's life when they are likely to have experienced a change in their main caregiver and living arrangements.

The Cross Party Group does not believe that the answer to this problem is to provide secure facilities for women in Wales. Robert Jones of the Wales Governance Centre told the Cross Party Group that for England and Wales combined, the number of women in prison has decreased by 8.4% from May 2012 to December 2014. However, for Wales alone, the number of women in prison increased by 6.2% over the same period (between May 2012 and December 2014). There must be urgent action to further develop community based alternatives to imprisonment for women who are sentenced. Steps need to be taken to ensure that the devastating impact on children, of the imprisonment of their mother is given due weight in sentencing decisions.

The Cross Party Group also heard evidence about the good practice that is already being delivered to support women in the criminal justice system and to ensure that children can enjoy their right to contact with their parents under the UNCRC (article 9) – even though their mother is placed outside Wales. Policy and practice guidance and training should alert mainstream and community support services, to the particular impact that the imprisonment of a mother can have on a child and equip them to support children through the experience of being the child of a mother in prison.

Women's Pathfinder- Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru

Integrated Offender Management Cymru (IOM) is a pan Wales strategic partnership, led by Wales Probation and ACPO Cymru. It was developed in recognition of the need to coordinate strategic and operational activity of criminal and social justice partners. The governance structure specifically focuses on reducing crime through reducing reoffending. The IOM Cymru Board has also developed the Wales Reducing Reoffending Strategy – the first national strategy in the UK on behalf of the All Wales Criminal Justice Board.

The delivery plan under the strategy includes a pathway specifically for children, young people and families of offenders with associated actions. The women offender pathfinder includes measures to develop and implement effective services, aimed at enabling female prisoners and offenders to maintain links with their children and families.

The overall aim is to design and deliver a women-specific, whole system, integrated approach to managing women who come into contact with the criminal justice system in Wales. The women offender pathway has been working with local community support partners and the third sector, including the Barnardo's Cymru CSOF Service to provide training, resources and consultation to mainstream services, so that they can better identify, recognise and respond to the needs affected children.

Visiting Mum Project - PACT and Sova

The innovative 'Visiting Mum' project is a Big Lottery funded project delivered in partnership by PACT and Sova. The project aims to respond to the high levels of need among the female prison population and to support contact with children and families.

The project provides first night in custody support, a kinship care service at HMP Holloway and family engagement workers to support contact for women in prison with their children and families.

The project is specifically supporting children from South Wales to keep in touch with their mothers at HMP Eastwood Park. Sova provide volunteers to support project delivery and make visiting mothers a reality for children and young people.

Child poverty and children affected by parental imprisonment

The imprisonment of a family member is associated with a range of predominately negative consequences for prisoners' families. In addition to the emotional strain, social stigma and practical challenges of the imprisonment of a family member, considerable economic hardship is a common experience for affected families.¹³

A study published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁴ found that:

- Prisoners' families were vulnerable to financial instability, poverty, debt and potential housing disruption following the imprisonment of a family member
- Families subsidised the imprisonment by sending prisoners money, clothing and electronic goods
- Disadvantage associated with imprisonment included, high rates of depression, physical illness and housing disruption
- Prisoners' partners and mothers prioritised the care needs of children above household income
- Barriers to employment were magnified for those caring for prisoners' children.

Criminal justice and social welfare policy combine to impoverish, disadvantage and exclude prisoners' families and their children in particular.

(Smith et al, JRF, 2007)

PACT Cymru presented evidence to the Cross Party Group on the financial situation of prisoners, before and during imprisonment:

- Finance is second only to accommodation in importance to prisoners, with three quarters reporting it to be a significant concern
- Only a third of prisoners report having a paid job within the four weeks leading up to prison
- 13% of people in prison report never having had a job
- A full-time working prisoner can earn on average £12.50 a week in prison (part time £7.50)
- Calls cost 23.5 per minute to a mobile and 8.4 per minute to a landline
- Only 12% of employers have employed someone with a criminal record in the last three years and one in five say they wouldn't consider it
- Four in five former prisoners say their conviction makes it harder to get insurance, and it costs them more, impacting mainly on mortgages and self-employment
- Prisoners and their families may accumulate debt during the prison sentence

Barnardo's Cymru gave evidence on the impact of a prison sentence in terms of additional costs for families suggesting that:

- It is conservatively estimated that the cost to a family of having someone in prison (visiting, sending money etc.) is £200 per month
- The average distance each way a family has to travel in order to visit an imprisoned family member is 60 miles

Case studies: Citizens Advice Cymru

Evidence provided to the Cross Party Group as part of the session on poverty, also included a number of case studies which highlight the severe financial strain that many families find themselves under.

Client has a young family (three children aged 3 and under) and her husband has recently been sent to prison (for a minimum of 6 months). The bank froze assets in a joint bank account when the client informed them her husband was in prison. She was eventually able to access wages and child benefit, but not money from working or child tax credits as the award letter was in both their names. The bank will not accept his authorisation in writing to release monies/close the account until they have spoken to him, which is not possible. The family are suffering financial hardship as a result.

Client is currently living at a hostel and his ex-partner is in prison (for an undefined period). Initially both their children were taken into care, but they are now living with him. He is claiming ESA, but both child benefit and child tax credits are still being paid to his ex-partner. He would like to claim both benefits to help him look after his children. He is also still paying £40 per month child support to his ex-partner. He has contacted both the Child Support Agency and DWP, but has received no assistance to date. He sought help from Citizens Advice, as he was struggling on very little money, hadn't eaten properly for some time and was in need of a food voucher.

Client is looking after her four grandchildren while her daughter is in prison. Her daughter was previously in receipt of income support which has now been stopped. Client has a long-term health condition and is on benefits herself. She is also affected by the under-occupancy charge (2 spare rooms), and is still having to contribute to her rent costs even though her grandchildren have now been staying with her for 8 weeks. The delays in sorting out her benefit entitlements, given the change of circumstances, are causing her (and the children) severe financial hardship. She has to rely on food

These case studies illustrate the level and depth of financial hardship associated with prisoners and their families. In addition to this, is the extra cost of supporting and visiting a family member in prison.

There is strong evidence that families affected by imprisonment are economically disadvantaged in a number of ways, before, during and following a prison sentence. It is apparent that children affected by parental imprisonment are at particular risk of experiencing child poverty. Child poverty impacts on the degree to which children are able to realise their rights and enjoy good wellbeing outcomes. Poverty policies, programmes and practice should recognise the needs of children and families affected by parental imprisonment and provide targeted support within prisons and the community, to ensure that children affected by parental imprisonment, are able to realise their right to an adequate standard of living under the UNCRC (article 27).

**PACT Cymru,
HMP Swansea, HMP Cardiff,
HMP Usk and Prescoed**

As part of their wider family support work in prisons and the community, PACT Cymru recognise the need to offer support in response to the financial impact of imprisonment. Their 'Building Stronger Families' programme is a 6-day course that is effective at strengthening prisoners' relationships with their partners; reducing the risk of couples breaking up. As part of this programme the financial strain, that requests for financial support from fathers in prison, have upon their partners in the community are explored which works to enable fathers inside to have a realistic view of the financial position at home.

'I had no idea how much it was costing my partner to pay the bills out there. Now I do, I won't be asking her where she has spent the money'

'I'm going to think twice before I ask her to send in £20 for me to spend on canteen'

PACT Cymru also support families, with information and advice on the 'Assisted Prison Visits' scheme, through which visitors on benefits can claim back the cost of up to one visit a fortnight retrospectively and on wider financial problems at home.

Citizens Advice Cymru

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice is a UK organisation which provides advice on a wide range of financial and service issues. In Wales, Citizens Advice Cymru has a network of 19 local Citizens Advice services – all individual charities, delivering advice from over 375 community locations.

As part of this work, Citizens Advice has provided 'Financial Capability' programmes in a number of prisons in Wales, through sessions and workshops. Citizens Advice also run advice sessions in prisons. They have identified a number of lessons from practice:

- The need for more proactive advice/financial capability support for affected families and prisoners on entry into prison as well as pre-release (to ensure debts/other financial responsibilities are dealt with)
- The need to raise awareness of wider advice/support available for families to help them cope with the significant change of circumstances
- The need for an approach that accommodates the potential challenges of delivering advice in prison environments

Barnardo's Cymru - Family Work, Susan Ellis Family Visitor Centre HMP & YOI Parc

Barnardo's Cymru family workers carry out direct and indirect work that supports children and families in the visitor centre. The service is developing innovative ways of working in partnership with services from the community that support children and families using the visitor centre. They provide support to parents and children through the visiting process, offering emotional and practical support, as well as advice and support to parents and children on presenting issues; they also signpost and refer parents to relevant community support services.

As part of this work, the family workers provide support with an Assisted Visiting Scheme, signpost to community support on financial issues and provide access to Healthy Start vouchers. Family workers also advocate on behalf of families, in accessing support with more complex issues such as, house repossession and the threat of eviction because of rent arrears or bedroom tax issues. Work is also undertaken to provide direct practical support to families who are struggling financially, through for example, a children's clothing 'Swap Shop', which provides good quality second hand clothes for children in the visitor centre.

Session with children and parents affected by imprisonment

The primary aim of this session was to provide an opportunity for discussion, conversation and debate directly between children and their families, with decision and policy makers. Four families attended the meeting; four children attended without a parent and seven children from two families attended with their parents. The children and families were supported by Barnard's Cymru CAPI (children affected by parental imprisonment) service staff and there was a break away room for children. The session was held in the Pierhead Building.

Children told us:

About the importance of school knowing that they had a parent in prison and the support that teachers and schools could provide them.

'The teachers always care for me and they are there for me and support me all the way though'

They also told us about the difficulties when school doesn't know what is happening at home, and how sad they feel in school sometimes, because of worrying about their family or missing their mother or father.

The support of extended family members was identified as important – especially for children with a mother in prison.

Children were clear about the extra hard work the parent who was at home with them had to do to keep the family going.

'On my birthday my mum acts like a Dad and Mum at the same time'

They told us about other children in school sometimes calling them names, or bullying them because they have a parent in prison. Children also said they had some friends in school who were really supportive and looked after them when they were upset.

'We feel on our own, because lots of our friends don't have dads in prison'

'They can say nasty things'

'My best friend makes me happy and cheers me up when I cry'

Children talked about the support they get from family workers and the activities they enjoy taking part in at the prison.

Family visits and homework clubs at HMP Parc were important to the children, so that they could spend quality time with their fathers. Phone calls were also really important for them, so that they could tell their fathers what was happening in school and what they were doing.

'I like the homework clubs, so my Dad knows what we are doing in school'

(Family days at the prison) 'The best visit ever and it would be really nice if it was three hours instead of two'

Parents told us:

One parent was worried about their children missing time off school to visit their father in prison. Another spoke about how supportive the school had been to her children, and helping to make sure that time off for visits wouldn't affect their ability to get through school work.

They were clear that for their children, contact with their father in prison, over the phone, or through visits is very important.

Mothers talked about the difficulties of discussing adult issues, such as financial problems, housing issues, or family news with their partners in prison in front of children during visits. The difficulties of conducting conversations of this kind, over short telephone conversations were also identified. They would welcome the possibility of contact through Skype, so that difficult issues could be discussed without children hearing.

Meetings of the Cross Party Group

May 13th 2014 - Inaugural Meeting - Family Support

Christine Chapman AM – Chair

Corin Morgan-Armstrong

Head of Family Interventions and Invisible Walls Wales,
HMP Parc

Jo Mulcahy

Head of Services Wales and South West, PACT

Laura Tranter

Strategic Service Manager, Children Affected by Parental
Imprisonment, Barnardo's Cymru

October 22nd 2014 - Education, Wellbeing and Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Christine Chapman AM – Chair

**Education, Wellbeing and Children Affected by Parental
Imprisonment**

Dr. Sam Clutton

Assistant Director, Policy, Barnardo's Cymru

Invisible Walls Accord: Working with schools

Corin Morgan-Armstrong

Head of Family Interventions and Invisible Walls Wales,
HMP Parc

**Implementing a Local Education Authority approach to
supporting CAPI in education**

Zoe Lancelott

Head of Engagement and Participation, Rhondda Cynon Taff

**Barnardo's Cymru Handbook for Schools and CSOF work
with Education**

Emma Reed

Project Worker, Barnardo's Cymru CSOF service

March 10th 2015 - Women Prisoners

Christine Chapman AM - Chair

Messages from Research

Robert Jones, Research Associate, Wales Governance Centre
University of South Wales

Visiting Mum Project

Jo Mulcahy, PACT Regional Head of Services

Women's Pathway Project

Wendy Hyett, IOM Cymru Women's Pathfinder Project
Manager

July 7th 2015 - Child Poverty and Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Christine Chapman AM – Chair

The National Context

Dr Sam Clutton, Barnardo's Cymru Assistant Director for
Policy

Family work in HMP and YOI Parc visitor centre

Helen Steele, Barnardo's Cymru Visitor centre worker

Prison, Families and Poverty

Jo Mulcahy, PACT Regional Head of Service

Prison, Families and Poverty

Lyndsey Kearton, Policy Officer, Citizens Advice

July 9th 2015 - Visit to HMP Parc by:

Suzy Davies AM

Aled Roberts AM

Jackie Radford AM Support Staff to Aled Roberts

Visit included the visitor centre, visits hall, the family intervention wing hosted by Corin Morgan-Armstrong, G4S.

November 24th 2015 – Children and Family Roundtable

Christine Chapman AM – Chair

Direct contact, conversation and discussion between children, their families and policy and decision makers.

Attendees at sessions of the Cross Party Working Group

Members

Christine Chapman AM (Chair)

Aled Roberts AM

Jocelyn Davies AM

Suzy Davies AM

Julie Morgan AM

Janet Haworth AM

Mike Hedges AM

Delegates:

Barbara Natasegara	(Safer Wales)
Ben Ford	(Write to Freedom)
Bernie Bowen Thomson	(Safer Wales)
Beverley Poitner	(FFOPS)
Caroline Ryan	(Cardiff YMCA)
Carol Floris	(SOVA)
Catherine Davies	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Charlie Cable	(SOVA)
Chris Powles	(Pembrokeshire Youth)
Christine Mathias	(Pembrokeshire LA)
Corin Morgan-Armstrong	(HMP Parc)
Danielle Rayner	(IOM)
Elaine Speyer	(Barnardo's Cymru Minutes)
Emma Jones	(Gibran)
Emma Reed	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Emma Wools	(Probation)
Emma Richards	(Wales CRC)
Eve Exely	(Cardiff University)
Eve Wilmott	(MA Student)
Gareth Williams	(Cardiff YMCA)
Gemma Jones	(Women's Aid)
Helen Steele	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Ingrid Zammit	(NOMS)
Jack Stanley	(Peter Hain's Office)
Jessica Joyce	(Cardiff University)
Jo Mulcahy	(PACT)
Joanne Heatley	(The Wallich)
Jocelyn Davies staff	

Justine Jenkins	(St Giles Trust)
Karen Rees	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Kate Doyle	(SOVA)
Laura O'Keefe	(VCS Cardiff)
Laura Tranter	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Lee Dutton	(St Giles Trust)
Leeanne Plechowicz	(Welsh Government)
Leon Morgans	(Wales CRC/Probation)
Lindsey Pudge	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Lindsey Kearton	(Citizens Advice)
Lyndon Samuel	(Gwent Police)
Margaret Gardner	(FASO)
Mary Cooke	(Invisible Walls Wales)
Mary Van den Heuvel	(ATL)
Nicky Sturgess-Webb	(Vale of Glamorgan LA)
Nicola Thomas	(Invisible Walls Wales)
Neera Sharma	(Barnardo's)
Rachel Thomas	(Children's Commissioner for Wales)
Robert Jones	(University of South Wales/Wales Governance Centre)
Robin Lewis	(AM Support staff)
Sam Clutton	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Sara Steele	(VCS Cardiff)
Shamshi Ahmed	(SOVA)
Sian Mile	(AM Support Staff)
Sian Thomas	(NAfW MRS)
Tim Ruscoe	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Tony Kirk	(NOMS)
Trish Woodhouse	(PACT)
Vicki Evans	(AM Support Staff)
Wendy Hyett	(IOM Women's Pathfinder Project)
Yvonne Rodgers	(Barnardo's Cymru)
Zoe Lancelott	(RCT Education)

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⁴ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*: MoJ Analytical Series, London: Ministry of Justice

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¹⁴ Rose Smith et al, (2007), *Poverty and disadvantage among prisoners' families*, York: JRF