

THE



FAMILIES AFFECTED BY

IMPRISONMENT

Welcome ...

... to the third edition of the Families Affected By Imprisonment Newsletter. This newsletter has been instrumental in raising awareness of the specific issues and needs of the children and families of North Wales affected by the imprisonment of a family member. Thank you to all the newsletters' contributors to date and if you wish to include an article in future editions about the work you do to support these children and families, or the research you have undertaken, please do get in touch.

HMPPS's new 'Families and Significant Others' Strategy to Highlight North Wales FABI Programme as Good Practice

The first edition of this newsletter reported on the 'Lord Farmer Review' which says that family ties should be seen as an important 'golden thread' running through criminal justice. Strong, safe and supportive relationships between offenders and their families can help make people less likely to reoffend, and can help to reduce the potential impact of imprisonment on the children of offenders.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales are learning from the findings of the Review and developing a '**Families and Significant Others Strategy**' – this Strategy will explain why family relationships are so important and will make a clear offer to offenders and their families about what they can expect. The Strategy will cover Public Sector Prisons in Wales (including HMP Berwyn) and the National Probation Service in Wales, including Approved Premises.

The Strategy is still being developed and HMPPS are working with offenders, families and partners including Welsh Government, Pact, Barnardos and G4S to ensure it delivers a meaningful offer to offenders and their families. The work is being led by Meinir Edwards and James Searle, and James attended the July meeting of the FABI Programme Steering Group to update members on how things were going. The Strategy will highlight the North Wales FABI Programme as an example of good practice.

For more information, please email: james.searle@noms.gsi.gov.uk, or watch this space for further updates!

This article was written by James Searle, Public Sector Prisons Development Lead, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales

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This newsletter has been prepared on behalf of the

North Wales Safer Communities Board, Area Planning Board & HMP Berwyn.



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board



North Wales Local Authorities

'Walk in a Child's Footsteps' at HMP Berwyn

On 3 July, officers - including Heads of Service - from the Education and Children Services Departments of North Wales local authorities had the opportunity to 'walk in a child's footsteps' through 'Visits' at HMP Berwyn. The visit was organised by the North Wales FABI Programme Team in partnership with HMP Berwyn and Pact and was hosted by the Deputy Project Director, Nick Dann and Sara Kettle, FABI Regional Programme Manager.

Sandra Edwards from Pact, HMP Berwyn's visits provider, led officers into the Visits Hall where a discussion was had about visits procedures, the impact on children and families and the contact that Pact have into the community. Officers also saw the prison's library and college and heard first-hand from three men on the 'Families First' Unit about the impact that their imprisonment had on their children and how they have improved their relationships with them whilst at the prison.

The visit was also supported by Detective Chief Inspector Helen Douglas (NW Police Lead for the ACE Early Action Together Programme), Sian Griffiths (Education Lead from the Wales ACE Support Hub), Catherine Pritchard (FABI Programme Officer), Emma Baines and Jamie Warr from Flintshire County Council and Norah Keller and Stephen Morley from HMP Berwyn.

"I recently attended a visit to Berwyn HMP as part of the 'Families Affected by Imprisonment Programme' and was enlightened by the work undertaken to support families and especially children. The imprisonment of a family member can have a significant impact on children's wellbeing but the work of the FABI programme addresses this in a very innovative and proactive way. A highlight of the visit was hearing the first hand experiences from three of the men on the Families First Unit, this certainly emphasised the value of this important field of work for all concerned. We will certainly be engaging with this programme as we see huge benefits to the families, especially the children affected, that will contribute positively to their future development."

Geraint Davies,
Principal Education Support Manager,
Denbighshire County Council

"This was a great opportunity to meet our partners in education and children's services across North Wales and talk about our hopes and ambitions to improve the lives of families in the region. I genuinely believe that working together we can make a real difference to the children, families, parents and grandparents of the men we care for. It has always been my hope that working together we can start thinking about how we can stop future inter-generational offending in North Wales and this meeting is where it began."

Nick Dann, Deputy Project Director,
HMP Berwyn



"The visit to Berwyn was beneficial and allowed officers from Anglesey County Council to have an insight into the needs of the prisoners and their families. By listening to the men during the visit it became clear that they had good supporting networks within the prison. I was particularly interested in the concept of the family wing where prisoners who have a focus on families are housed together. It was good to see that it was further supported by courses which supported their bond with the family back home."

This highlighted that we, as a service, need to provide information and advice for families affected by imprisonment and complete the circle of support that is evident for the men in Berwyn but not necessarily available for their families at the moment."

The importance of family life and continuing the bond between the parent in prison and their children (when it is safe to do so) cannot be underestimated. In the future, we hope to support families affected by imprisonment by, firstly, contacting all families affected by imprisonment in Anglesey and supplying a leaflet explaining where to find advice and information, if it's required and secondly, establishing a support group on the island that will be community-led. Identifying and measuring the need is an important initial step and we hope that our relationship with HMP Berwyn and other prisons can be strengthened to support this goal in the near future."

Llyr ap Rhisiart, Service Manager,
Early Intervention and Prevention Services,
Anglesey County Council and Cerys Kellet, Denu Talent Officer.

Flintshire Teachers Spearheading FABI Work to Support Children

Following 'Hidden Sentence' training delivered by Barnardo's Cymru, over 30 staff from across Flintshire have pledged to become a Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) for children and their families affected by imprisonment. The training was impactful and wide-reaching and head teachers, teachers and support staff from a number of settings including primary and secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units now report that they feel confident and equipped to better support this often hidden group.

SPOCs have been using resources recommended on the training, but they have also been creating resources such as books and worksheets to support children before, during and after visiting parents in prison. Families have been signposted to agencies including NICCO, PACT and Family Lives and information posters have been placed on school notice boards, twitter and school websites.

A teacher support group has been set up – **Flintshire Families Affected By Imprisonment (FFABI) Support Group** – to bring staff together to share ideas, resources, current research etc. The group's first meeting was well attended and included presentations by Kevin Kenealy

and Paul Handley from the Family Intervention Unit at HMP Altcourse, Fazakerley who talked about their work to strengthen links between the men and their families. The meeting was also attended by Sara Kettle and Catherine Pritchard, officers for the FABI regional programme who discussed the origins, make up and focus of the regional programme, part of the work of the North Wales Safer Communities Board and Substance Misuse Area Planning Board, and linked to HMP Berwyn.

Moving forward, ideas in the pipeline include further prison visits, establishment of school/prison partnerships and collaborative working in order to better identify and support children affected by imprisonment at both a County and school level. Contact Emma Baines at Flintshire County Council for more information on: Emma.Baines@flintshire.gov.uk Otherwise, please get in touch with the regional team if you are a school/work with a school that would like to support children in the school environment who have a family member in prison.

This article has been provided by Emma Baines, Lifelong Learning Department, Flintshire County Council.

ACE Update- Meet the North Wales Early Action Together (EAT) Team

Previous editions of this newsletter have highlighted the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Programme and 'parental incarceration' as an ACE. The 'Early Action Together (EAT) Programme-Tackling ACEs and Building Resilience' has been developed as a collaborative approach between Public Health Wales (PHW), the four Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), four Police Forces across Wales and key partners to transform cross-organisational practice to vulnerability in Wales to a multi-agency, ACE informed approach that enables early intervention and root cause prevention.

This programme builds on the research carried out by PHW which found 47% of adults living in Wales (aged 18-69 years) have experienced more than one ACE while 14% had experienced four or more ACEs (before the age of 18). This included 23% who had experienced verbal abuse; 17% who had experienced physical abuse; 10% who had experienced sexual abuse. Within the household, 20% had experienced parental separation; 16% had been exposed to domestic violence; 14% to mental illness; 14% lived in a household affected by alcohol abuse and 5% by drug use; 5% grew up in a household where someone was incarcerated.



The North Wales team for implementing the programme in North Wales are now in place and are working closely with the FABI team given that 'parental incarceration' is a key ACE factor.

You can get further information on the programme by contacting the team's Business Support Officer- sara.worland@nthwales.pnn.police.uk

Photo: The North Wales FABI Programme Team with the North Wales Early Action Together Team: Detective Chief Inspector Helen Douglas (Police Lead) and Vicky Jones (Partnership Lead)

This article was provided by Detective Chief Inspector Helen Douglas, North Wales Police Lead and Vicky Jones, North Wales Partnership Lead - from the North Wales Early Action Together Programme.

FABI Consultation Findings from North Wales



Action for Children Family Help Centre & Help Hub, HMP Grampian



During May and June, the FABI Programme Team carried out a regional consultation exercise with organisations that work with North Wales' children and families, including those in the criminal justice system. The aim of the work was to further understand the North Wales landscape, specifically what the region is doing to support children and families affected by imprisonment and what can be done in the future to provide earlier intervention and more targeted support.

The key findings are as follows:

- 86% of respondents have contact with children and/or families who have a family member in prison;
- only a limited number of respondents record the numbers of children who have a parent in prison, however, of those that are not recording any information on children affected by parental imprisonment, the majority felt that this would be something that they could do in the future;
- 72% provide support to these children and/or families, however, much of this is as a result of other support requirements, rather than targeted to this particular need;
- 100% are aware that 'Parental Incarceration' is an ACE and 75% would like more information about this; and
- 69% would be interested in learning more about 'Hidden Sentence' training.

Although the response rate was lower than expected, the FABI Team believe that this gives a good indication of the North Wales picture. Thank you to all those organisations that took the time to complete this survey and, where requested, the team will be in touch soon. A follow-up consultation will be carried out in circa 18-24 months' time.

Consultation Responses – Some Gaps and Barriers highlighted:

- identification thereby preventing/delaying support
- data sharing
- distance from home of the secure estate – particularly for women and young offenders
- lack of referrals due to poor awareness about the impact
- staff not being appropriately informed about the impact and support available
- lack of a strategic dialogue between stakeholders thereby preventing a holistic approach
- and lack of opportunities for staff to undertake 'Hidden Sentence' training.

Consultation Responses – Specific Needs identified included:

- earlier and more rapid intervention
- specific needs to be understood and supported, free of stigma
- having someone to talk to confidentially
- easy accessibility of relevant information including general information about the prison estate and what to expect
- help to maintain contact with the family member in prison including advice on relationships, financial support and overcoming the barriers of distance
- help with complex issues arising from the offender such as violence in the home or sexual offences
- support for children who become young carers particularly when a parent goes in prison and for children at school
- assistance with finances and housing

Above left: The North Wales FABI Programme Team: Sara Kettle – Programme Manager (right) and Catherine Pritchard (left) – Programme Officer

Ex - Armed Forces in the Criminal Justice System and the Impact on their Children



Research highlights that the number of Ex-Forces who have ended up in the criminal justice system (CJS) is actually lower than the numbers from the general public and that serving in the Armed Forces acts as a protective factor in terms of general risk of entering the criminal justice system.

However, for Ex-Forces who do find themselves in prison, the reasons are far from straight-forward. Research has shown that those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds; those who have experienced difficulties during service with mental or physical injury; or those who have struggled to make the transition from military to civilian life are all more at risk of offending. When combined with other factors such as experiences of combat and trauma during deployment, social isolation and alcohol misuse these can play a major role in crimes committed by Ex-Forces.

The emotional impact on the families of Ex-Forces being in prison and in particular on their children, has been compared to experiences that they have when a parent is deployed while still serving in the Armed Forces (see diagram). The disruption to a child's routine and the extra pressure on the lone parent struggling to cope, leads to issues with behaviour, motivation in their school work and feelings of loss, along with worrying about their absent parent. Reintegration is difficult, as the child learns to cope without mum or dad, only to have to readjust when they come back home.

The comparisons to a custodial sentence are obvious and if a child has experienced separation during military service and then as a result of a prison sentence, then it is a double whammy.

So what help is available to our Ex-Forces in prison? The MOD has funded various projects in North Wales and there are now two dedicated **Armed Forces Liaison Officers** employed through the local authorities. One of the key partners is **SToMP** which has been developed by the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales. With the help of MOD funding, they work with Ex - Forces in the Criminal Justice System from police call out, through custody suites, court, probation, prison and resettlement into the community.

During the project, **SToMP** Prison Liaison Officers have worked to ensure best practices are adhered to and to encourage Ex- Forces to maintain contact with the wider Armed Forces Community. There has always been a strong network of support within the Armed Forces and this is often the best way of helping the offenders and their

families. Military charities such as Royal British Legion and SSAFA , will provide practical and financial help to Ex - Forces families and their spouses and also sit on the North Wales Armed Forces Forum.

We are currently working with the FABI Team and aim to further explore opportunities to support children and families of ex-armed forces in the CJS, working in partnership to improve the choices of our Armed Forces Community in North Wales.

The Cycle of Emotional Turmoil Experienced by Children of Armed Forces Personnel



This article was prepared by Ian Langton SToMP Prison Liaison Officer, Janette Williams Armed Forces Liaison Officer - North Wales East and Stephen Townley Armed Forces Liaison Officer - North Wales West.



“What About Me?”

Image source: Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)

A Call to Action to Protect Children Affected by Maternal Imprisonment

“It’s hard when it’s your mum in prison... she’s supposed to be the one looking after you”, Malik (aged 13) said. Tyler (12) agreed: “Your mum makes you who you are.” Malik and Tyler are two of the 25 young people who were consulted for a new [Prison Reform Trust report](#), looking at the impact on children of having a mother in the criminal justice system.

The [What about me?](#) report gives voice to some of the estimated 17,240 children affected by maternal imprisonment each year in England and Wales. They talked about the trauma of being separated from their mum; the grief and loss at her not being there and the difficulty they have in explaining her absence to others; and the disruption to almost every aspect of their lives, including housing, education, health, and well-being.

For most children, their mother is their primary carer and the person they are closest to. Yet they, and the consequences of separation, are rarely considered in criminal justice proceedings. Decisions are made about important issues like contact with their mother without listening to how the children themselves feel and without recognising that feelings change over time. As Katelyn (15) says in the report, “I want to be allowed to be angry with my mum and miss her at the same time. If I say

I don’t want to see her, that doesn’t mean forever – I need to be able to change my mind.”

The report spells out what more can be done to ensure children’s voices are heard. Practitioners and academics highlighted the difference it can make when children have contact with their mother as soon as possible after imprisonment. Although initial visits are often hard, knowing that their mum is safe can help. The report emphasises that initiatives such as [Visiting Mum](#), a partnership between [Pact](#) and [Sova](#) for Welsh children, are crucial in alleviating anxiety and providing essential emotional support. Unfortunately, funding for Visiting Mum has not been continued, leaving many children to cope alone with their fear, confusion, and loss.

The young consultants rightly identified the key recommendations of the report, as Megan (11) says: “I wish my mum had got support so she didn’t get to this point.” The fact is that prison is rarely the answer, and women are far better served by support in the community that addresses underlying issues. That’s why this report is calling for a presumption against short prison sentences and an investment in women’s centres so that places like the [North Wales Women’s Centre](#) can provide the excellent support they

are known for, relieved of funding concerns. As shown throughout this report, children themselves know what needs to be done. [What about me?](#) is their call to action.

This article has been provided by Sarah Beresford. Sarah is a Prison Reform Trust Associate and author of ‘What about me?’ Hard copies of the report are available from info@prisonreformtrust.org.uk



Image source: Andy Aitchison (andyaitchison.uk) / Pact

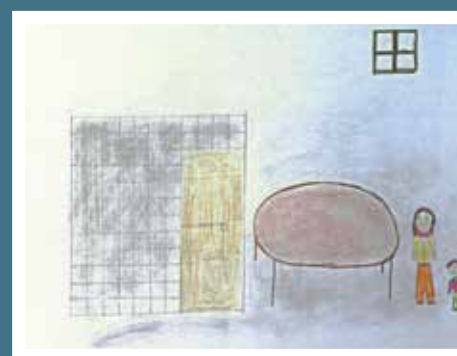


Image source: Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)

In their Pocket

“Once you have started you are in their pocket and lose control over your own life. You become a slave.”



ACOM

Violence and Vulnerability Unit

Supported by the Home Office and
The Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime

'County Lines' and the Threat to Vulnerable Children, Young People & Adults

'County Lines' is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Adults and young people used by gangs in this way aren't usually members of the gang but will find themselves in prison or a young offenders institute as a result of being caught by the police with large quantities of drugs. Whilst in prison they will be expected to keep quiet and may also be at risk of violence and exploitation from other inmates. They are likely to have debt as a result of their arrest (due to the drugs/money being confiscated) and will subsequently find it extremely difficult to break free of the gang influence.

Children and families with a family member in prison are also vulnerable to gangs targeting them, especially regarding payments of debts and these families can also be threatened.

County Lines are complex and it is not easy to interpret and define gangs, groups and organised crime groups; this has been a problem in the USA too. However, 'Locality Reviews' conducted by the Home Office's 'Violence and Vulnerability Unit' have heard throughout their community and prison reviews that improving the sharing of information between partners is essential to effectively understanding and tackling this growing issue. An intelligence review of how information is collected and shared is a good way to highlight where barriers, gaps and opportunities to collaborate exist.

The new Serious Organised Crime Units and regional intelligence units working closely with the regional and local policing units can help to develop a clear data collection plan that can help highlight the current gaps on this agenda. It is an essential part of any operational plan that families, friends and professionals working with vulnerable groups need to be aware of the pressures faced by those exploited by gangs, and the need to recognise the signs of County Lines involvement.

For further information and support for future work, please contact the authors of this article in the Violence & Vulnerability Unit: Mick McNally at: michaelcmcnally1@gmail.com and Paul Cullen at: sgoservices@outlook.com or visit: <http://vvu-online.com>

WHAT MAKES WORKING FOR A GANG AN OPTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Protection, safety, a lack of family and role models, attachment issues, poverty, a need for status, boredom, the lure of easy and quick cash, materialistic outlook, family involvement, because gangs seem cool, a need to feel cool and attractive

GROOMING - WHAT ARE GANGS LOOKING FOR?

Young people going through emotional distress – emoting on Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and other social media sites

Young people with attachment issues such as those who go missing regularly, looked after children – or vulnerable single parents

Those in need of money or after small quantities of drugs such as cannabis

Those who actively chase the opportunity – adults and children

Individuals with learning difficulties – adult and children



WHAT MAKES WORKING FOR A GANG AN OPTION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE?

The offer of free drugs, protection (from the gang itself and other gangs), safety, attachment issues, poverty, the lure of easy and quick cash, materialistic outlook, lack of awareness of danger.

Pact to Run New Court Support Service in North Wales



As referenced in the last FABI Newsletter, Pact (Prison and Advice Care Trust) is a registered charity supporting people affected by imprisonment, providing practical and emotional support to prisoners' children and families, and to prisoners themselves.

In addition to being the family engagement provider at HMP Berwyn in Wrexham and in other prisons, Pact has recently been awarded a grant by the 'Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation' to establish a new court support service - 'A Way Home' project - in North Wales; this will support the children and families of prisoners of North Wales to maintain their place and home in the communities of North Wales.

The service will provide volunteers in the courts of North Wales - including Caernarfon, Llandudno, Mold, Wrexham and Welshpool. Court volunteers can help families prepare for going to court and also provide emotional and practical support at this difficult time. Pact will also train community mentors to support families in their own communities. Full training and expenses will be provided. A trial service will start on 3rd September.

If you are interested in finding out more, or you would like to volunteer, please contact Lynne Nicklin, Volunteer Coordinator: Lynne.nicklin@prisonadvice.org.uk Also see Pact's website: www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Is Your Service Included on 'Dewis Cymru'?

'Dewis Cymru' is a new website to help people access local support services in Wales and to find the information they need to improve their own well-being and access local services in Wales.

It is an important first for Wales as it creates a single, clear and reliable point of access that can be used by members of the public, as well as service professionals. It is provided by the 22 local authorities across Wales as part of their Information, Advice and Assistance services.

The website currently contains a directory of over 6,200 local and national organisations and services including those provided by local councils, community groups, voluntary organisations and businesses.

If you provide a local service that can support children and families affected by imprisonment, please add it to the directory by going to www.dewis.wales for more information. It's totally FREE, so why not give it a go!

The information for this article was provided by Richard Palmer and Jodie Phillips from Dewis Cymru.

Further Useful Resources

Newsletters and other resources from the following organisations can be accessed by contacting them online:

The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders:

<https://www.nicco.org.uk/>

Partners of Prisoners:

<http://www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk/>

Action for Prisoners and Offenders Families:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk>

For further information about the work, please contact:

Sara Kettle, FABI Programme Manager on sara.kettle@wrexham.gov.uk / 01978 292453 or

Catherine Pritchard, FABI Programme Officer on Catherine.pritchard@wrexham.gov.uk / 01978 292444