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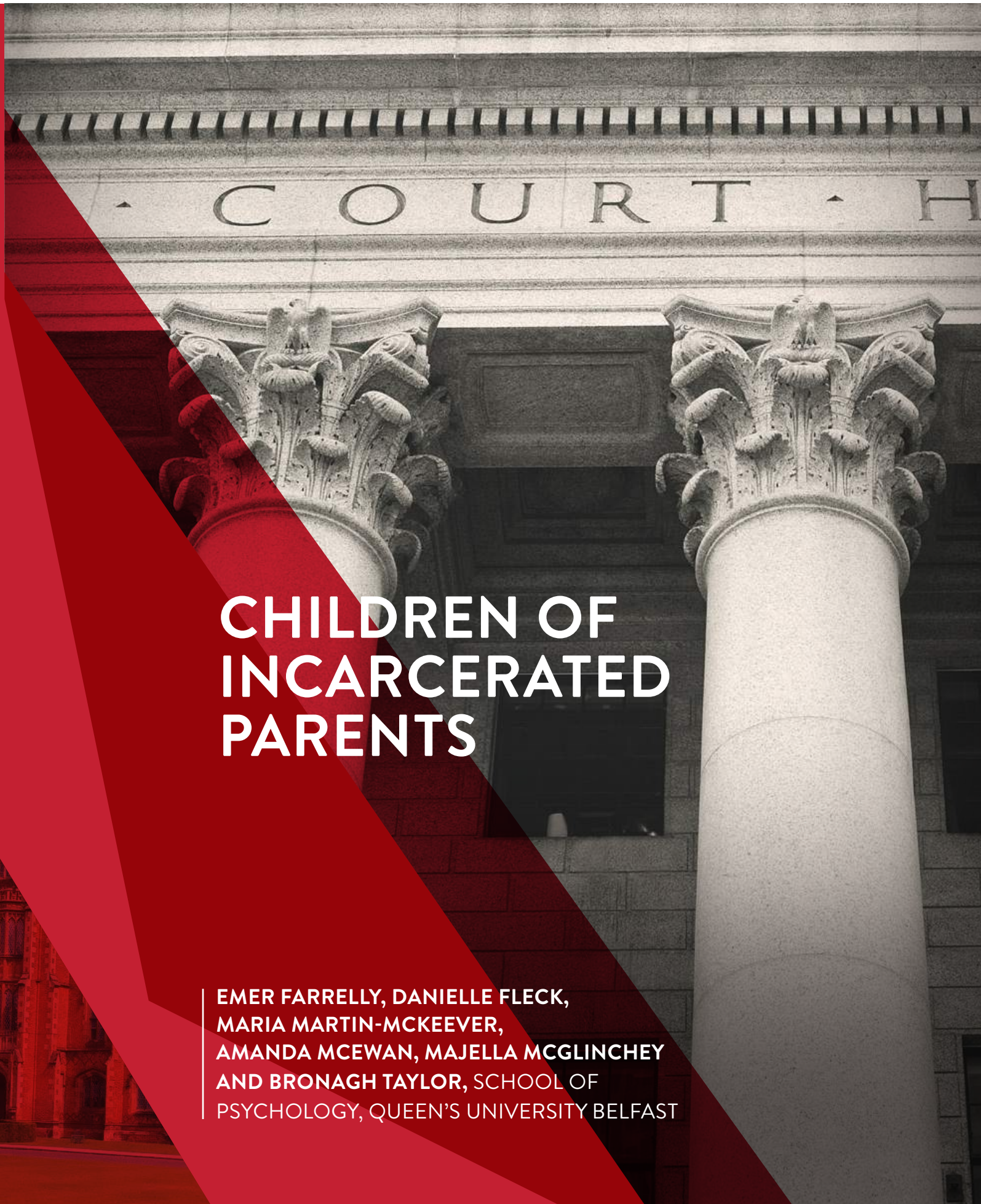

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

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The Children of Incarcerated Parents in Northern Ireland

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Foreword

Every year our Year 2 trainees complete a placement dedicated to exploring issues around Equality and Diversity. During the 2017/2018 academic year, the group focused on the specific issues experienced by the children of incarcerated parents.

The following document sets the context of the prison population in Northern Ireland in light of the world prison population. We go on to explore the research around outcomes for this vulnerable population and factors moderating and mediating these outcomes.

Finally, we explore intervention programmes offered within UK prisons and within the community and consider the role of the school community as a potential source of support.

Thanks are due to Dr Karen Trew who assisted with this Research Project.

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Introduction

Since 2000, there has been a steady increase in worldwide prison populations, which have risen more rapidly than general population growth (Walmsley, 2016). As prison populations continue to rise it follows that increasing numbers of children are being separated from a parent due to parental imprisonment.

There is recognition that parental imprisonment can have a profound and long-lasting impact on children as a consequence of its significant practical, financial, social and emotional ramifications for families (SCCJR & University of Glasgow, 2015). Affected children have often been described as the 'collateral damage' of imprisonment (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). In the UK, the number of children affected by parental imprisonment is estimated to be six times the number on the child protection register; two and a half times the number in care; and three and a half times the number with autism (Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Glover, 2009). It is also estimated that more children in the UK are affected by the imprisonment of a parent than by divorce in the family (Prison Reform Trust, 2007).

According to Barnardo's (2014), "Children affected by parental imprisonment are some of the most vulnerable; their voices go unheard and their needs are frequently unmet" (p. 1). International research going back to the 1960s (e.g. Morris, 1965) identifies numerous long-term negative impacts and poor outcomes that children of prisoners may experience compared to their peers with more stable backgrounds (Murray, 2013).

Murray (2005) proposed a conceptual model to enhance the understanding of the relationship between parental imprisonment and the adjustment of children. This model outlines pre-existing risks for children, including the criminality of parents, poverty, mental illness, genetic risks and other social disadvantages. The mediators within this model are concerned with the mechanisms through which the incarceration of a parent may be harmful to the child (Murray, 2005). These include parent-child separation, strains upon the family such as economic strain and strained parenting, stigma, poor explanations of the imprisonment, and prison visits. Of particular interest from Murray's (2005) conceptual model are the moderators of the relationship between child outcomes and parental incarceration. These are factors that alter the impact of parental incarceration upon children and their reaction to this, and include the child and parent's sex, age, IQ, race and temperament. The identification of moderators enhances our understanding of the reasons why some children may have adverse outcomes while others do not. The prior experience of parenting, the type of crime committed by the parent and social support are also important components within this model. These factors do not cause impact in isolation but rather interact and overlap. Richards et al. (1994) suggest that these effects are experienced more acutely if the imprisoned parent in question is the mother.

Some of the potential adverse effects of parental imprisonment are summarised in Figure 1. These are mapped onto the Outcomes for Children outlined in 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) (DfES, 2004), which should underpin service delivery to support children and improve their well-being. It should be noted that while there may be a negative impact on most children, there are circumstances in which in which the imprisonment of the parent has positive effects, such as when that parent has been the perpetrator of violence or abuse within the home (SCCJR, 2015).

Be healthy	The rate of mental health problems among children of prisoners may be up to three times that of their peers (Murray & Farrington, 2008; Families Outside, 2009).
Stay safe	Parental imprisonment can lead children to experience stigma, bullying and teasing (Boswell, Wedge & Paylor, 2002). Children's caregivers often experience considerable distress during parental imprisonment, and children are often subject to unstable care arrangements (Philips, Erkanli, Keeler, Costello & Angold, 2006).
Enjoy & Achieve	Children of prisoners also experience higher levels of social disadvantage than their peers (Murray & Farrington, 2005).
Make a positive contribution	Children of prisoners may have three times the risk of anti-social/delinquent behaviour compared to their peers (Murray & Farrington, 2008).
Achieve economic well-being	Imprisonment has a negative financial impact on families, leaving families vulnerable to financial instability, poverty and debt and potential housing disruption (Grimshaw, Smith, Romeo & Knapp, 2007). 72% of prisoners were in receipt of benefits before coming into prison (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).
Crime reduction	65% of boys with a convicted parent go on to re-offend (Farrington, 2003).

Figure 1: *The potential adverse effects of parental imprisonment. The figure maps adverse effects onto the ECM outcomes for children's well-being (adapted from DCSF & MoJ, 2007, p. 5).*

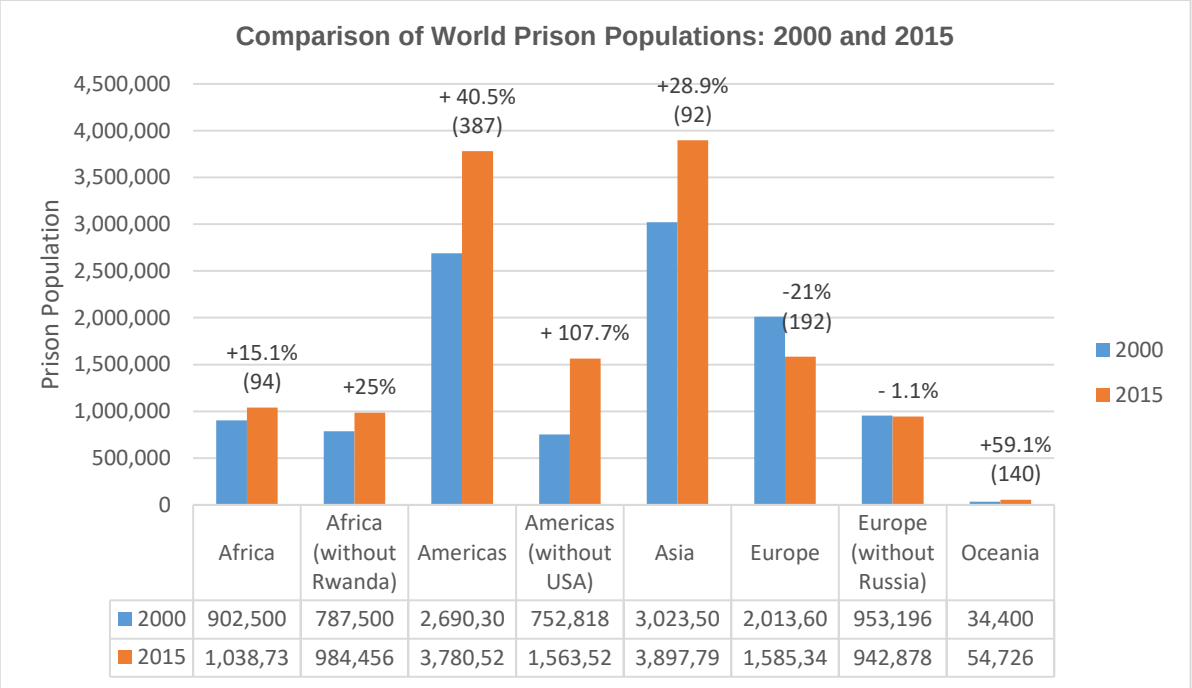
Whilst a number of initiatives have been established in the Northern Ireland context both in prisons and within the community to minimise the impact of imprisonment on child outcomes, it is felt that, given that approximately 7% of children experience the imprisonment of a parent during their time at school (Shaw, 1992), there is an increased role for the school community, including Educational Psychologists (EPs), to support children of prisoners. EPs are well placed to work directly and indirectly with this vulnerable group by providing support for the range of potential psycho-social presenting problems, including "depression, hyperactivity, aggressive behaviour, withdrawal, regression, clinging behaviour, sleep problems, eating disorders, running

away, truancy, low academic achievement, low self-esteem, delinquency and anti-social behaviour" (NIACRO, 2016).

On a wider level, EPs may also be able to influence policies and legislation at the Northern Ireland Education Authority (EA) and government levels to support significant change for those who have a parent in prison. Thus, EPs can play a key role in supporting the children of prisoners.

Chapter 1: The World Prison Population

The World Prison Index (Walmsley, 2016) shows that more than 10.25 million people are currently imprisoned worldwide. Since the year 2000, the worldwide prison population has increased by roughly 20%, which is faster than the estimated rate of growth in the general population of roughly 18% (Walmsley, 2016). Figure 1.1 below highlights the percentage change in the world prison population between 2000 and 2015 across the five continents; the rate of imprisonment per 100,000 of the population is shown in brackets (Walmsley, 2016).



	Africa	Africa (without Rwanda)	Americas	Americas (without USA)	Asia	Europe	Europe (without Russia)	Oceania
2000	902,500	787,500	2,690,30	752,818	3,023,50	2,013,60	953,196	34,400
2015	1,038,73	984,456	3,780,52	1,563,52	3,897,79	1,585,34	942,878	54,726

Figure 1.1: *World prison population, 2000-2015 (Walmsley, 2016).*

The United Nations estimates that roughly 144 people per 100,000 are imprisoned worldwide. Rates vary considerably across continents and countries, however, and continental figures mask the influence of social, political and economic factors within countries. The prison population in Africa is greatly affected by the figures from Rwanda, where many thousands of people remain confined following the genocide in 1994 (Walmsley, 2016). The slower growth in the prison population of the United States (USA) (the largest prison population in the Americas) has influenced the percentage increase in the Americas. When the USA is excluded from this estimate, the figure indicates that the number of people imprisoned across the Americas has more than doubled over the last 15 years. However, while rates of imprisonment in large parts of the world have significantly increased, there are also trends in the opposite direction. For example, a reduction in the Russian prison population from 1,060,404 to 642,470 since the year 2000 has resulted in a drop of 21% in the prison population of Europe (Walmsley, 2016). Excluding the large decrease in Russia, there

has been a small drop (1.1%) in rates across Europe during this period. It is also of note that while the rate of imprisonment in Oceania rests just below the world average (140), the continent has observed the largest percentage increase in prison population in the world over the last 15 years.

Prison Populations and Discrimination

It is important to note that across world prison populations there is an overrepresentation of certain groups, meaning that within countries some children are subject to the added disadvantage of parental imprisonment because of their background. In their review of world prison trends, Jacobson, Heard and Fair (2017) compare penal cultures across 10 states (Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, India, Thailand, the United States, England, Wales, Hungary, Netherlands and Australia) and report that parents of children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, lower education, ethnic minorities or races who are discriminated against are disproportionately represented within the prison system. For example, in Hungary, Roma people make up 6% of the national population but represent 40% of the prison population (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017). In Dutch prisons, 62% of the prison population is made up of those born outside the country (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017). The USA has some of the most staggering racial, ethnic and educational disparities of any prison system (Murray, et al., 2014). For example, “a black child born in 1990 had a 25.1% chance of having their father sent to prison; for those whose fathers did not finish high school, the risk was roughly double that, at 50.5%” (Wildeman & Western, 2010, p. 162).

It appears that discrimination is embedded within the prison system in some national contexts. It follows that some children face a double disadvantage: they are at increased risk of having a parent in prison because of their family background and consequently they may be more likely to grow up in a community fragmented by increasing use of incarceration. The accumulative impact of multiple adversities can make it difficult to disentangle what impact parental imprisonment has independent of other risks, such as poverty, parent criminality, penal culture and drug/alcohol use.

How Many Children Are Affected by Parental Imprisonment?[1]

The consequence of rising prison populations is an increase in the number of children affected by parental imprisonment and the subsequent social, familial and economic disruptions associated with it (Murray et al., 2014). More parents than ever before are incarcerated worldwide but accurate figures on the number of children who are separated from a parent due to imprisonment do not exist. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has requested that states record the number, ages and location of each prisoner’s children on prison entry (Council of Europe, 2009).

[1] Unless otherwise stated *parent* refers to either the mother or the father; see chapter 3 for an exploration of the role of the gender and the impact on outcomes for children of parental imprisonment.

However, most countries do not record whether prisoners have children under the age of 18 (Smith & Gampell, 2011),[2] highlighting that at a national level, whether or not a convicted criminal is a parent is not routinely considered in sentencing. Without accurate statistics on the number of children who are separated by a parent due to imprisonment, states may fail to adequately support their needs or consider the societal and economic consequences of imprisonment.

Estimates of the number of children affected by parental imprisonment are often based on parenting rates. Jones et al. (2013) extrapolated from the figures for parenting visits in prisons in the European Union, roughly 800,000 children are affected by parental imprisonment on any given day and more children are separated from a parent due to imprisonment than for any other reason. According to the HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons annual report for 2016, around half of prisoners in England and Wales reported that they had a child under 18. In Sweden, 0.5 % of children are estimated to have an imprisoned parent (Jones et al., 2013), and in the United States, the Bureau of Justice estimate that on any given day, over 1.7 million children had a parent in prison (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008).

Using the figure provided by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) of 1.3 children per offender and Walmsley's (2016) world prison population index, Figure 1.2 below reports the estimated number of children worldwide by continent. These estimates suggest that on any given day, 14.5 million children worldwide are separated by a parent due to imprisonment.

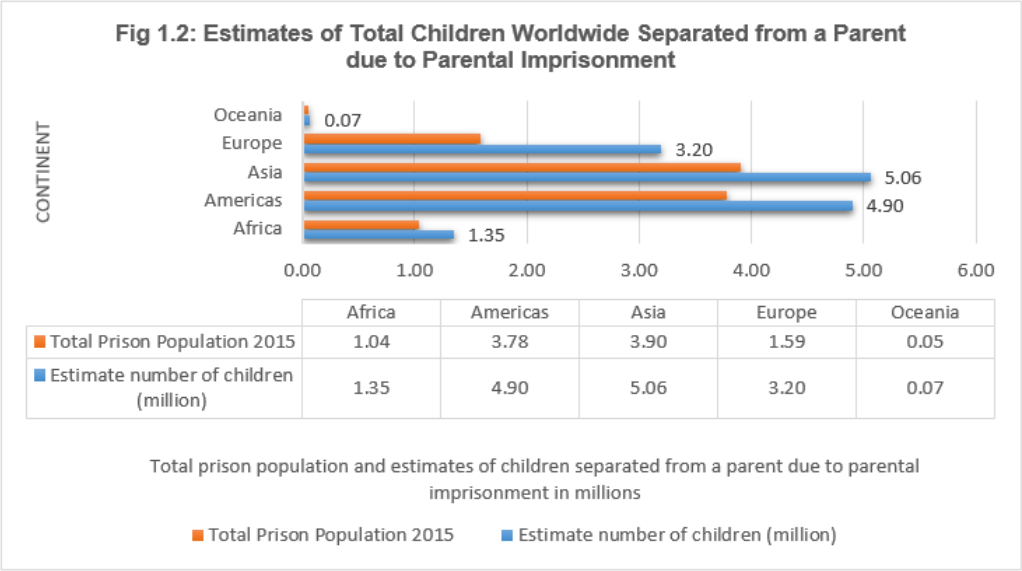


Figure 1.2: *Estimated number of children worldwide separated from a parent due to parental imprisonment (adapted from data from Walmsley, 2016).*

[2] In Europe, Sweden and Latvia are exceptional in that they routinely record and systematise information on prisoners' children (Moore & Convery, 2011).

Despite this, a recent study of global prison trends suggested that "increasing the use of imprisonment plays a relatively modest role in preventing and reducing violence and other forms of crime"; rather, "research generally indicates that increases in the *certainty* of punishment, as opposed to the *severity* of punishment, are more likely to produce deterrent benefits" (Allen, 2015, p. 5). It is essential that when considering how criminal justice objectives can best be met, the cost of imprisonment to children and families is acknowledged (Murray et al., 2014). Governments have a responsibility to the children who are left behind and who often suffer the unintended consequences of imprisonment (Allen, 2015).

Penal Culture

Jacobson, Heard and Fair (2017) state that the main justifications for imprisonment include:

- denunciation of wrongdoing;
- punishment or retribution;
- deterrence;
- incapacitation (to manage risk and protect against further harm); and
- rehabilitation or re-socialisation.

However, there is no general international consensus on the purpose of prison. The complex story that underpins each country's penal policy results from its unique social dynamics, political and economic climate, structural inequalities and "perceived internal and external threats" (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017, p. 35). The following section will explore how penal culture impacts prison populations, with particular focus on the rise in punitiveness around the world, examples of rehabilitative penal cultures and how visitation and communication practices can support or disrupt the relationship between parent and child.

The Rise of Punitiveness

A commonality observed across advanced democracies from the 1970s onwards has been the substantial rise in punitiveness (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017). Punitive policies often include mandatory sentencing, longer custodial sentences, stricter bail conditions, reduction in granting of bail, reduction in the use of parole and increasing use of solitary confinement (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017). Punitive practices frequently result in less discretion for first-time offenders and are a major factor contributing to rising prison populations. For example, new drug laws introduced in Brazil in 2006 lengthened sentences for trafficking and reduced sentences for possession, which effectively increased the prison population for drug offenses from 33,000 in 2005 to 138,000 in 2013 (Miraglia, 2015). Those hit worst by these changes were first time-offenders and women (Miraglia, 2015).

The USA has been described as one of the most punitive democracies in the developed world (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017), with an average prison sentence of 2.9 years (Center, 2011). So-called *three-strikes laws* result in mandatory prison sentences of up to 25 years for third-time convictions for minor offenses (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017), and *deep break* punishment strategies involve the deliberate isolation and separation of prisoners from families and communities (Adritti, 2005). In extremely punitive cultures, prisoners not only lose their freedom while confined, but their opportunities for future employment following release continue to be curtailed (e.g. accessibility of prison records can affect future employability) (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017; Murray et al., 2014). Arguably, these policies are particularly destructive to family relationships, as they limit contact, incarcerate greater numbers, remove the judge's ability to consider parental responsibilities during sentencing and have long-term consequences for future life chances upon release (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017; Murray et al., 2014).

Rehabilitation

In stark contrast to the general rise in punitiveness and the particularly harsh prison climate in the United States is the Swedish judicial system. In Sweden, more than 80% of prison sentences are for less than one year and the majority of prisoners receive probation after two-thirds of their sentence has been served. The Swedish judicial system is centred around rehabilitation, and prison is "devised so as to facilitate the inmate's return to the community and counteract the negative effects of imprisonment" (Ministry of Justice, Swedish Judicial System, p. 26). In 2014, as part of the Langford Lectures series on prison reform, Nils Öberg, the director-general of Sweden's prison and probation service, described how the Swedish model was contributing to closing prisons and reducing prison populations (from 74 per 100,000 in 2010, Sweden's prison population had fallen to 55 as of 2015, the lowest rate in Europe; Walmsley, 2016). Öberg attributed this success to the increasing use of alternatives to custody (electronic tagging, community service, parole) and improving treatment of prisoners. Prisons in Sweden are run on three principles (1) to control the prisons; (2) to make every day count; (3) to treat human beings, not criminals (Öberg, 2014). This approach acknowledges that for the majority of prisoners, what led them there it is not a single issue but the accumulation of multiple problems (poverty, drugs, alcohol, abuse, etc.) over many years.

There is some evidence that in other parts of the world, too, the trend is towards rehabilitation. For example, The Prison Reform Bill was introduced in England and Wales in February 2017[3] (Beard, 2017), Japan is increasingly using parole (Öberg, 2014) and prisoners in Poland earn minimum wage, minimizing some of the financial

[3] The Prison Reform Bill was introduced in England and Wales in February 2017 and states that prisons must aim to '(a) protect the public, (b) reform and rehabilitate offenders, (c) prepare prisoners for life outside prison, and (d) maintain an environment that is safe and secure'. However, the bill does not state how prisons will achieve these objectives (Beard, 2017).

hardships often associated with confinement that families experience (Kładoczny & Wolny, 2013). Since independence from colonial rule, the prison system in Namibia has undergone major reform. The goal is to foster an atmosphere of rehabilitation and to treat prisoners with dignity and respect (Bukurura & Nyoka, 2001). The Namibian prison service is guided by the philosophical principle that individuals can change, and change is influenced by the conditions under which inmates are kept (Bukurura & Nyoka, 2001). Another promising example is the penal system in Norway, which, like Sweden, is characterized by education and training. A large, population-wide study carried out by Bhuller, Dahl, Loken and Modstag (2016) found that time spent in Norwegian prisons increased prisoner rates of future employment and reduced rates of recidivism. Their findings suggest that when prison is necessary, rehabilitative practices within prisons can improve outcomes for prisoners. Better outcomes for prisoners are also likely to be associated with better outcomes for families.

Visitation and Communication Practices

Cross-nationally, penal culture and individual prison policy influence the visitation experience for children. As shown below, visitation can impact the sense a child makes of their parent's experience and the quality of the interaction between parent and child. It is beyond the scope of this report to compare visitation practices across all national contexts. However, findings from the COPING study and the *Family Connections: A Review of Learning from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Prison Reform Fellowships, Part II* report (Fair & Jacobson, 2016) are briefly summarised below.

The COPING study was a cross-national comparison which explored the practical and financial barriers to maintaining contact and children's experiences of visiting prisons in the UK, Germany, Romania and Sweden (Jones et al., 2013; Sharratt, 2014). As part of the COPING study, Jones et al. (2013) gathered evidence from over 1,500 children and adults from four European countries representing different social and cultural traditions, different incarceration levels and penal policies and different support services. Sharratt's (2014) paper presents findings from the in-depth interviews that were conducted as part of the COPING study. Families affected by imprisonment in each country were interviewed, including 161 children, their non-imprisoned parent/carer (n=123) and their imprisoned parent/carer (n=65). *Family Connections* is a broader report that collates learning from initiatives studied by research fellows between 2000-2015 in the USA, England and Wales, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Holland and Spain. These initiatives explored how family relationships are maintained through programmes, facilities and family visits (Fair & Jacobson, 2016).

Regular contact with the imprisoned parent was a key aspect of wellbeing and resilience for children (Jones et al., 2013; Sharratt, 2014). Although most children reported visiting their imprisoned parent, the frequency with which they did so varied between countries. The cost of visiting prisons was a strain across each of the four countries. Often prisons are in isolated locations with limited public transport access.

In the European countries reported on by Sharratt (2014), the main barrier was the cost of the journey, particularly in Romania, the most economically disadvantaged of the countries included in the study. Families across all four countries reported that the financial cost of traveling to prison was often beyond their means and support through NGOs or government made visitation possible. This finding underscores the argument made previously that children from more impoverished family backgrounds can be more negatively influenced by parental imprisonment.

A number of countries allow extended visitation, which can involve specially designed family units where prisoners can stay with their children over a period of days. Most Swedish prisons provide accommodation where family members can stay with prisoner free of charge for the weekend without supervision (Dobbie, Grönqvist, Niknami, Palme & Priks, 2018; Fair & Jacobson, 2016; Sharratt, 2014). In Portugal, extended family visits are available every three months, subject to risk assessment. These involve three to five hours in a private visiting suite equipped with a bed, television, kitchen and bathroom facilities (Fair & Jacobson, 2016). In California, Connecticut, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York and Washington state in the USA, family-friendly schemes enable overnight visits for prisoners with families (Fair & Jacobson, 2016).

In the COPING study, the authors reported that the experience of visiting prison differed significantly across countries (Jones et al., 2013). Influencing factors included “the physical environment, search procedures, restrictions on physical interaction, and the provision of meaningful activities” (Jones et al., p. 768). When physical contact was restricted, this was often confusing for children, who reported feeling worried and anxious (Jones et al., 2013). Differences were also observed in access to child-friendly activities and toys. Children in Sweden, for example, reported that this was welcomed and an appreciated part of visitation (Fair & Jacobson, 2016; Jones et al., 2013). Across countries it appears that for families whose relationships are already fragmented, lack of child-friendly resources can contribute to children feeling uncomfortable.

Chapter 2: The Northern Irish Context

"The Troubles" and "Post-Conflict" Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland today remains in a period of transition following "The Troubles", a period of sustained political violence between 1968 and 1998 (McAlister, Haydon & Scraton, 2013). It is estimated that during this 30-year period of conflict, 3,636 people lost their lives (McKittrick, Kelters, Feeney & Thornton, 1999). However, McAlister et al. (2013) note that many more were directly impacted by death, injury, trauma and displacement, with findings from research by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in Northern Ireland (CVSNI) indicating that an estimated 500,000 people consider their lives to have been profoundly damaged by the conflict (McAllister, 2011).

The beginning of The Troubles in the late 1960s had a major impact on the penal system in Northern Ireland, most significantly the rapid increase in the size of the prison population during the period from the 1960s and throughout the 1970s. McEvoy (2001) notes a growth in the prison population from approximately 600 in 1969 to 3,000 in 1979. This was driven by a dramatic rise in rates of imprisonment resulting from the internment of individuals under emergency legislation (McEvoy, 2015). During the conflict, two distinct groups of prisoners were held within Northern Ireland prisons: politically affiliated prisoners charged with terrorist offences detained under emergency legislation, and 'ordinary' prisoners (Moore, Convery & Scraton, 2011). The central role of these politically affiliated prisoners in the peace negotiations leading to the 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement is highlighted by McEvoy (1998), who states that "neither Republican nor Loyalism would have been able to move away from political violence without the support of their prisoners" (p. 1541). Today Northern Ireland is a post-conflict society that has experienced 20 years of relative peace since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Nevertheless, in keeping with a country emerging from conflict, Northern Ireland continues to face many challenges, including those surrounding identity, reconciliation and societal division (Preston, 2018).

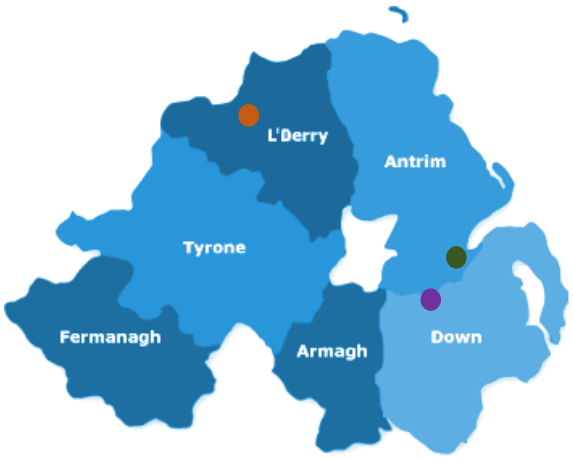
One of the most contentious issues in the political process of bringing about peace in Northern Ireland was that of the early release of politically affiliated prisoners (DPI, 2013). Between 1998 and 2012, under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, the Sentence Review Commission approved 506 applications for the release of prisoners (DPI, 2013). As evidenced by the statistics presented later in this chapter, there has been a decline in the average daily prison population from its peak in 1978. Butler (2016) notes that "this decrease is attributed to a reduction in the use of internment, ceasefires, release of those imprisoned for political offences and decreasing levels of politically motivated violence" (p. 12). During The Troubles, the Northern Ireland prison system was designed to hold politically motivated prisoners, resulting in a penal system that was "distinct and unique" and "the policies and regulations under which it

operated have exceptionally differed from the traditional modalities of penal practice found in other jurisdictions" (Dwyer, 2007, p. 780).

Following the devolution of NI's Policing and Justice Powers under the Hillsborough Agreement in 2010, a review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) was conducted, culminating in the publication of a report by the Prison Review Team in October 2011 (Prison Review Team, 2011). The team outlined 40 recommendations for structural, operational and cultural change across the NIPS system, designed to move away from the past towards a prison service which reflects the post-conflict society. Since then there has been large-scale transformational change in the NIPS and as of 2016, over 90% of the report's recommendations had been delivered. However, in *Prison Reform and the Shackles of the Past*, McCracken (2014) notes that there still endures "a catalogue of issues that are a direct legacy of imprisonment during the conflict". This is perceived to be most evident in Maghaberry Prison (see Chapter 5), which is described as having a prison environment "entirely unique" to NI. Thus, while the children of Northern Irish prisoners today live in a post-conflict society, their parents are incarcerated in institutions that to some extent reflect the legacy of The Troubles.

Overview of the Current Northern Ireland Prison System and Prison Population

In Northern Ireland, prisoners are held in the three custodial institutions, whose location is shown in Figure 2.1. In terms of the prison population, the most recent bulletin produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA, 2017) provides an overview of key statistics on Northern Ireland prison population levels by prisoner type, gender and establishment for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The average daily Northern Ireland prison population during this period was 1,472. In terms of gender, the vast majority were male (96.4%), with an average daily prison population of 1,428 males compared with 54 females. In terms of establishment, the average daily population of each of the custodial institutions is presented in Figure 2.2. The NISRA statistical bulletin highlights that during 2015, there were 87 prisoners for every 100,000 people in the population in Northern Ireland. This compared to 143 in Scotland, 148 in England and Wales and 80 in the Republic of Ireland.



HMP Maghaberry - a high-security prison in Lisburn holding adult male inmates serving long-term sentences and those on remand. Average daily population 2016/17: 869.

HMP Magilligan - a medium- to low-security prison in Limavady holding adult male prisoners with under 6 years left to serve of their sentence. Average daily population 2016/17: 453.

HMP Hydebank Wood College - a young offender's centre in Belfast accommodating male inmates aged 18 to 21, with a focus on providing education and employment opportunities. Average daily population 2016/17: 96. **HMP Hydebank Women's Prison** (Ash House) - holding all Northern Ireland female prisoners, both sentenced and remand. Average daily population 2016/17: 54.

Figure 2.1: *The Northern Ireland prison estate. The figure shows the location of the custodial institutions alongside an overview of each prison.*

As highlighted in Figure 2.2 below, for the second year in a row there was an overall decline in the average daily prison population from 1,661 in 2015 to 1,482 in 2016. However, this is not the full picture, as in 2016, total prison receptions[4] increased for the first time since 2012. For example, 2016: 5,199 prison receptions compared with 2015: 4,757 (+9.3%). Therefore, although more people entered prison, on average they spent less time there, and this reduced length of stay had a direct impact on the average daily population figures.

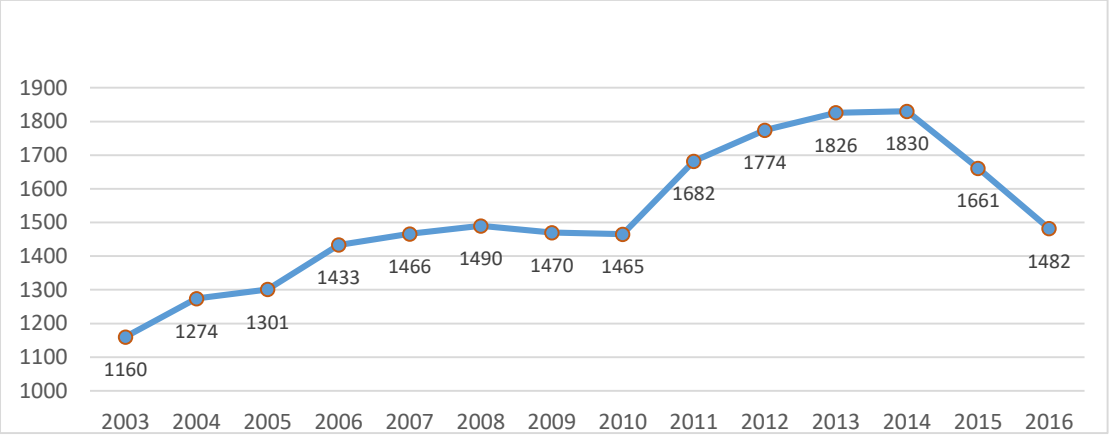


Figure 2.2: *Average daily prison population, 2003-2016 (NISRA, 2017).*

[4] The number of prison receptions relates to the number of new prisoners in a time period by counting an individual only once in the year they were first received into prison.

How Many Children in Northern Ireland Have a Parent in Prison?

No official data is available nor are any records held on the number of children of prisoners in Northern Ireland. However, as we have seen, Northern Ireland is not alone in this respect; as Murray (2013) states, there is no accurate, up-to-date data on the numbers of imprisoned parents, or children of imprisoned parents, in the UK, while The Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) study reported that almost no European country has gathered data in a systematic way on whether prisoners have children (Jones et al., 2013).

In the absence of official data, an estimate of the number of children of prisoners can be derived by applying a ratio of 1.14 children to one prisoner in the UK, as suggested by the Ministry of Justice in a 2012 survey (Philbrick, Ayre & Lyn, 2014). Based on the 2016/17 figure of 1,472 Northern Ireland prisoners, it would seem applying the 1.14 ratio that there are at least 1,680 children affected by parental imprisonment. This figure could be an underestimate, as the average family size in Northern Ireland tends to be larger compared to other regions of the UK (Butler, Hayes, Devaney & Percy, 2015). The COPE Pan-European study of "children of prisoners" (Jones et al., 2013) estimated the number of children in Northern Ireland who have a parent in prison to be more than 2,400, although, as previously noted, there has recently been a downward decline in the prison population. A more recent policy paper by NIACRO (March 2016) estimates that at any given time in Northern Ireland, there are 1,500 children with a parent in prison. While the NIPS does not collect official data on a prisoner's parental responsibilities, what data is available provides insight into the number of imprisoned parents and therefore the number of children of prisoners in Northern Ireland.

Analysis of data derived from the *Prisoner Needs Questionnaire (PNQ)* gives an estimate of the number of imprisoned parents, as the self-report questionnaire includes a question on whether the respondent has children. It should be noted, however, that at any given time, not every prisoner will have completed a PNQ due to various factors, chief among them length of stay (a PNQ is only completed up to 30 working days after committal). Upon request from the researcher, NISRA carried out an analysis of completed Prisoner Needs profiles at the end of January 2018. In this data snapshot, there were 878 completed PNQs, representing 62% of the total prison population on that day (1,421). From the responses, 427 parents in Northern Ireland prisons were identified as having 802 children under the age of 18. To estimate the number of children for the full prisoner population, this figure can be factored up, which suggests an approximate total of 1,300 children of prisoners.

Analysis of the Northern Ireland prison visitor statistics obtained via Freedom of Information requests also provides useful information on children of prisoners. That data indicates there were over 25,000 visits by children to the three Northern Ireland prison establishments during 2013, representing approximately 20% of the 126,500

prison visits made that year (Torney, 2014). Of the 4,865 individual children making visits, approximately 2,000 children visited on one occasion while the others visited the prison on multiple occasions, on average 8 times (Torney, 2014). While this information provided does not include the nature of the relationship between the children and the prisoners they visited, it is probable that many were visiting a parent. Moore et al. (2011) previously estimated that approximately 36,000 of the 120,000 visitors to Northern Ireland prisons every year were child visitors, although this figure was based on the larger prison population in 2011.

It is recognised that gathering this type of data is problematic for many reasons, including the unwillingness of some prisoners to share the fact that they have children because "they are concerned about how the 'authorities' or school will respond when they learn that a child has a parent in prison, or because their children have been taken into care" (Gill & Deegan, 2016, p. 18). It should also be noted that these estimates focus on the biological children of imprisoned parents without recognising that there may be many children in families impacted by parental imprisonment due to a step-parent or a parent's partner being incarcerated (Gill & Deegan, 2016). Moreover, the incarceration of a close family member such as an older sibling or a grandparent can have a similar effect on the child's life (Barnardo's, 2015).

While estimates provided here suggest that between 1,300 and 1,680 children in Northern Ireland may be affected by parental imprisonment, it is difficult to identify this vulnerable group of children because there is no official record of their existence. Matthew's (1983) description of these "hidden" children of prisoners as the "forgotten victims of crime" remains relevant today. As Gampell (2015) asserts, "the failure of governments to record statistics on children impacted by imprisonment is a serious failing impeding the identification of, and provision for, their needs".

Chapter 3: Child Adjustment Outcomes

Social Characteristics of Adult Prisoners

Parental imprisonment is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) (Dube et al., 2003). ACEs can often lead to negative outcomes, particularly if children are affected by multiple ACEs (Dube et al., 2003). However, it is unlikely that the imprisonment of a parent marks the beginning of the experience of difficulties for a child and their family (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011). Johnston (1995) suggests that the lives of prisoners are often marked by a variety of challenges such as limited education, instability at home, poverty, substance abuse, violence, trauma and health problems. Similarly, Dodd and Hunter (1992) suggest that prisoners are more likely to be of low social class, to be unemployed, to experience marital difficulties, to experience mental health problems and to have experienced neglect and abuse. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the sociodemographic risks and challenging backgrounds that prisoners may have faced and provides an indication of the challenges that such backgrounds may place upon family functioning and the children in the family prior to incarceration.

Social characteristics of adult prisoners

Characteristic	Prison population	General population
Taken into care as a child	24% (31% for women, 24% for men)	2%
Experienced abuse as a child	29% (53% for women, 27% for men)	20%
Observed violence in the home as a child	41% (50% for women, 40% for men)	14%
Regularly truant from school	59%	5.2% (England) and 4.8% (Wales)
Expelled or permanently excluded from school	42% (32% for women, 43% for men)	In 2005 >1% of school pupils were permanently excluded (England)
No qualifications	47%	15% of working age population
Unemployed in the four weeks before custody	68% (81% for women, 67% for men)	7.7% of the economically active population are unemployed
Never had a job	13%	3.9%
Homeless before entering custody	15%	4% have been homeless or in temporary accommodation
Have children under the age of 18	54%	Approximately 27% of the over 18 population*
Are young fathers (aged 18–20)	19%	4%
Have symptoms indicative of psychosis	16% (25% for women, 15% for men)	4%
Identified as suffering from both anxiety and depression	25% (49% for women, 23% for men)	15%
Have attempted suicide at some point	46% for women, 21% for men	6%
Have ever used Class A drugs	64%	13%
Drank alcohol every day in the four weeks before custody	22%	16% of men and 10% of women reported drinking on a daily basis

Figure 3.1: *Social characteristics of adult prisoners (Prison Reform Trust, 2017)*

As can be seen from Figure 3.1, imprisoned parents are more likely to be disadvantaged prior to incarceration compared to those who are not imprisoned. Prior to imprisonment they are likely to be badly paid, requiring support from benefits and/or living in poverty (Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011). Imprisoned parents are also more likely to abuse substances and have mental health problems prior to their imprisonment (Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012).

Research suggests that many of these parents have led chaotic lifestyles prior to their imprisonment, creating significant instability within their families, leading to domestic abuse, violence, diminished parenting capacity and damaging parenting styles (Dallaire, 2007; Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012). As a result of disadvantage, children from these families will already have experienced serious challenges which can often lead to further difficulties. For example, a child growing up in poverty is already at a greater disadvantage in terms of being successful at school than a child whose family lives above the poverty line (Cooper & Stewart, 2013). Often parental imprisonment further compounds existing problems (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016).

Outcomes often are linked to multiple pre-existing risk factors (Gill & Deegan, 2016). This is because parental imprisonment does not occur randomly in the population (Murray, 2013) but rather typically emerges from a background of instability within the family which may in itself explain the increased level of risk for these children (Jones et al., 2013).

> Prisoners are more likely than the general population to be unemployed, to be of low social class, and to have multiple mental health problems, many criminal convictions, marital difficulties and their own experiences of abuse and neglect (Community Care, 2008).

Parental Imprisonment and Child Adjustment

Murray (2013) proposed a general model to show how child adjustment is affected by parental imprisonment (Figure 3.2). The model recognises that the experience of each child is unique and there are many variables that can impact the relationship between the explanatory variable (parental imprisonment) and the outcome variable (the adjustment of the child). In describing the mechanisms through which parental imprisonment may affect the child, the model proposes four types of explanatory factors: selection effects preceding the imprisonment, and direct, mediating and moderating effects following the imprisonment. It attempts to separate or 'disentangle' these factors and map the multiple pathways by which having a parent in prison may impact on a child's well-being (Jones et al., 2013). Murray (2013) cautions that the factors included in his model are 'hypothesised influences' that must be tested via "large scale, longitudinal studies of prisoners' children, with reliable measures and appropriate controls" (p. 447).

A selection effect occurs when these pre-existing differences between prisoners' children and their peers account for their differential outcomes (Murray, 2013, p. 448). These selection effects predispose a child to difficulties with emotional adjustment, antisocial behaviour, relational difficulties and poor school performance.

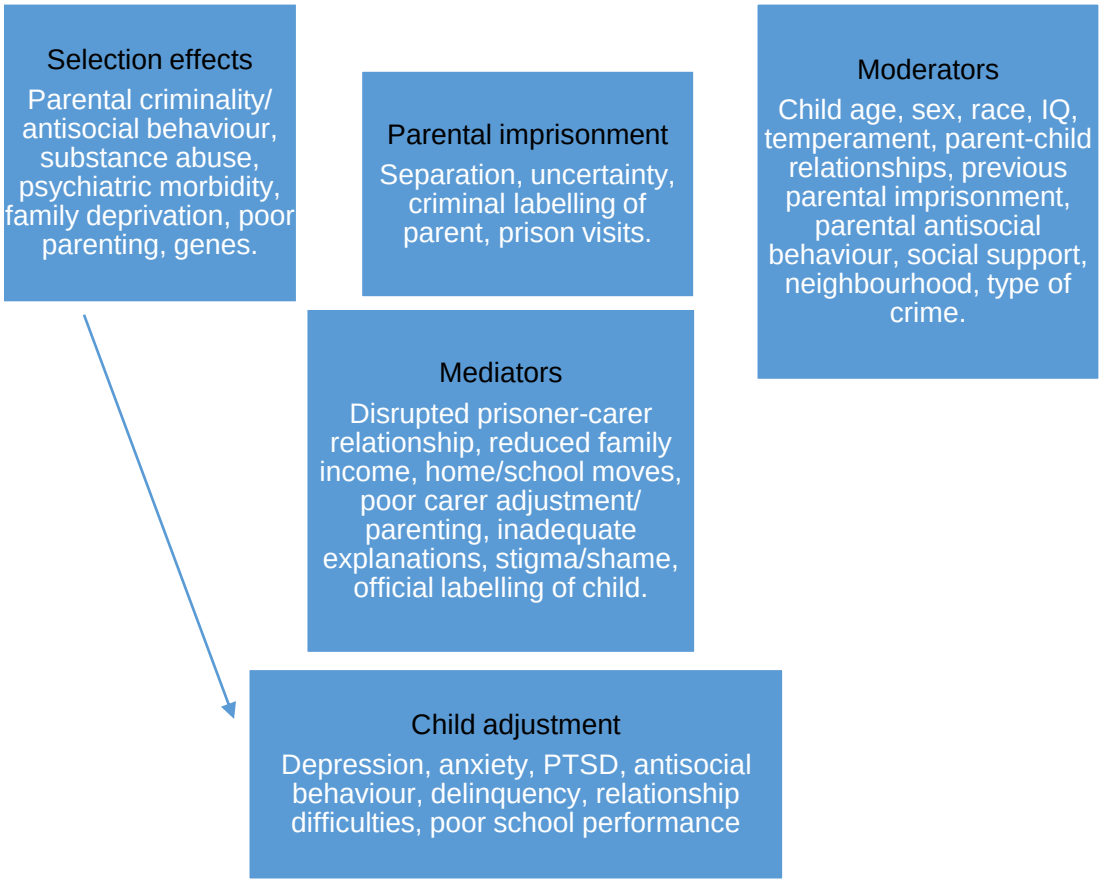


Figure 3.2: *The relationship between parental imprisonment and child adjustment. (Adapted from Murray, 2013, p. 453*).

It is likely that this cycle continues for the children of parents emerging from such difficult circumstances and it has been identified that the presence of multiple risk factors increases the likelihood of a child developing problems, including antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, violence and delinquency (Dallaire, 2007).

Cognitive Development and Educational Outcomes

Research suggests that children's development can regress or be delayed when a parent is imprisoned (Murray & Farrington, 2008; Thombre et al., 2009; Turney, 2014). Regression or delays may mean that a child is not developmentally ready to begin primary school. For example, Haskins (2014) found that paternal imprisonment adversely impacts boys' "non-cognitive school readiness" (p. 152). Other consequences of parental imprisonment, such as insecure attachment, and other ACEs, such as poor parental mental health, are also linked to poor developmental outcomes (Dallaire, 2007; Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

Friedman and Esselstyn (1965) found that teachers reported children of prisoners were underachieving, had low academic self-concept and poor attitudes towards their academic work. Foster and Hagan (2007) suggest that underachievement may be due to children losing one of their main educators through parental imprisonment, which may result in a loss of academic opportunities and support. The child may become demotivated to engage in school activities and struggle to complete their homework alone (Foster & Hagan, 2007). If this is combined with a generally poorer attitude to education, which has been found amongst families of working-class white Protestants in Northern Ireland, it may lead to significant educational disadvantage amongst these children (Purvis & the Working Group on Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class, 2011).

However, Dallaire, Ciccone and Wilson (2010) found that teachers are often prejudiced against children of prisoners, assuming that they will be less successful than their peers. This prejudice may mean that children are labelled as being difficult and less academically able. Labelling and stigma by teachers may also make it easier for bullying to go unpunished. Research suggests that children of prisoners are typically victims of bullying and can have friendship difficulties (Buckinghamshire County Council, 2013; Dallaire, 2007; Glover, 2009; Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2012; Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012; Moore & Convery, 2011).

In addition to these issues, Philbrick (2002) found that children of prisoners were often behind their peers in schoolwork, had lower grade point averages (Hagan & Foster, 2012), were at greater risk of school failure (Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012) and were more likely than their peers to be held back at primary school (Turney & Haskins, 2014). It has also been reported that some children of prisoners may find the move from primary to secondary school more difficult than their peers (Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012). This may be due to the difficulty children of prisoners have coping with loss and change. Furthermore, children of prisoners may be less likely to graduate from a US high school (Nichols & Loper, 2012).

It has been suggested that these academic difficulties are due to weaker cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Haskins, 2013; Maag, 2017; Turney & Haskins, 2014). Buckinghamshire County Council (2013) stated that core cognitive skills such as attention and problem solving can be affected by parental imprisonment. Memory may also be impaired if children of prisoners have experienced high levels of stress (Bremner, Krystal, Southwick & Charney, 1995; Bremner et al., 2003).

Children of prisoners are often subject to school moves (Geller, Garfinkle, Cooper & Mincy, 2009). Hypermobile children may have knowledge gaps, lack basic skills or have overlearned certain topics (Edwards, 2009; Phillips, Burns, Wagner, Kramer & Robbins, 2002). In the classroom, this may result in activities or tasks being set which are not appropriate to the child's developmental level, leading to task failure (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). Consistent failure is likely to lead to children developing poor self-

esteem and/or children becoming demotivated and disengaging in the classroom (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). They may also find it more difficult to develop and maintain friendships due to a constant fear of loss or lack of adequate social skills.

Murray, Loeber and Pardini (2012) proposed that behavioural difficulties are the reason that children of prisoners achieve poorly at school, as they may be inattentive or unmotivated to engage in the classroom. Behavioural difficulties can also lead to suspension, truanting or children becoming 'school refusers', all of which are likely to negatively impact educational outcomes (Atkinson, 2012; Morgan, Leeson & Carter-Dillon, 2013; Phillips et al., 2002). Di Prete and Jennings (2012) argue that if persistent behavioural issues occur when a child is starting school, there is likely to be a negative impact upon the child's cognitive skills.

Absence due to prison visits, which must take place during the normal working/school day, can be common for children of prisoners (Glover, 2009). Families who must travel further in order to visit may be forced not to send their child into school that day. This can lead to missed school days and possible discord between the family and the school if visits are recorded as unauthorised absences. School absences and/or poor attendance are major issues. Children may lose contact with their friends, making them feel isolated. If they are absent for long periods of time, they may find it difficult to socialise with their peers. In addition, absences mean that children are missing key areas of their education. However, Jones and Wainaina-Wozna (2012) found that often children's education only suffered in the short-term when their parent was imprisoned. Thus, educational impact may be related to the "frequency and duration" of the parent's imprisonment, i.e. greater disruption for longer periods may be more detrimental to a child's education (Andersen, 2016, p. 163). Therefore, children whose parents are imprisoned for multiple short sentences may be most at risk of academic failure.

Conversely, other studies have found no substantive threat to a child's educational outcomes when their parent was imprisoned. These studies suggest that the evidence is currently too weak to show a definite link between poor educational outcomes and parental imprisonment, often because research fails to account for other adversities that impact educational outcomes for children of prisoners (Dallaire, 2007; Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012; Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012).

Special Educational Needs

Internalising and externalising difficulties, often associated with children of prisoners, may result in children of prisoners being classed as having SEN. Dallaire (2007; see Figure 3.2) found that if a boy's father was imprisoned, the boy was significantly more likely to need to access SEN support by the time he was nine years old. Turney (2014, p. 310) showed that parental imprisonment is "independently associated" with an increased risk of having "learning difficulties, developmental delay, and speech and language problems". It was not clear from the study whether or not parental learning

difficulty had been taken into account. This is highly relevant as many prisoners are thought to have some form of learning difficulty (Fazel, Xenitidis & Powell, 2008).

Hypermobile children of prisoners who have SEN may encounter difficulties in accessing the same provision to meet their needs if they move to a different area of Northern Ireland or to another part of the UK or Ireland. This may be particularly challenging if children of prisoners move during the school year, when provision has already been fully allocated. Furthermore, children of prisoners who were due to be assessed by an EP in one school may be unable to do so in another school if that school has used their EP time allocation for the year. Thus, children of prisoners with SEN may be at considerable disadvantage in the context of current practices and procedures relating to meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

Mental Health Difficulties

Jones et al. (2013) investigated the mental health needs and resilience of children of prisoners in the UK (England & Wales), Germany, Romania and Sweden. The authors found that children separated from a parent due to imprisonment are at a significantly greater risk of mental health difficulties than the general population. This risk increased for children over 11, with nearly 25% having an increased risk of mental health difficulties; for children from Romania, this figure was nearly 50% (Jones et al., 2013). There were country-wide differences in reported levels of wellbeing, with Romanian children reporting the lowest scores and Swedish children the highest. Across the four countries, children with an incarcerated parent had poorer outcomes than their peers in all health-related quality of life measurements taken (Jones et al., 2013).

Jones et al.'s (2013) findings suggest that across varied national contexts, the separation of a child from a parent due to imprisonment has a lasting and significant negative association with mental health. However, a number of within-country factors can moderate a child's ability to manage the confusion and sadness that often accompanies this loss. Across all four countries, close and supportive relationships with extended family, regular contact and the facilitation of more natural interactions (physical contact, child friendly, family visits) helped mediate the difficulties experienced by children. For children in Sweden, which has one of the most generous social welfare systems, those from the most unstable families had the most difficulty adjusting to parent imprisonment. This finding suggests that family instability may be responsible for some of the effects observed in parental imprisonment. What is clear is that those children whose relationship with their parent is disrupted prior to parental imprisonment will likely need additional, more targeted support than is typically available even in the most supportive visitation contexts (Sharatt, 2014). In contexts that have more limited welfare support systems, less family-friendly policies and greater financial hardship, many more children are at risk of mental health difficulties when separated by a parent due to imprisonment.

Internalising and Externalising Difficulties

Trauma may also result in children of prisoners presenting with internalising and externalising difficulties (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011; see Figure 3.2). These difficulties have been associated with lower self-esteem and confidence, impacting a child's self-image and their own perceived ability (Buxton-McClend, 2013; Evans, 2009; Weidberg, 2017). Internalising difficulties reportedly include becoming withdrawn, becoming isolated, feeling guilty and feeling sadness and/or anger (Barnardo's, 2015; Buxton-McClend, 2013; Turney et al., 2012; Weidberg, 2017). Significant early stress through trauma can lead to stress hormones being continually activated, leading to a child failing to develop the ability to regulate their emotions (Anda et al., 2006). Some children may develop chronic stress which can lead to amygdala abnormalities, resulting in increased difficulty coping with anxiety (Stein, Simmons, Feinstein & Paulus, 2007).

Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher and Mincy (2012) found a link between parental imprisonment and externalising problems in five-year-olds, but not internalising problems. Arguably, this may be because internalising difficulties may be more challenging to interpret in five-year-olds.

It has been suggested that paternal imprisonment has a greater negative impact on children's externalised behaviour than maternal imprisonment, particularly in boys (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Wildeman & Turney, 2014). Male children with imprisoned fathers are reportedly more aggressive (Geller, et al., 2012; Wildeman, 2010), and paternal arrest has been associated with male children drinking alcohol and smoking by age 14 (Kinner, Alati, Najman & Williams, 2007), as will be discussed further in Chapter 4. However, following the imprisonment of a parent, both male and female children were equally associated with drinking and smoking at age 14, although girls were more likely to experience internalising difficulties and boys externalising difficulties (Kinner et al., 2007). Drinking alcohol and smoking are outlets for both internalising and externalising problems. Other difficulties linked to externalising and internalising problems in children of prisoners are substance abuse (Murray & Farrington, 2008), poor attention (Buxton-McClend, 2013; Edwards, 2009), sexual promiscuity and adolescent pregnancy (Jose-Kamfner, 1991). These externalising difficulties may be explained as ADHD although it is likely that many of these diagnoses are incorrect as externalising difficulties in children of prisoners are typically due to their trauma experiences and not due to within-child disorders (Misheva, 2018).

Poor parenting, which can be a consequence of parental imprisonment, is likely to account for some of the behavioural problems in children of prisoners. The remaining caregiver may struggle to effectively and consistently discipline the child, leading to children having little understanding of boundaries, rules and consequences, which inevitably leads to behavioural issues (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011; Reid et al., 2002; see Figure 3.2).

Conversely, Murray and Farrington (2008) argue that long-term behavioural issues cannot be fully explained by parental imprisonment. They suggest that long-term difficulties are more likely to stem from existing risk factors for behavioural problems rather than parental imprisonment alone.

Future Criminality, School Outcomes and Poverty

Studies across countries consistently find that "parental imprisonment can trigger a downward spiral affecting the next generation" (Global Prison Trends, 2017, p. 3). Children of prisoners are more likely to engage in anti-social or offending behaviour than their peers (Besemer et al., 2011; Dobbie et al., 2018; Murray & Farrington, 2008). For example, in Scotland children of prisoners were found to be three times more likely to offend than their peers who did not have a parent in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2007).

Besemer et al.'s (2011) cross-cultural comparison explored the relationship between parental imprisonment and future criminality in English and Dutch children. This study examined whether children whose parents had been imprisoned had more adult convictions than children whose parents were convicted but not imprisoned. The study utilised data from two longitudinal datasets from the period 1946 to 1981: the Cambridge Study on Delinquent Development and the NSCR Transfive Study. Although in recent years penal policies in England and the Netherlands have become more closely aligned along more punitive lines, during this period (1946-1981), the criminal justice systems of these two states differed significantly. The Dutch penal system was characterised by liberal social policies and tolerance. Custody was used sparingly, and resocialization was the primary goal (Besemer et al., 2011). In contrast, penal policy in England was more punitive, as evidenced by higher prison rates and longer sentences (Besemer et al., 2011).

The authors found that there was no significant relationship between parental imprisonment and offspring offending in the Netherlands. In England, parental imprisonment increased a son's likelihood of future criminality. The authors suggest that the contrasting penal situations in each country may explain the observed difference in criminality in children (Besemer et al., 2011).

Murray et al. (2014) re-analysed findings from four previous studies. The purpose of the comparison was to compare the effects of parental imprisonment across four settings (the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (USA), the Netherlands and Sweden) and two different time periods (1950-1960s; 1970-1980s) on the chances of future criminality in the sons of prisoners. In all countries, boys with an incarcerated parent were at an increased risk of future criminality compared to those whose parents were never convicted or incarcerated. However, only in the UK, the USA and the Netherlands during the period 1970-1980s were sons of incarcerated parents at a greater risk than sons of those convicted but not incarcerated. This suggests that imprisonment rather than parental criminality was the factor that negatively influenced

future risk of offending for these children (Murray et al., 2014). Parental incarceration in Sweden and the Netherlands during the 1950-1960s did not increase a son's future risk of criminality.

Considering the difference in penal climate between countries, the authors suggest that child-friendly prison policies (family visits, private visits, better communication systems, protection from the media and social welfare assistance) mitigated the potential harm of parental imprisonment on children in Sweden and the Netherlands (during the 1950s and1960s). Children whose parents were imprisoned prior to their birth did not experience the same level of risk as those whose parents were imprisoned during their childhood, except in the United States, where both pre-birth imprisonment and imprisonment during childhood increased a child's likelihood of future offending. The authors propose that the severe levels of social exclusion and the stigma that result from long-term exclusionary policies in US may explain why children are affected in equal measure by the pre-birth imprisonment of a parent and parental imprisonment during their childhood (Murray et al., 2014).

Previous research has treated parental imprisonment as a dichotomous event without separating out the frequency and length of sentencing which may affect outcomes for children. Using register data on the entire Danish cohort born in 1991, Wakefield, Lee and Wildeman (2016) found that future criminality and educational outcomes were correlated with duration in prison and the frequency of paternal incarceration. That frequency and duration of imprisonment affect children in a country with one of the lowest rates of incarceration (rate of 61) highlights that these factors are also likely to influence child outcomes in countries with much higher rates of imprisonment (Wakefield et al., 2016).

Bhuller et al. (2018) used a quasi-experimental design with judge stringency as an instrumental variable on longitudinal data in Norway. The authors found no effect on school outcomes or future criminality for children of prisoners in Norway. This lends some support to the reasoning that rehabilitative penal systems moderate the impact of parental imprisonment on children. In contrast, Dobbie et al. (2018) used a similar methodology but with administrative, population-wide data from Sweden. The authors found large increases in teen pregnancy and teen crime and a reduction in youth employment at age 20 for children separated by a parent due to imprisonment. The effects were almost entirely driven by children from the most disadvantaged families. Their findings also highlighted the significance of the characteristic of the non-incarcerated parent and the mediating role this can have on children (the poorest outcomes were recorded for those with a criminal history or history of drug and alcohol abuse). Dobbie et al. (2018) suggest that children from disadvantaged homes are particularly sensitive to the trauma of having a parent sent to prison. The authors highlight that Sweden's generous welfare system likely ameliorates some of the adverse consequences of parental imprisonment, as observed in the weaker correlations of poverty and criminal behaviour in Sweden compared to other

developed countries previously reported in the literature (Murray, Janson & Farrington 2007). Their findings highlight that even in affluent countries, “the incarceration of parents with young children significantly increases the intergenerational persistence of poverty and criminal behaviour” (Dobbie et al., 2018, p. 3).

When considered from an international perspective, this finding provides tentative evidence that rehabilitative penal policy alone is not enough to diminish the harm parental separation due to imprisonment can have on children. It is likely that across national contexts, there will be children who are particularly vulnerable to the disruption of parental imprisonment due to the complex interaction of selection effects, mediators and moderators described in Murray’s model of child adjustment (Murray, 2005).

Chapter 4: Child Outcomes – Mediating and Moderating Factors

This chapter will consider the mediating and moderating factors that may affect child adjustment outcomes and thus will have clear implications for agencies providing support to the children and young people of incarcerated parents.

A mediator is a mechanism through which having a parent in prison may be harmful to child adjustment. Examples include reduced family income, home and/or school moves, poor carer adjustment/poor parenting, inadequate explanations and stigma/shame. For example, if parental imprisonment indirectly impacts on child adjustment via reduced family income and financial strain, then this is likely to mediate the effects of the parental imprisonment. Likewise, if having a parent in prison results in the child experiencing stigma and being bullied and teased, then this mechanism may mediate the effects of parental imprisonment on children. Murray (2013) contends that these mediators might be as significant as direct effects on child adjustment and should therefore be the subject of more research.

A moderator can alter the impact of parental imprisonment on adjustment. Understanding these moderators may help explain why some prisoners' children fare better than others and are less impacted by their parent's incarceration. Moderators include the child's age, sex, temperament, parent-child relationships, social support, neighbourhood and the type of crime for which their parent was convicted. For example, there is some evidence that boys and girls may experience parental imprisonment differently (Barnardo's, 2015), therefore the sex of the child may be a moderating variable influencing how the child's adjustment is influenced by parental imprisonment. Murray and Farrington (2005) suggest that boys exhibit more externalised problem behaviour whereas girls' reactions may be more internalised. Johnston (1995) found that the reaction of children to parental imprisonment can also depend of the developmental stage of that child. Therefore, each child's experience will be unique to them and individual differences are important.

Socio-economic Status and Reduced Family Income

The impact of socio-economic status is important to consider as incarceration occurs more frequently among disadvantaged groups (Pettit & Western, 2004) and the incarceration of a parent results in the loss of income from that parent (Murray & Farrington, 2008). It is difficult to establish if existing financial difficulty impacted upon the likelihood of incarceration or if the socio-economic disadvantage was a result of the incarceration (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011). Wildeman (2010) suggests that there is considerable socio-economic risk prior to imprisonment, while other research indicates that incarceration can worsen the financial situation for families, with loss of income and legal fees providing some explanation for this (Arditti, Lambert-Shute & Joset, 2003).

Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher and Mincy (2012) suggest that children of incarcerated parents in the United States face greater economic instability and as a result may have unmet material needs which in turn impacts upon their developmental outcomes. Maag (2017) lends support to this view, suggesting that socio-economic status can impact upon child development outcomes.

Jones et al. (2013) note that research has identified an increased level of financial strain within the family as a key consequence of a parent being imprisoned. Financial difficulties faced by the family include both *reduced family income* (e.g. loss of the prisoner's income, disruption and reduction in benefits income) and *increased family expenditure* (e.g. the cost of visits and providing money to imprisoned family members (SCCJR, 2015). Grimshaw et al. (2007) estimate an average cost of £175 to each family per month as a result of a parent being imprisoned, a figure which will be an underestimate given that it was calculated over a decade ago. This strain on the family's finances can mean a reduction in the money available to spend on meeting the child's needs (Dickie, 2013).

These financial effects may be felt more acutely in Northern Ireland, as analysis of Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) visitors shows that children visiting prisons come from some of the region's most deprived areas (Torney, 2014). Statistical analysis has shown that Northern Ireland's most economically deprived wards are also some of the areas most impacted by the violence during the conflict (McAlister, Scraton & Haydon, 2009). Parental imprisonment may put these families at risk of spiralling further into poverty; Houchin (2005), for example, suggests that existing socio-economic disadvantage can be exacerbated by prison. Such financial instability may put the security of the family's home at risk (Dickie, 2013), leading to house moves and resulting change of schools. In Northern Ireland, these vulnerable children and their families are therefore at risk from a range of challenges and difficulties in their lives, with parental imprisonment, social deprivation and the transgenerational impact of The Troubles presenting as Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (MACE).

Relationships

A child's attachment style may have been compromised prior to parental imprisonment due to the presence of other risk factors, for example, domestic abuse, or due to poor relationships between the child and the caregiver prior to imprisonment. Makariev and Shaver (2010) suggest that there are a number of complex factors, both prior to and during a parent's imprisonment, that impact their child's attachment styles. It is evident from Makariev and Shaver's work that the imprisoned parent's background, which in turn influences their experiences of parenting and their attachment as well as their coping mechanisms, is as important to consider when accounting for attachment risks

to children of prisoners as their attachment relationship with the parent currently and before the parent's imprisonment.

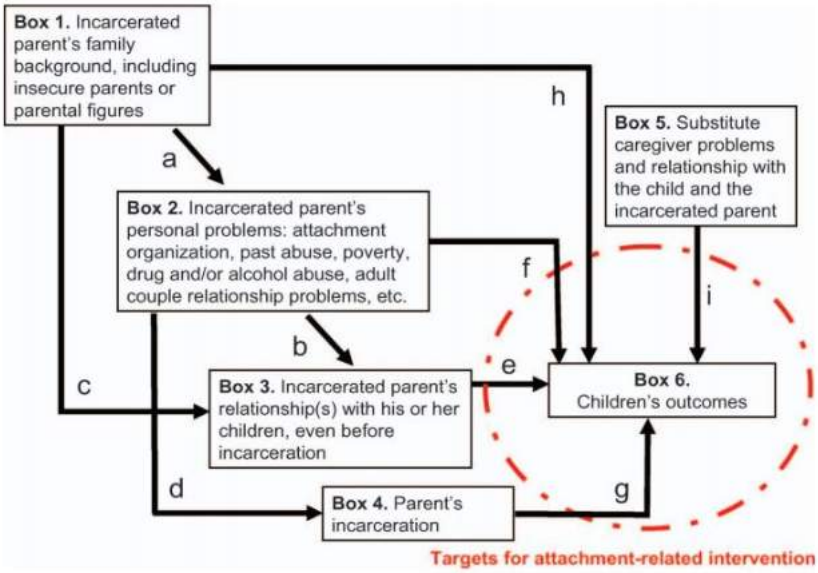


Figure 4.1: *"An attachment-focused model, based on existing research, of processes that affect incarcerated parents and their children" (adapted from Makariev & Shaver, 2010, p. 313).*

Nevertheless, the act of imprisonment itself can impact a child's attachment styles. The separation from the imprisoned parent which occurs from the time of arrest may lead to the child feeling unable to rely on the parent to maintain their safety, or on the availability of their "secure base" (Bowlby, 1982; Murray & Murray, 2010). This separation may unintentionally lead to a 'separation' from other caregivers in the child's life, who they may be less emotionally available due to the unpredictability and anxiety surrounding the imprisonment. Thus, their capacity to be available and provide stability may be reduced. Moreover, the family may insist on keeping the imprisonment a secret, leading to the child feeling unable to communicate their thoughts and feelings (Murray & Murray, 2010). This lack of transparency may lead to children altering their understanding of close relationships to include secrecy and mistrust. Ultimately this is likely to lead to the development of insecure attachment styles and faulty internal working models.

Furthermore, some prisons do not allow physical contact between prisoners and visitors, meaning that children are not reassured, able to seek their secure base or able to be comforted when distressed during prison visits (Dallaire, Ciccone & Wilson, 2012). Poehlmann's (2005b) study of relationships between children and their imprisoned mothers showed that simply visiting an imprisoned parent was not enough to maintain a good attachment style if the visitation did not facilitate relationship development.

Poehlmann (2005a) found that 63% of children with a mother in prison were insecurely attached to their caregivers. Insecurely attached children often experience serious difficulties throughout their lives and can also pass on disordered attachment styles to the next generation (Byrne, Goshin & Joestl, 2010). Thus, it is crucial that threats to secure attachment be reduced.

Trauma and Shame

Children may experience a mix of shame and grief in connection with their parent's imprisonment, leading to feelings of isolation and inability to talk about these feelings with others for fear of stigma (Barnardo's, 2015). Arditti (2012) refers to the "hostile, disapproving or indifferent societal attitudes pertaining to the loss of a family member through imprisonment" (p. 103). In research studies, prisoners' families have identified the negative labels attached to them due to the imprisonment of their family member (Bocknek, Sanderson & Britner, 2009; Boswell et al., 2002) and children may experience or fear bullying and/or exclusion due to this labelling (Barnardo's, 2014). In the Northern Ireland context, McEvoy, O'Mahony, Horner and Lyner (1999) found that the reported experiences of the families and children of politically motivated prisoners were markedly different than those reported by the children and families of 'ordinary' prisoners. The former experienced much less stigma and were regarded by the community with a sense of respect and pride. In particular communities, the families of IRA members were regarded as 'heroic victims' themselves (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). Over 500 political prisoners were granted earlier release under the Good Friday Agreement; however, a number of prisoners affiliated to some Loyalist and 'dissident' Republican organisations continue to be incarcerated at Maghaberry Prison. Moriarity (2017) reported there were 27 Republican prisoners in Roe House and 16 Loyalist prisoners in Bush House at Maghaberry. It should be noted, however, that McEvoy et al.'s (1999) research was conducted with families almost 20 years ago, and the political and social landscape of Northern Ireland has changed significantly. There is an identified gap in the literature in terms of the stigma carried by parental imprisonment in Northern Ireland and whether certain crimes carry less stigma in some communities due to political, socio-economic or social reasons.

A final factor regarding how children in Northern Ireland experience stigma and labelling relates to how Northern Ireland is seen as 'a small place' with few prisons, which has implications for a child's right to privacy (Moore et al., 2011). These societal characteristics may negatively influence the stigma and labelling of the children of so-called "ordinary prisoners".

Loss and Change

Parental imprisonment means that the family is likely to experience loss and change. Children may feel isolated in grief as they may have been told not to talk about what has happened (Barnardo's, 2011; Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012). This ambiguous

loss can lead to children of prisoners being unable to fully grieve their loss, maintaining the trauma (Jones & Wainaina-Wozna, 2012; Weidberg, 2017). The family may also experience losses in finances and support and physical loss if there are no suitable caregivers for the children and they are placed into foster care (Covington, 2003; Evans, 2009). Children of imprisoned mothers may be most at risk of the latter.

Parenting Style/Practices

In families where a history of incarceration has been identified, there is less use of effective parenting strategies (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011), suggesting apparent difficulties in the area of discipline, its consistency and appropriateness in particular. Murray and Farrington (2008) found poor parental supervision and harsh or erratic paternal discipline in families that had experienced paternal incarceration. Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011) suggest that a possible explanation for inconsistent discipline is the parent's involvement in criminality and their attention to that, while the strain experienced by the parent may also lend some explanation. The parent may experience escalated anger and frustration in response to irritations and overreact to a child's behaviour, which in turn may impact upon their method of disciplining that child.

Intergenerational Offending

It is apparent that a history of imprisonment can occur within families, known as intergenerational offending. This is an important factor to explore in relation to the impact of parental incarceration on children. The notion that criminality can be inherited has concerned researchers since the early nineteenth century. Farrington (2011) proposes six potential explanations for why crime can be concentrated within families: offending is part of a larger cycle of antisocial behaviour and deprivation, with such families experiencing exposure to multiple risk factors; assertive mating, whereby individuals are attracted to people similar to themselves, so that male offenders have children with female offenders; the influence of family members on each other; similar environmental factors experienced by the family, including parenting and neighbourhood; genetic components; and finally the criminal justice system may show bias towards certain families. The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, which explored development and prediction of such behaviour, found that offending behaviour can occur within families: 61% of male participants had a convicted mother while 63% had a convicted father and then went on to be convicted themselves (Farrington, Jolliffe, Loeber, Stouhamer-Loeber, & Kalb, 2001). The Pittsburgh Youth Study also found a high concentration of arrests within families, with 8% of the families in that research accounting for 43% of all individuals arrested (Farrington, 2011).

When considering if other family members are incarcerated, it is important to investigate sibling imprisonment. Van De Rakt, Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf (2008)

found that more convictions are evident in children who have a sibling convicted of one offence or more.

Parental IQ

When considering familial factors, the IQ of the incarcerated parent is important to consider. Across the literature it is apparent that individuals who score lower on standardised IQ assessments are more likely to have been arrested for a crime, to self-report criminal involvement and to hold a pro-criminal attitude (McNulty, Bellair & Watts, 2013). Over a quarter (28.8%) of all Irish prisoners have been reported to have a learning disability (Murphy, Harrold, Carey, & Mulrooney, 2002). Hayes, Shackell, Mottram and Lancaster (2007) identified a significant difference in IQ scores between prisoners and standardised norms, with only 8% of the general population score in the learning disabled or borderline group whereas 32% of the prison population score within this range, while Herrington (2009) found 60% of prisoners to have difficulties in literacy and numeracy. This research suggests that many incarcerated parents have a learning difficulty, which would also impact upon their parenting skills and their ability to support their child's learning.

Family Roles

Where a child experienced positive involvement with the incarcerated parent it is expected that a more adverse effect of the loss would be experienced in comparison to a negative relationship, in which case the child may benefit from the incarceration of the parent (Murray, 2007). As previously discussed, the loss of a primary carer will undoubtedly present a child with greater challenges than the imprisonment of a parent who had a less active role in the child's life. Similarly, the roles undertaken by parents vary across families and this will also mediate the impact of the incarceration upon the child and their behaviour. While the changes in a child's behaviour can be explained by emotional disturbances, the incarceration of a parent who undertook the role of disciplinarian may also help to explain this change in behaviour (Ryan-Mangan, 2014).

Within families, often one parent may undertake the role of promoting education with their children. This role may involve ensuring the child is at school and on time, encouragement to do well at school and homework completion (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). The loss of this support due to parental imprisonment can potentially lead to a loss of educational opportunities, which in turn impacts upon the future educational opportunities of these children (Foster & Hagan, 2009).

Parent's Gender and Child's Gender

The structure of a family is altered when a parent is incarcerated regardless of the parent's gender (Thombre, Montague, Maher & Zohra, 2009). However, the changes experienced by the child can somewhat depend on the gender of the incarcerated

parent. Research by Thombre, Montague, Maher & Zohra (2009) suggests that when a father is incarcerated, the loss experienced by the child and family is related to financial stability and when a mother is incarcerated an emotional connection is lost. The impact of gender of the incarcerated parent on the experience of the child has further implications for the functioning of the family.

Paternal Incarceration

The impact of paternal incarceration is important to consider as imprisonment is more common amongst males (Pettit & Western, 2004). Makariev and Shaver (2010) suggest that paternal incarceration carries less risk for children as they will often remain in the care of their mother. However, the notion that paternal incarceration has less adverse outcomes than maternal incarceration is now questionable. The changing conception of childhood explains this in part, with fathers now adopting a more caring role and being more active and involved in their role as parent (O'Keefe, 2014). Furthermore, there is emerging evidence which suggests equality between parents in their role as carers (Morgan, Nutbrown & Hannon, 2009).

Geller et al. (2012) noted an increase in behavioural problems when a father is incarcerated in comparison to maternal incarceration. Sack (1977) reported that in his research, sons of incarcerated fathers went on to imitate the crime committed by their fathers. Social learning theory has been applied to the area of paternal incarceration, suggesting that the children of incarcerated fathers may imitate the behaviour of their father following imprisonment (Matsueda, 1988).

Paternal incarceration may impact upon the socio-economic status of families due to a decreased income (Foster & Hagan, 2009). Strain theory suggests that impact may be experienced by children in a number of ways. For example, the mother may seek further employment, disrupting the children's established routine, leading them to spend time at home with little supervision and take on additional responsibilities within their family such as caring for siblings. The strain of financial hardship is noted throughout the literature as a key feature of the impact of paternal incarceration, leading to deprivation (Geller, Cooper, Garfunkel, Schwartz-Sokher & Mincy, 2012).

Geller et al. (2012) indicate that incarceration often limits a father's capacity to parent further due to the strained relationship between him and other members of the family which can impact upon his ability to maintain a role in parenting and even contact. Upon release from prison, these strained relationships may further restrict the father's involvement.

There is a need for further exploration of the impact of paternal incarceration and a move away from focussing merely on the practical aspects, including financial loss, with which much of the research to date has been concerned.

Maternal Incarceration

In Northern Ireland in 2010 more than 17,240 children were separated from their mothers through incarceration (Wilks-Wiffen, 2011) and 60% of female prisoners in Northern Ireland have children under the age of 18 years.

Motherhood and the importance of the mother-child relationship is a widely researched area, particularly in the field of child development and psychology. Fahlberg (2012) indicates that it is crucial to support and maintain the relationship between mother and child, particularly throughout the formative years of a child's life. A separation may lead to psychological difficulties and impact upon the development of trust and the development of autonomy (Miller, 2006). Murray and Farrington (2008) indicate that adverse outcomes are common for children who have an incarcerated parent due to the trauma of the parent-child separation. This notion is supported by the work of Bowlby (1980) in relation to attachment and Hirschi (1969) in relation to social bonding. Poehlmann (2005) conducted cross-sectional research and concluded that where a child experienced maternal incarceration, insecure attachment feelings developed towards their mother. Incarceration of mothers disrupts the mother-child bond (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016), making this difficult to re-establish, especially if incarceration is for a long period or occurs at a vulnerable age for the child (Fahlberg, 2012).

Hagan and Dinovitzer (1999) found that maternal incarceration has the potential to be more damaging for children in comparison to paternal incarceration. Similarly, Murray and Farrington (2008) suggest that children may experience a greater negative impact if a mother is incarcerated. Research has identified and explored factors which may explain the reason for this. It is more likely that children live with their mother prior to her incarceration in comparison to paternal incarceration (Mumola, 2000). Similarly, Robertson (2007) suggests that incarcerated mothers are often the primary carer for their children. In the Republic of Ireland, this loss of a primary caregiver results in displacement from the child's home and care received from a family member, foster care or the State for approximately 95% of children whose mother is incarcerated (Gill, 2013). Maternal incarceration may result in siblings being split up (Robertson, 2007). The loss of the primary caregiver presents as a challenge for children to visit incarcerated mothers and maintain contact due to a lack of adults to accompany them to the prison (Robertson, 2007). In many areas there are fewer prison facilities for women than for men, resulting in a greater distance for children to travel to visit their mothers (Hagan & Coleman, 2001). However, mothers are often incarcerated for a shorter period of time than fathers which can be viewed as an ameliorating factor in such situations (Murray & Farrington, 2008).

Gender of Child

Research regarding the gender of the child and their reaction to parental incarceration has yielded inconsistent results. Murray and Farrington (2008) indicate that gender differences may be observed in how children react to parental incarceration. In a

manner similar to a reaction to stress, antisocial behaviour (externalising) is more prevalent in boys and anxiety and depression (internalising) is more prevalent in girls. Although despite the expectation that boys would experience more adverse effects arising from the notion that boys are more vulnerable to stressful changes, the evidence is unclear (Hetherington, Bridges & Insabella, 1998). Moffitt and Caspi (2001) found boys and girls to be similarly affected by parental incarceration. Murray, Janson and Farrington (2007) compared the effects of parental incarceration of boys and girls in Project Metropolitan and found the incarceration of a parent to be a strong indicator of adult criminal behaviour for both genders, with a slightly stronger effect for females. Friedman and Esselstyn (1965) suggest worse effects for girls while Gabel (1992) found greater negative reactions amongst boys. Lundberg, McLanahan and Rose (2007) suggest that the incarceration of a father may be less detrimental to girls as fathers are less involved with daughters than with sons. However, the emerging research regarding equality and parenting challenges this.

The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study in the USA (Wildeman, 2010) indicates an increased risk of aggression amongst boys and a decrease of such behaviour amongst girls. However, Kinner, Alati and Najman (2007) suggest an association between paternal incarceration and internalising behaviour amongst adolescent females but not males. It is apparent that both are adversely affected but react differently (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2003). This research highlights the developmental stage of the child as a moderating factor and the importance of not simply considering these factors in isolation but exploring their interaction.

Child's Age and Developmental Stage at Time of Incarceration

According to Miller (2006), emotional survival takes precedence when a challenge emerges that exceeds the child's capacity to cope. This impacts upon the child's ability to meet developmental goals.

Children may react to parental incarceration in various ways depending on their developmental stage (Murray & Farrington, 2008) and may regress developmentally and become withdrawn (Maag, 2017). During infancy, incarceration will disrupt attachment; in early to middle childhood, there may be an impact upon the child's self-concept and possible developmental regression, while in adolescence antisocial behaviour and delinquency may emerge (Johnston, 1995). However, the reaction of a child to parental incarceration in relation to the developmental stage of the child is an area of research that has generated inconsistent results (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). Murray, Farrington and Sekol (2012) suggest there are no evident differences in relation to the developmental stage of the child, while Miller (2006) suggests that it is a crucial factor to consider when examining the impact of parental incarceration. Murray and Farrington (2008) suggest that there is little empirical evidence to support the notion that parental incarceration may cause children to react differently and have varying outcomes depending on the age of the child. The age and developmental

stage will directly impact upon many variables including the explanation given to the child, the level of contact that the child has with the incarcerated parent, and the impact of other people's reaction to the parent's incarceration.

Before Birth to Age 1

When a mother is incarcerated during pregnancy, her baby can reside in prison until they are twelve months of age in the Republic of Ireland and nine months in Northern Ireland. This allows opportunity for the development of a mother-child relationship during this critical period in the child's life (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016). After this period, the child will be cared for by family members or foster carers as the prison environment is viewed as unsuitable. In the UK, prisoners who give birth in prison can apply for a place in a mother and baby unit. Seventy-nine percent of such applications were successful in March 2017, during which 40 babies were held in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2017). According to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (2010), prisons do not provide an environment that is appropriate for babies and young children. However, the separation of mothers from their children is an undesirable outcome.

Research lends support to the benefits of babies staying with their parents in prison. Jbara (2012), for example, found that babies who remained with their mothers developed healthier attachments than those who did not. Where this is not possible, the bond with the incarcerated mother is greatly impacted. Poehlmann's (2005) research also indicates the presence of attachment difficulties, with younger children having less secure attachment feelings to the incarcerated parent in comparison to older children. The disruption of attachments at an early age and for a long period of time is almost impossible to re-establish (Fahlberg, 2012).

While living with a mother in prison can reduce the trauma of separation, it can prove detrimental to the development of the child (Eloff & Moen, 2003). Although children living with parents in prison made similar developmental progress, those who spent a longer than average period in prison showed a decline in cognitive development over a four-month timeframe.

The Cambridge Study (Murray & Farrington, 2008) explored the impact of parental incarceration before and after birth by conducting a comparison between boys who experienced parental imprisonment before birth with those who experienced the imprisonment of a parent between 0-10 years of age. The rationale for this particular comparison was the boys whose parents were imprisoned prior to their birth were not directly exposed to parental imprisonment but should have similar backgrounds to those who experienced parental imprisonment from 0-10 years. The researchers concluded that separation due to parental imprisonment after birth was a predictor of increased rates of mental health difficulties, antisocial behaviour and further adverse outcomes in comparison to parental imprisonment prior to birth. Moreover, the incarceration of a parent prior to the birth of a child has less adverse outcomes than

imprisonment after birth, regardless of age (Murray & Farrington, 2008). However, in Project Metropolitan (Murray, Janson & Farrington, 2007), the results indicated that parental incarceration after birth was not a predictor of higher rates of crime than incarceration before birth.

Childhood

Johnston (1995) identified the incarceration of a parent during early childhood and in particular when a child is aged 2-6 years as having the most harmful long-term effects because the child is unable to process the trauma independently. The experience of stigma may emerge during this period of development. Ryan-Mangan (2014) argues that younger children may not understand or be aware of the negative reactions of others and as a result not experience the shame that older family members may experience. However, Miller (2006) suggests that younger children have already developed an awareness of the stigma of criminality and incarceration. Wildeman (2010) explores this notion further, implying that children are affected by the associated stigma of parental incarceration regardless of their cognitive ability to process this. Nesmith and Ruhland's (2008) research also lends support to the notion that even younger children react to parental incarceration and are aware of the disruption caused. In their study, this emerged as an awareness of the resulting stressors for the family and in particular the remaining parent. One participant tried to solve problems at home while also attempting to cope with their own feelings in a positive manner. Other children in the sample, however, were fearful of peer judgements and were isolated. Sack (1977) found that boys aged 6-12 years were the most likely group to show aggression as a reaction to the incarceration of a parent.

The experience of stigma within the child's peer group is essential to explore in relation to the impact in childhood. The incarceration of a parent can cause children who have established a peer group to feel alienated from their peers, which further exacerbates the loss and disruption already being experienced as a direct result of the incarceration (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). The stigma can also be experienced in childhood as withdrawal from friendships. This can be experienced in younger children as parents withdrawing their children from children of incarcerated parents, often without an explanation (Breen, 1995). Furthermore, research suggests that bullying may be experienced by the child due to the incarceration of their parent, which can lead to a reluctance to attend school or even school-refusal (Chui, 2010).

An impact upon academic functioning has also been discussed (Edwards, 2009). The work of Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) identified academic difficulties for children of incarcerated parents with lower levels of cognitive performance than the national average. Research suggests that deterioration in academic performance and even academic failure can emerge (Dallaire, Ciccone & Wilson, 2010). Murray et al. (2012) argue that parental incarceration is not a risk factor for academic achievement. A possible explanation where a negative change is experienced in academic

achievement is the loss of concentration and attention in childhood (Geller et al., 2012).

Adolescence

Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011) identified that where a parent is incarcerated there is greater risk and an increase over time of poor adjustment, problem behaviours and delinquency for their son or daughter across adolescence. Although their research did not identify the reason for this, the researchers suggest that parental incarceration may be a possible influence on subsequent parenting, which in turn may impact upon later outcomes. Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011) suggest that a decrease in the influence of protective factors that were relevant in childhood or the process of maturation where stresses are asymptomatic in earlier childhood development may provide an explanation. Similarly, Thombre, Montague, Maher and Zohra (2009) identified an increased risk for delinquency, anti-social acting out behaviour, drug involvement and even drug addiction in adolescence.

However, Murray et al. (2007) compared the impact of imprisonment on children as a function of the age of the child, from birth to 19 years. Their findings indicate that the impact is similar across all ages. However, research in this area is limited by small convenience samples and cross-sectional design (Geller et al., 2012).

Features of the Crime

A longer duration of imprisonment and the more often a parent is imprisoned increases the likelihood of adverse outcomes for children (Murray & Farrington, 2008). This highlights the importance of exploring the characteristics of the crime to further enhance our understanding of the difficulties children of incarcerated parents may experience.

Nature of the Arrest

Incarceration is not a single event; it is a dynamic process that occurs over time (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2003). The impact of the incarceration of a parent begins with the arrest (Light, 1995). A sudden removal of a parent from the family can cause disruption and uncertainty for the child, causing upset and anxiety (Ryan-Mangan, 2014) regardless of how the arrest is conducted or whether the arrest brings respite to the family (Martynowicz, 2011). Police focus on the arrest, with criminal justice taking precedence over additional factors such as the presence of a child (Martynowicz, 2011). McEvoy, O'Mahony, Horner and Lyner (1999) found that where a parent was arrested at home, 84% of families reported that children were present during the arrest. A further 80% identified that there were immediate effects on the children including general emotional problems, problems with schoolwork and being over protective of the parent at home. McEvoy et al. (1999) found that children present at the time of the arrest did not cope as well as those children who were not present. Walden, Harris and Catron (2003) lend support to this suggesting that when an arrest

was witnessed by a child, there were greater negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression and emotional regulation difficulties.

As previously discussed, separation from a parent presents a significant difficulty for a child, but often the manner in which separation occurs for a child when a parent is incarcerated presents its own unique challenges. Murray (2007) suggests that arrests are a traumatic experience for children as they may be violent or confrontational. Often arrests are unexpected for the child and may remain unexplained causing fright and confusion. The arrest of a parent proves difficult for children to comprehend, impacting upon feelings of safety and security and often resulting in a child blaming themselves (Martynowicz, 2011).

On the island of Ireland, families may have experienced poor treatment by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) or Gardai, including persistent visits to family homes and the use of sinister tones which had a negative impact upon children (Martyn, 2012). The arrest of a parent is often a child's first experience of the criminal justice system, and therefore has an impact on their understanding of the system and their feelings about it (Robertson, 2007). When a child witnesses the arrest of a parent in a negative manner, this may shape their feelings towards the criminal justice system and be a further moderating factor of their future behaviour.

Type of Crime and Length of Prison Sentence

When considering the type of crime committed by the incarcerated parent in the context of Northern Ireland, politically motivated prisoners are of particular interest. McEvoy et al. (1999) indicate that stronger family support is evident for politically motivated prisoners even when long-term sentences have been imposed. Similarly, Cho (2009) found that due to socio-economic or cultural factors, less stigma may be associated in certain regions. Ryan-Mangan (2014) found that families of IRA members can be seen as heroic members of their community. This in turn impacts upon the child's feelings towards their incarcerated parent and even towards crime.

In the USA, a drug offense is the most common reason for incarcerating women (35%), while a violent offense was the most common reason for the incarceration of males (Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002). In the UK, 75% of females are incarcerated for non-violent offences, the majority being theft or damage (Prison Reform Trust, 2017). In Northern Ireland, female incarceration increased by 30% in 2014-2016 in comparison to a 4% increase for males. Defaulting on fines has been identified as the most notable reason for this according to the Prison Reform Trust. These statistics illustrate that although female incarceration is increasing, the type of crime committed is less serious than those committed by men. The type of crime committed is important to reflect upon as this impacts upon the child's ability to visit their incarcerated parent.

The severity of the crime will inform the length of the sentence served by the prisoner, which is an important factor when exploring the moderating factors of incarceration in

relation to children of prisoners. Figure 4.2 outlines the type of crime committed and length of prison sentence in relation to gender.

Figure 4.2: *Type of crime committed and length of prison sentence in relation to gender (Ministry of Justice, 2017).*

Trauma theories suggest that the longer the prison sentence, the greater the likelihood of adverse outcomes (Murray & Farrington, 2008). The findings of the Cambridge Study (Murray et al., 2007) lend support to this, with boys being more likely to become repeat offenders in adulthood if parents were incarcerated for longer than two months (35%) than if the incarceration was for less than two months (7%).

How Many Times the Parent is Incarcerated

Children experience parental absence and loss for various reasons, including separation, divorce, death and emigration. However, the uniqueness of separation through parental incarceration is that this can be experienced on multiple occasions (Wildeman, 2010) and previous experience of parental incarceration is a moderator of a child's reaction to the incarceration of a parent (Murray, 2007). The more often a parent is imprisoned, the more likely it is that they will experience adversity (Murray & Farrington, 2008). This makes it difficult for the child to feel secure and to re-build an assumptive world (Ryan-Mangan, 2014), leading to great uncertainty for the child both while the parent is incarcerated and when the parent returns to the family. According to Johnson and Waldfogel (2002), 67% of incarcerated males and 53% of incarcerated females were incarcerated at least once before.

Project Metropolitan (Murray et al., 2007) identified a relationship between the number of times a parent was incarcerated and the number of times a child offended as an adult, with a greater frequency of parental incarceration resulting in a child offending multiple times in adulthood.

In a study of incarcerated females, Hairston (1991) found that the more often a woman had been incarcerated the less likely she was to be living with her children at the time of her most recent incarceration, with the frequency of incarceration impacting on family life even upon release.

Race

As highlighted in Chapter 1, levels of incarceration are higher amongst certain races, establishing this as a family characteristic of importance to explore. According to the Ministry of Justice (2017), in the UK, 26% of prisoners are from a minority group, while traveller, gypsy and Roma prisoners make up 5% of the prison population in Europe (Martynowicz, 2011). A direct association has been identified between ethnicity and the probability of receiving a custodial sentence (Martynowicz, 2011). Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011) revealed a disproportionate number of children from Native American, African American and Hispanic backgrounds experiencing parental incarceration in the first year of their lives. Therefore, minority children are possibly the most negatively affected by the incarceration of a parent, which further impacts upon the potential for this group to experience adverse outcomes (Novero, Booker Loper & Warren, 2011).

Contact in Prison

The frequency of contact between the child and their incarcerated parent may impact upon the outcomes experienced (Foster & Hagan, 2009). Research by Foster and Hagan suggests that the conduct of children improved when they heard from their incarcerated parent. When visits are possible, a sense of connectedness is achieved as the parent and child are able to have a relationship due to the experience of direct communication and investment from the parent, leading to a decrease in worry and anxiety in the child (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

However, Brown, Dibb, Shenton and Elson (2002) suggest that some aspects of prison visits can cause strain for children, including possible long-distance travel, search procedures in prison, limited if any physical contact during visit and difficulty leaving the parent at the end of the visit. Their research indicates that such visits may be problematic for children and exacerbate the difficulties they experience.

The ‘Parental Imprisonment-Child Adjustment Model’: Northern Ireland-Specific Factors

Prison visits can be a difficult experience for children, evoking both positive and negative emotions as the child may be happy to see their parent but then may find it upsetting to say goodbye again after a short visit (SCCJR, 2015). Entering a prison environment can be a daunting and confusing experience, due to “poor facilities that are not ‘child friendly’ and confusing rules restricting how they can interact with their imprisoned family members” (SCCJR, 2015, p. 4). These identified difficulties may be

exacerbated in Northern Ireland due to the legacy of The Troubles, which is still evident in the operational policies and regimes of the Northern Ireland penal system (Moore et al., 2011), events during the period of conflict having resulted in “a very risk aversive, security-focused regime” (Butler, 2016). While reform is ongoing to adapt the prison service to meet the needs of a significantly different prison population to that of the 1970s to 1990s, Maghaberry, Northern Ireland’s high-security prison, continues to have two wings dedicated to politically affiliated prisoners while the rest of the population is diverse with all categories of male prisoners. However, blanket maximum-security conditions apply to all the prisoners, which has significant implications for their visiting children. Maghaberry has been described as “a forbidding place” (Moore et al., 2011) and children entering the prison must pass through “an intensive and intrusive security procedure” involving biometric handprint, a ‘rub down’ search, screening of bags and belongings and a “passive drug dog search”. It is recognised that the NIPS has made “a real effort to facilitate relaxed and extended contact between the prisoner and their child” (Barnardo’s, 2015) through child-centred visits within each prison (Scharff Smith & Gampell, 2011). However, only limited numbers of imprisoned parents can participate in the schemes (Moore et al., 2011) and research has found a lack of awareness among families in Northern Ireland about the availability of these visits (Scharff Smith & Gampell, 2011).

Another practical consideration for children visiting Northern Ireland prisons, particularly Magilligan, is geographical location. Magilligan holds male prisoners from all over Northern Ireland but is situated in a remote area approximately 90 miles from Newry, 67 miles from Belfast and 25 miles from Derry (Moore et al., 2011). Access by public transport may require a combination of bus, train and taxi journeys. A return trip to the prison may therefore be expensive for a family and involve a full day of travel time, and “distance and travelling difficulties are considerable barriers to children being able to visit their parents in prison frequently and regularly” (Moore et al., 2011, p. 146).

Chapter 5: Moderating Risk – Interventions within Prison

This chapter will consider a range of initiatives and interventions that have been implemented within prisons in order to moderate the potentially negative impact of incarceration on child adjustment.

Prison Visits

At the most fundamental level there are certain factors which should be considered when a child is visiting an imprisoned parent. Although we have seen that additional contact between an incarcerated parent and their children should be implemented where possible, the concerns this could cause for parents should be taken into consideration. Parents may be worried about other prisoners interacting with their child, and in particular, women have voiced concerns about other prisoners asking to hold their baby (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016). There may also be concerns about conflict or arguments breaking out between other prisoners which a child could witness (Hayes, Butler, Devaney & Percy, 2018), which in turn could cause distress for the child and for the parent.

In addition, visiting hours in prison can be very noisy, and previous studies have noted incarcerated parents' concerns about this, particularly if a child has sensory issues (Hayes, Butler, Devaney & Percy, 2018). Children could therefore benefit from special family visits rather than adhering to standard visiting times in order to limit the additional challenges which may arise from being in an environment which could possibly be over-crowded, noisy and dangerous.

Child-Friendly Prisons

There are many changes which could be made to make a prison more child-friendly, such as setting specific visiting hours for families, allowing prisoners and their families access to a private room for their visits, or providing toys, activities or facilities which could make the visit more natural and give the child and parent a greater opportunity to have a more typical relationship. However, it should also be taken into consideration that in addition to security concerns, accommodating children in prison can require additional costs and the necessity to change the infrastructure of a prison in order to make it child-friendly (Hoffmann, Byrd & Kightlinger (2010). Given that prisons may not have additional funding for this, it may mean that there are limitations to the steps they can take to make the prison more family focused.

Implications of a Parent's Gender

Although the vast majority of parents who are in prison are men, the majority of women in prison have a child (Miller, 2014). Therefore, the impact for the child and parent

when a mother is imprisoned should also be an important consideration when forming interventions in prison. O'Malley and Devaney (2016) interviewed eight staff members in the Irish prison system and found that while steps appear to be taken to ensure that prison staff are aware that an inmate is a mother, the way in which this is carried out is not always adequate, as the prisoner is relied on to provide accurate information. Furthermore, if a social worker is involved with the family, it is their responsibility to make themselves known to the prison authorities, and this does not always happen. Consequently, the information the prison has on an individual or their family can be very limited. Although mothers are usually granted a second weekly visit and are occasionally allowed to have an additional outing with their children, the visiting space in prisons was thought to be inadequate for interacting with children, and while mothers had requested facilities that would enable them to replicate normal family life while their child was visiting, prisons do not have the capacity to provide this.

The impact of the characteristics of mothers and fathers in prison has been discussed, but their differing needs should also be taken into account when forming a prison intervention. Kjellstrand et al. (2012) carried out a study involving 359 parents (198 women and 161 men) who were in prison which aimed to examine the differences in their characteristics and how this could influence the formation of interventions. The researchers carried out interviews with each parent and distributed self-report questionnaires relating to the parent's family, childhood, relationships, friendships, experiences, beliefs, culture and expectations for the future.

They found that incarcerated mothers and fathers were similar in that the vast majority had low levels of education, low income and a history of a difficult background which tended to involve substance abuse and violence. This indicates that parenting programmes for mothers and fathers should be taking risk factors such as these into consideration, regardless of the gender of the parent. However, the study also suggested that mothers had a lower level of employment than fathers, and that those who were employed had a lower level of pay. Mothers were also more likely to be living in poverty or receiving some form of government aid, and they reported a higher level of drug or alcohol abuse than fathers. While it is worth bearing in mind that this data was obtained through interviews and self-report and was therefore constrained by the honesty of the participants, it could be helpful in highlighting areas such as these which may affect women more extensively than men, and which suggest that mothers would benefit from programmes which provide additional support in these areas.

Choosing the Correct Intervention

It has been suggested that children of parents who are incarcerated can be influenced by different factors, and when forming an intervention within a prison, the type of difficulties children may be experiencing should be considered. Murray and Farrington (2008) argue that there are four particular areas which could cause adverse outcomes

for the child of an imprisoned parent: trauma, strained caregiving, economic strain and stigma. It would therefore be useful for the particular type of adversity a child is experiencing to be identified prior to implementing an intervention, and their gender and age and stage of development established in order to support the child when they are visiting their parent.

Prison Interventions Outside Northern Ireland

Parenting Inside Out (USA)

The difficulties which children and their incarcerated parents face do not always end when a parent is released from prison.

The Parenting Inside Out programme aims to provide parents in prison with the knowledge, skills and motivation to prevent anti-social behaviour problems in their children. The 359 participants included 161 men and 198 women from various participating prisons. In the month before their incarceration, 34% of the parents had lived with their child full-time, 9% lived with them part-time and 25% had no contact at all. The participants took part in a total of 90 hours of instruction over the course of 12 weeks, with approximately 15 people per group.

The researchers found that the participants in the Parenting Inside Out intervention had 41.4% fewer arrests after their release from prison than the control group who had received services as usual. Furthermore, in the intervention group, there was no significant difference between the rearrests of parents who lived with their children before incarceration and those who did not. By contrast, in the control group, there were significantly more arrests among those who had not lived with their children. This indicates that while services as usual do not appear to reduce the chances of someone being rearrested if they did not previously live with their child, the Parenting Inside Out programme potentially motivates both parents who previously lived with their children and those who did not.

The Family Connections Programme (USA)

The maintenance of a parent-child relationship and the limitation of disruption to the child's development are of optimum importance when a parent is placed in prison. However, the emotional burden of having a parent in prison can also have negative ramifications for a child's academic success (Ryan-Mangan, 2014). This means that the utilisation of reading programmes for incarcerated parents and their children could play an important role in reducing the potential difficulties this can cause.

Blumberg and Griffin (2013) explored the advantages of The Family Connections programme in California, which required incarcerated parents to record DVDs of themselves reading an age-appropriate book to their child, which were then posted to the child to watch. This was thought to provide the parent with a sense of responsibility, and it was anticipated that this would help them to return to a role as a functioning parent upon their release. It was also hoped that the programme would give children

the opportunity to “interact” with their parents in a way which would not have otherwise been possible.

While a programme such as this does not necessarily increase the direct contact a parent and child have, it addresses some of the difficulties which can arise from prison visits by taking the interaction outside of the prison for the child. As well as potentially benefiting the child and parent’s relationship, it also provides an opportunity to encourage reading, which could in turn support the child’s academic ability. Although this is not empirical research and the long-term impact of this programme is unknown, it is interesting to consider the possible positive influence that a programme such as this could have.

Barnardo’s (England and Wales)

In addition to interventions and programmes which are carried out within prisons (see below), Barnardo’s takes steps to ensure that support is given to the children of incarcerated parents in England and Wales (Barnardo’s, 2014). They arrange higher quality visits for parents and children which take place in visitors’ centres and halls and include play facilities in order to ensure that the visit is family-focused and child-centred, as well as encouraging children and their parents to cook and read together. They also work with local authorities in England and Wales and provide parenting and volunteer programmes in prisons.

While Barnardo’s carry out work within the Prison Service in Northern Ireland, their support is usually provided as part of another intervention or programme rather than in isolation.

Young People in Prison (UK and USA)

Young people in Juvenile Justice Centres are a unique group with specific needs due to their age, but they may also need support as parents, since approximately one in four of them has a child (Macmillan, 2005). Buston et al. (2012) carried out a systematic review which aimed to examine the effectiveness of parenting interventions targeting young male offenders and identified a range of programmes in both the UK and the USA.

They found that the participants enjoyed the programmes they took part in and found them useful in enabling them to improve their knowledge about parenting and their attitudes towards fulfilling this role. However, the researchers also identified many shortcomings in the limited research available relating to parenting programmes for young male offenders. This included the fact that no programme had actually been evaluated using experimental methods, meaning that it was difficult to derive whether or not there were any lasting benefits to the interventions which were being carried out. They also highlighted the fact that evaluations were often carried out by those who had designed or delivered the intervention, which could raise questions about how objective these evaluations really are.

This could be indicative of the need for further empirical research in this area, in order to ensure that young offenders who are parents are provided with the support they need to learn skills which could benefit them as well as their children. Although this particular systematic review focused on young male offenders, it would also be interesting to explore the impact of parenting programmes for young female offenders, as there appears to be extremely limited research in this area also.

Prison Interventions within Northern Ireland

We have discussed already the fact that the prison system in Northern Ireland is heavily influenced by political conflict, which has led to a more restrictive regime and a greater focus on security than that which may be evident in other prisons (Butler, 2016). Given the unique prison environment that this could potentially be creating, the necessity to ensure the availability of appropriate interventions for parents within this prison population is of optimum importance. The following interventions and services have been provided in Northern Ireland in recent years.

Temporary Release

Although this is not a specific intervention, prisoners in Northern Ireland are often granted the opportunity for temporary release, to enable them to spend a short time at home with their family. Due to the nature of some crimes, it would not be advisable to enable all prisoners to have access to this privilege as it may be dangerous for their family or members of the public, but the opportunity to visit their family in their own home environment could be very beneficial for some prisoners. Furthermore, a scheme such as this gives children the opportunity to see their parent outside of the prison environment and could provide them with the chance to interact in a more natural manner, which may not always be possible during prison visits.

The "Being a Dad" Programme

McCrudden et al. (2014) carried out a study in Maghaberry Prison with 18 fathers aged 23-50 years old, who took part in the "Being a Dad" programme. This programme took place over the course of 17 weeks and focused on family life and relationships. It aimed to encourage fathers to become more reflective about their relationships with their children and their own parenting skills, in the hope that they would then be capable of contributing positively to family life while in custody and following their release.

The fathers were required to complete questionnaires before and after the intervention, which asked them to rate their own understanding of their child's behaviour, age and stage of development, as well as their ability to communicate with their child and their understanding of how their child was impacted by their imprisonment. They were also asked about their awareness of their parenting style, and their confidence as a parent. In addition to completing the questionnaire, 13 of the fathers took part in a focus group discussion following the intervention.

The results indicated that the fathers felt that they had improved their understanding of child behaviour and development, and more specifically, that they had enhanced the quality of their communication and their parenting and had a deeper understanding of the impact that their incarceration had on their family. These improvements were associated with stronger relationships both inside and outside of prison, and the fathers who took part stated that they valued the opportunity it provided for them to have enhanced visitation with their children.

This emphasises the hugely positive ramifications that a programme such as this can have, and while the study was with a relatively small group of participants, the results are a valuable indication of the potential outcomes of making a programme of this nature available to all fathers who wish to take part. While the long-term impact of this intervention is unknown, the positive short-term results imply that fathers, and consequently their families, benefit from taking part, which could limit or even prevent some of the damage caused by a parent being incarcerated.

The Families Matter Programme

Hayes, Butler, Devaney and Percy (2018) carried out a study examining the impact of the Families Matter programme in Maghaberry Prison. This was a 17-week residential parenting programme for adult males, which aimed to improve father-child relationships by increasing both the frequency and quality of contact, while strengthening parenting skills through the completion of parenting classes. The researchers conducted 10 days of non-participant observation in the prison, as well as carrying out semi-structured interviews with 18 imprisoned fathers, 7 family members and 17 members of staff.

They found that the families responded very positively and felt that the increased contact in the form of additional telephone access and special family visits provided fathers with the opportunity to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with their children. Fathers also felt that they were provided with adequate opportunities to use the parenting skills which they had been taught, which suggests that a combination of increased contact along with the chance to practice skills which have been taught could be highly beneficial to parents who are in prison, and consequently, could also benefit their children and families.

Unfortunately, the additional opportunities for parent-child contact which were provided during the course of the programme were then withdrawn by the prison following the completion of the intervention, meaning that the positive results which were seen may not have been able to be maintained. However, the very encouraging benefits of taking part in the programme could help emphasise the importance of putting new guidelines in place which allow parents increased contact with their children while they are in prison, particularly if they are willing to undertake parenting classes to develop their own skills and abilities as well.

The Family Strategy Scheme

In 2017, Magilligan Prison put a Family Strategy Scheme in place, which aimed to support family relationships in order to limit the impact of imprisonment (DOJ, 2017). They did this by providing extended visits during which prisoners spent time with their children, and their families were given an escorted tour of the prison and its facilities. Furthermore, charities, church groups and services for children were involved in the scheme and provided further support to the prisoner and their family. More than 70 prisoners took part in the scheme, but as of yet, there appears to be no empirical research about the outcomes and potential benefits of the intervention.

The 6 out of 10 Project

Because being a parent who is in prison can be even more overwhelming and difficult for a young person, intervention is vital to ensure that people in this position are given the opportunity to develop their parenting skills. For this reason, the 6 out of 10 Project specifically targets young parents in prison and involves 18-24-year-old parents in Hydebank Young Offenders' Centre and Ash House. The project encourages young people to spend more time with their children while they are in prison and provides them with training relating to interacting with their children in a positive way through playing, listening and talking. As an additional benefit of the programme, the young people are given the opportunity to discuss where they would like to work after they leave prison, and upon their release, they are granted a 1-year job placement. This particular aspect of the project has the potential to benefit the prisoner's children, as employment could increase the young person's self-confidence in their ability to provide for their child, which in turn could help them utilise the parenting skills they learned while they were in prison.

As is the case with some other prison-based parenting programmes in Northern Ireland, there is currently no empirical research to support the benefits of an intervention such as this. However, it stands to reason that the provision of training combined with the knowledge that a job will be provided upon release from prison could be both beneficial and motivating for a young parent who is in prison.

Skype

Advances in technology mean that prisoners can now interact with their families in ways which would have been impossible in the past. Magilligan Prison has introduced a programme which enables parents to make video calls to their families, in the hope that this will not only strengthen their relationship with their children, but that the maintenance of this relationship will also support them in their reintegration into the community following their release from prison (DOJ, 2015). While no empirical research currently exists to lend support to this type of provision, it would be beneficial to explore the impact that this has, as it has the potential to be a low-cost yet effective form of support for incarcerated parents and their families. Given that it makes use of modern technology, it may also be a form of communication which children are familiar with and which they enjoy.

NIACRO: CHIP

The Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) offers a service entitled Children with Imprisoned Parents (CHIP), which offers a range of services based on the child's specific needs. These services include supporting positive engagement between the child and their imprisoned parent, support for the parent in prison and working with prison staff to ensure a more family-friendly environment within the prison (McGonigle, 2002; NIACRO, 2016). The CHIP programme also supports families following a parent's release from prison; this will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Although research exists which looks at the benefits of similar programmes in Northern Ireland (Hayes, Butler, Devaney & Percy, 2018; McCrudden et al., 2014), there appears to be no existing empirical research specifically relating to the CHIP programme. Considering this programme focuses on the child, the parent and the staff within the prison, it would be interesting to explore the benefits of this for all three of these groups, and the potential implications this has for the future development of the child or young person.

Chapter 6: Moderating Risk – Interventions Based in the Community

We have seen that for a child whose parent is imprisoned, the entire custodial process – from arrest to release – can be scary, confusing and unsettling. The nature of the crime, its impact and implications may not be completely explained to the child. The child may feel vulnerable, isolated and upset. It is important that supports are in place for these children and their families as they negotiate this unfamiliar terrain. We have seen that a strain may be put on the family system, where the practicalities of having an imprisoned parent lead to financial difficulties, shifts in roles and expectations within the family, and logistical difficulties, for example, if the imprisoned parent was the only adult who could drive the children to and from school, extra-curricular activities etc. Support for families therefore needs to target the emotional aspect of parental incarceration as well as the practical aspects.

Maintaining positive family ties has been shown to increase the stability of a child's life both during and after parental incarceration. As yet, there is no statutory agency in Northern Ireland which is specifically geared toward supporting children of imprisoned parents (Barnardo's Briefing Paper No. 8). These children often go 'unseen', with schools and other agencies unaware of them unless they have presented with issues for another reason, e.g. child protection issues, truancy, etc. Although guidance has been issued by the government recognising children of prisoners as a group that requires support (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009), there is a lack of specific guidance about the type of support, lack of consistency and lack of funding to implement this guidance effectively.

Issues Faced by Prisoners and their Families on Release

Prisoners face a multitude of issues upon release. In terms of practicalities, accommodation is often an issue. Approximately one third of female prisoners lose their homes whilst in prison and do not have accommodation arranged for when they are released (Prison Reform Trust, 2011), and around 35% of all prisoners have nowhere to stay upon release (Gojkovic, Mills & Meek, 2012). Housing has been noted as one of the key factors that can reduce re-offending rates by as much as 20% (Home Office, 2001). Having a place to call home can provide offenders with the fundamental stability needed to address other issues and to access a range of community-based services. It can also provide a secure, stable base for the entire family.

Many prisoners struggle to secure employment after being released. This may be due to the need to disclose any convictions when applying for most jobs. This difficulty securing employment can then have a knock-on effect, increasing financial pressure on the individual and their family. Aside from alleviating financial pressure, employment can also provide stability and a sense of purpose for the individual, and a sense of belonging within the community. Statistics show that only 27% of people

released from prison in 2014-2015 had a job to go to (Prison Reform Trust, Bromley Briefings).

Poverty is widespread in Northern Ireland and can be a risk factor for criminal activity. It also affects the families of those who commit criminal acts and receive custodial sentences. Many prisoners are affected by debts that have built up during their sentence, such as mobile phone bills (Prison Reform Trust, Bromley Briefings).

Despite official ceasefires in Northern Ireland, paramilitary groups still exist in some communities and can inflict punishments on those who are perceived to have acted in an antisocial manner, including exile, beatings and shootings. For many prisoners in Northern Ireland, a paramilitary threat may be issued upon their release, further compounding the difficulties around their reintegration.

Aside from, or possibly intertwined with, practical issues facing prisoners upon release, emotional and psychological issues also have a huge impact.

Mental health issues affect many prisoners both before, during and after their incarceration. Among sentenced prisoners, 72% of men and 70% of women suffer from two or more mental health disorders (Prison Reform Trust, 2010). One study found that recently released prisoners are at a much greater risk of suicide than the general population, especially in the first weeks after release (Pratt, Piper, Appleby, Webb & Shaw, 2006). Mental illnesses such as depression and psychosis were amongst the most prevalent amongst prisoners in a worldwide systematic review and meta-analysis (Fazel & Seewald, 2012).

Many prisoners may struggle with issues of substance misuse and/or addictions. In America, it has been estimated that half of all prisoners meet the criteria for drug misuse or dependence (Karberg & James, 2005). In the United Kingdom, newly released prisoners were found to be at an “acute risk” of drug-related death; this was particularly apparent for females (Farrell & Marsden, 2008).

Social exclusion and perceived stigma attached to parental incarceration can also affect the prisoner as well as their families, creating further difficulties with reintegration. For children of prisoners, there may be stigma from parents who do not want their children to have contact with a child who has a family member in prison, or the child may fear the reaction from others or there may be general hostility in the community caused by the nature of the offence, which may be exacerbated by media coverage of the offence.

Characteristics of offenders and child outcomes have been discussed. It is worth mentioning that often the environment an individual finds themselves in can influence their risk of criminal behaviour. Risk factors include poverty, deprivation and low education levels. It is therefore important that interventions are systemic and holistic,

so that the individual is not returned to the same environment that influenced their offending in the first place (Carlen, 2013).

The importance of multi-faceted approaches to community support for prisoners and their families is highlighted in the effectiveness of strategies which target both practical and emotional support, which not only promote positive reintegration but also encourage desistance. One review found that interventions focusing on accommodation, substance treatment and trauma counselling were particularly important in encouraging desistance (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).

It is only by considering the various issues faced by prisoners and their families that effective intervention can be put in place which targets the individual and systemic needs of the family and its members.

Role of the Probation Service

Depending on the conditions of probation, offenders may be offered interventions within the community designed to help them to re-integrate into society. The Probation Board in Northern Ireland (PBNI) offers a range of intervention programmes which are aimed at facilitating change, successful reintegration and reducing re-offending rates for those who are being re-integrated into the community having been convicted of a crime. These programmes are put in place when the individual has been assessed and their personality, attitudes and behaviours have been explored. The programmes are supervised by the PBNI, who also provide Probation Officer support to monitor progress and reinforce learning.

There are a number of exclusion criteria for the PBNI programmes:

- Those with unstable mental health difficulties (can enter when mental health is stable)
- Those with current, unstable, acute substance dependency (can enter at a later stage when stable)
- Those with learning difficulties which may impede their ability to engage with/understand the programme. Participants who have achieved a score of 80 or lower in standard IQ tests will be referred to the PBNI Psychology department for consultation.
- Those with poor English. It is not appropriate to have interpreters in a group session, but these participants can enter the programme at a later stage, when sufficiently able to speak and understand English.
- Those who refuse to participate.
- It is worth noting that denial of the crime does not necessarily exclude individuals from participating in the programmes.

Those attending programmes are subject to pre- and post-programme assessment and evaluations to determine the efficacy of the programme and progress made.

Participants are expected to demonstrate full attendance, with two or more sessions missed resulting in removal from the programme.

Barnardo's

Barnardo's charity carries out ongoing work in Northern Ireland which is aimed at improving outcomes for children of prisoners. They adopt a systemic approach to this, preferring to support the whole family as a system as a means of protecting and promoting positive outcomes for children. They offer parenting support for families during periods of imprisonment as well as post-release. The Parenting Matters programme has been implemented successfully in Northern Ireland, helping imprisoned parents to maintain positive relationships with their families. Barnardo's also offer training to prison staff so they can co-facilitate programmes designed at promoting positive parenting, and to raise awareness of the importance of family ties when a parent is imprisoned.

An evaluation of the Parenting Matters programme (Healy, Kelly & Hart, 2005) recognised the integral link between the programme and the process of resettling offenders when they are released, as it not only addresses parenting issues while in custody, but it prepares the parents for their future involvement in family life after release.

Barnardo's also works in the community with the partners of imprisoned parents as part of the Parenting Matters programme. This not only meets the parenting needs of the partners, but also allows them to meet others in a similar situation to establish a support network.

Barnardo's: Empowering Children of Offenders (ECHO)

Barnardo's have worked to develop services in the South West of England to identify, assess and support children and families of offenders within the community. Its overall aim is to reduce the stigma and isolation felt by children of offenders, lessen financial pressures on the family and improve the overall wellbeing of these children. It targets five key outcomes for children:

- Satisfactory school attendance
- Enhanced parent-child relationships
- Increased parent-child contacts
- Access to information on housing, health, benefits, rights or support needs
- Children's voices heard and acted upon.

To achieve these ends, Barnardo's aims to develop strong working links between support services and local authorities so that referrals for children in this situation can come from a variety of sources. Children give their views through the medium of a reference group, in which children, families, and professionals from referral sources work together to inform the direction of intervention projects. Interventions vary

between signposting to practical support services, one-to-one parenting work inside and outside of prison, one-to-one work with children whose behaviour or school attendance is deteriorating, and support to make prison visits easier for families. There is a particular emphasis on the importance of education in supporting children, and the services work closely with schools to raise awareness and implement strategies to support children of prisoners.

Outcomes of the ECHO programme so far have shown:

- Improvements in families' access to information on housing, health, benefit rights and support needs
- Significant improvements in relationships within the family at home
- Improvement in children's emotional wellbeing
- Behavioural improvements
- Improvements in attendance at school.

Key themes emerging from a qualitative report on the ECHO project included:

- The importance of support at the point of imprisonment
- The need for early intervention around how imprisonment is talked about
- Dealing with the direct impact on children during the arrest of a parent and the initial period of imprisonment
- Parental management of the family following the other parent's incarceration – support for the parent, support for the parent explaining the situation to children
- Children's understanding of having a parent in prison
- The implications of sexual and violent crime
- The importance of working with schools.

The ECHO programme appears to have a good impact on the families of prisoners, particularly the children. Some of the key themes emerging may be relevant to community organisations but also to the role of Educational Psychologists – supporting the child individually as early in the process as possible, but also the family and school systems so that the child benefits from a consistent, systemic support network. Barnardo's stated that the key message emerging from evaluating this programme is the need to talk to children directly about imprisonment and its impact on their world, noting the danger of offering family support without exploring directly with the child their thoughts and feelings (Barnardo's, 2013).

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)

NIACRO is a voluntary organisation which is aimed at reducing crime and its impact on people and communities. NIACRO offers support to prisoners as well as their families. It offers both practical and emotional support using holistic support services and contributes toward effective resettlement after a custodial sentence. The service

provides affordable transport to allow families to visit relatives in prison as well as advice and support with the financial aspect of having an incarcerated parent. It is worth noting that evaluation studies have not been completed for the following programmes as yet. NIACRO offers a number of programmes to support children who have a parent in jail.

Children with Imprisoned Parents (CHIP)

This is a NIACRO service offered to children aged 0-18 who have a parent or sibling in jail. CHIP is funded by the Early Intervention Transformation Programme aimed at supporting families in the early stages of the custodial process. It acts as a consistent point of contact throughout the legal process, from committal to release. It adopts a strengths-based approach to supporting children, tailoring intervention strategies to the child's individual needs. It is a holistic programme which is offered regionally throughout Northern Ireland.

Supporting Children and Siblings of Prisoners Everyday (SCOPE)

The SCOPE programme is run by NIACRO and funded by Children in Need. It is currently run in the Greater Belfast area. It aims to improve familial relationships, reduce social isolation and increase resilience in children who are affected by imprisonment. The SCOPE service offers one-to-one emotional and practical support, which can be availed of within the family home, at school or in the community. Children are given the opportunity to talk openly about what has happened and its impact on them. They are also given information to help them to understand the custody process and reduce feelings of fear and confusion over what it means to have a parent or sibling in jail. They are supported to keep in contact with the incarcerated parent through email or letters. The children are also able to take part in group activities with other children who are in a similar situation, to reduce feelings of social isolation and social stigma. They are encouraged to develop coping strategies to help them to process the circumstances they find themselves in.

SCOPE also offers family sessions in a bid to work systemically with children and their families who are affected by imprisonment. The aim of such sessions is to strengthen communication and relationships within the home. Support can be offered to parents to help them explain the imprisonment and its implications to their children in an age-appropriate way. Referrals can be made to other community support services as necessary. SCOPE can also support parents to inform the child's school when a parent is imprisoned, so the school can be aware of the child's needs.

SCOPE also offers guidance and information services to schools and other agencies involved with children to help them to understand the needs of the children and how to best support them, including providing training for staff and Education Welfare Officers.

Referrals to SCOPE often come from NIACRO's Family Links service. When a Family Links worker meets with new committals, usually in Maghaberry prison, and if the prisoner is known to have children, a referral is made to SCOPE. Other referral sources include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Services, and other voluntary organisations.

SCOPE is an example of an organisation which seeks to elicit, as well as 'hear' and act on, the voice of the child. They arrange for children of prisoners to meet with prison governors and wardens as a group to generate discussion about contact issues with their imprisoned parent(s) and how they would like to be supported to maintain positive contact.

Aspire

Aspire is a service run by NIACRO which provides intensive support in the community for those who have been released from prison. It is a 12-week mentoring programme, with mentors meeting the prisoner up to 4 weeks before their release date in prison, on the release day, and every day for the first week after release. Contact continues for 12 weeks following release with support being offered for a range of issues, including accommodation, employment, money management/benefits, addictions and family issues.

The services offered by Aspire are targeted at prisoners post release. Supporting prisoners in this early stage of reintegration allows for some sense of stability and direction for the prisoner, which has resultant implications for the family. The service allows for planning and emotional and practical support to help to adapt the immediate environmental influences of the prisoner in a bid to reduce risk factors, reduce potential Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and promote wellbeing on both the individual and systemic levels – all of which have positive implications for the children involved.

Access

Access is another service offered by NIACRO which aims to support individuals who have been released from prison in terms of their employability skills and work-readiness. Support is offered in building a CV, preparing for interviews, applying for courses or jobs, and help with writing a disclosure statement. Support is offered to each individual to allow for a smooth transition onwards to work or training.

The Aspire and Access programmes may benefit not only the individual who has been released from prison, but also their families in terms of alleviating financial pressure via money management support and employability support, allowing the released individual to begin to reintegrate into the community and giving them a sense of purpose. Support with addiction issues and family difficulties can also benefit families and children. In its 2017 annual report, NIACRO noted that 91% of prison leavers were put in touch with training and employment providers.

The Distinctive Needs of Female Prisoners in the Community

Research has found that 60% of female prisoners in Northern Ireland are mothers (Roberson & Radford, 2006). In order that these women can return to their role as a parent after a custodial sentence, interventions within the community must take account of their needs and experiences prior to incarceration.

In general, a mother has a distinctive and practical role in a child's life (Barnardo's Briefing Paper No. 8). Their experience of prison and the impact on the child may therefore be qualitatively different from that of a father who is imprisoned. Research has found that the detrimental impact on children of imprisoned parents can be greater when it is the mother who is imprisoned (Hudson, 2006).

In terms of women's risk factors for criminal offences, issues such as experiences of trauma, domestic violence, bereavement, child-care responsibilities and substance misuse among others may present on their own, or be combined, to act as major influences in women committing crimes (Belknap, 1996; Chesney-Lind, 2004; Owen, 2006). One study detailed the prevalence of these risk factors in female prisoners in Northern Ireland:

- 88% of female prisoners experienced depression while in prison
- 60% were taking some form of medication prior to imprisonment
- The majority had experienced some form of physical and/or sexual abuse
- 64% were in receipt of some sort of social security benefit
- 72% reported use of drugs and/or alcohol prior to incarceration.

(Roberson & Radford, 2006)

A subsequent study conducted in Northern Ireland also found evidence of trauma for all the female prisoners in the sample (O'Neill, 2015). It is evident that the impact of trauma has a role to play in women's propensity to commit crime in Northern Ireland, which may in some cases be related to the legacy of The Troubles.

Interventions must then focus on the women's individual circumstances prior to incarceration in order to ensure they are appropriately supported upon release.

The Department of Justice has recently recognised the need for gender specific interventions to combat re-offending behaviour, as the needs of women may differ to those of men. The experience of men being released from prison was noted to be qualitatively different from that of women (Loucks, 2004). Baroness Jean Corston conducted a review of women in the criminal justice system (Corston, 2007), making numerous "revolutionary recommendations" (Kendall, 2013) designed to meet the needs of female offenders and their families, including genuine alternatives to imprisonment. Corston posited that "community solutions for non-violent women

should be the norm" (Corston, 2007). Some examples of gender-specific interventions are outlined in this report.

Female prisoners are currently housed in Ash House in Hydebank Wood Prison. However, a review of prison services in Northern Ireland was carried out by Dame Anne Owers in 2010 which found Ash House to be "unsuitable". The Owers Report recommended that a new custodial facility should be purpose built and centred around a therapeutic model, supported by "an acute mental health facility and draw on a network of staff, services and support in the community". Given the background of trauma and conflict in Northern Ireland, the need for a therapeutic approach to rehabilitation, including mental health support, cannot be overstated. Adopting a therapeutic modality may be more successful in preventing re-offending through improving mental health and coping skills for prisoners both during their custodial sentence and afterward and may help to enable successful reintegration.

Inspire Women's Project (Northern Ireland)

The Inspire Women's Project was established in 2008 in Belfast. It was created to "develop and deliver in the community a new, enhanced range of women-specific services which directly contribute to reducing women's offending through targeted community-based interventions" (DOJ, 2010). It was based on the idea that there are gender differences in the needs, motivations, experiences and patterns of offending of prisoners in the justice system, and that "equality of outcomes is not necessarily achieved by equality of treatment" (Corston, 2007).

Female-only support services have been used with success across the British Isles, such as the Together Women's projects in England (Hedderman, Palmer & Hollin, 2008) and the 218 Service in Scotland (Easton & Matthews, 2010; Loucks, Malloch, McIvor & Gelsthorpe, 2006).

Women attending the Inspire Project can use the premises to attend probation appointments, attend programmes and access support offered by probation and external agencies. Offence-focussed programmes offered at Inspire include Alcohol Awareness, Anger Management, Think First[5] and GOALs UK.[6] Most of these are delivered on a one-to-one basis with support and supervision from probation workers.

Inspire works alongside a number of external agencies who provide services within Inspire which may be useful and relevant to the needs of the female participants, such as Barnardo's, the Northern Ireland Women's Centres and the Prison Arts Foundation among others. These services offer programmes such as creative writing, holistic therapies and parenting programmes. Childcare is also available as part of the service.

[5] Think First is a CBT programme aimed at women who have three or more convictions.
[6] GOALs UK is a programme which supports offenders to achieve independence, self-esteem, personal awareness and self-motivation so they can live independently.

Inspire also has links with external services and community organisations, including the Community Addiction Teams, psychiatrists, Women's Aid, employment support, support with debt management, assistance with CVs, educational support, counselling support and parenting support.

The Inspire Women's Project continues to be implemented successfully in Northern Ireland. Tackling pressing issues such as mental health and offering practical support for women to get back on their feet following incarceration not only helps to reduce re-offending but also better places them to integrate well into the community and equips them to re-join their families.

An evaluation of the Inspire Women's Project was carried out by the Department of Justice in 2011 to determine whether or not the service was meeting its key objectives and effecting change for the women using the service. The evaluation was led by a steering group including members of the Justice Policy Directorate of the Department of Justice.

A mixed-methods approach was utilised whereby quantitative data was analysed, including PBNI data, demographic data, ACE scores, and information about underlying needs and histories; this was complemented by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews involving a sample of 37 female offenders using the service and 16 key stakeholders, including members of the probation board, prison service and a range of community and voluntary organisations. The population of offenders in the evaluation sample was determined to be representative of female offenders in Northern Ireland, in that they tended to share similar background experiences and had similar underlying needs as described previously in this chapter.

Both service users and stakeholders commented on the positive contrast with mainstream probation provision. One stakeholder commented that there seemed to be a "*more human aspect to it*", and a service user commented "*it was far, far better than [the probation office]*". Some reasons cited for this by service users were the comparative inapproachability of staff at mainstream probation services, the lack of discretion due to the location of probation services, the presence of male offenders, and the lack of gender-specific services and programmes.

Both service users and stakeholders noted that one of the most important aspects of Inspire was the attitude and behaviour of staff. One service user commented that "*they just seem to listen to you more...they go out of their way to help you…instead of being barked at [by probation service staff]*".

All of the practitioners interviewed felt that Inspire had been extremely effective in the short time it had been running. It was felt that the service provided by Inspire allowed women to build up their confidence and stabilise their lives.

The outcomes for women using Inspire include:

- An average 3-point reduction in ACE scores between start date of Inspire and most recent score held by PBNI
- 78% offenders reported they had not committed any further offences since becoming involved with Inspire
- 70% reported changes in their attitudes to offending as a result of attending Inspire
- 76% reported that their self-esteem and/or self-confidence had improved as a direct result of their contact with Inspire
- Improvements to mental and physical wellbeing
- Increases in education, training and employment
- Decrease in substance misuse
- Increase in self-confidence leading to ability to leave abusive relationships.

It seems that the Inspire project is particularly mindful of the need for gender-specific interventions as recommended by Baroness Corston in 2007 (Corston, 2007), responding to the unique and complex needs of female offenders to deliver strategic objectives outlined in the Northern Ireland Strategy to Manage Women Offenders (DOJ, 2010). The outcomes listed above map closely onto the risk factors listed previously in this chapter for female criminal offences. Changing the environment and circumstances that women found themselves in prior to incarceration can therefore not only reduce re-offending rates, as shown above, but can also have a multitude of positive effects on the women themselves, allowing them to reintegrate into society.

Some of the mothers in the population sample discussed how the Inspire project had helped with their relationship with their children and strengthened their position with social services. One service user was successful in having her child removed from the Child Protection Register, and another two were able to increase the frequency and duration of contact with their children. They also noted that they benefited from practical parenting advice provided to them. One mother commented, "*It's helping me to talk to my 14-year old*."

While Inspire offers parenting programmes and advice to directly support the children of female offenders and to promote positive parenting for the mother, the work by Inspire may also have an indirect, positive ripple effect on the family system of the service user. The outcomes for offenders listed above, including reduction in substance misuse, increases in education and employment, and increases in self-esteem and positive mental health, can only lead to benefits for the family as a whole.

The Inspire programme evaluation has shown it to be a positive, effective programme. As highlighted throughout this report, interventions should focus on both the practical and emotional implications of imprisonment and Inspire seems to target both these aspects successfully.

Together Women's Project (England)

Following various government strategies and research aimed at examining female offending in England, the Together Women's Programme (TWP) was funded as an approach designed to "demonstrate how a multi-agency approach in the community could address women's complex needs more effectively" (Kendall, 2013). The charity has bases in five community centres in Yorkshire and also provides outreach services and a drop-in centre at New Hall prison. The service was designed to be a 'one stop shop' for female offenders or those at risk of offending, providing early intervention and peer mentoring services, intensive, centre-based programmes and holistic support options.

The project also supports positive resettlement for women upon release, creating individualised support plans which not only meet fundamental practical needs such as housing and welfare benefits prior to discharge, but also support a positive transition back to family life.

One of the aims of the TWP is to shift women out of damaging behaviours and lifestyles and into more a positive life. An evaluation of the programme (Granville, 2012) found that it met all of its objectives and in most cases exceeded expectations, including:

- Reduction in female offending and re-offending
- Fewer women given custodial sentences
- More women accessing and being sustained in community provision
- Reduced isolation and creating active citizens
- Reduced substance misuse
- Reduced vulnerability through learning coping strategies
- Improved life chances through learning, training and employment
- Reduction in avoidable family breakdowns, specifically pertaining to children
- Self-reported improvement in parenting.

The programme was found to be supportive of mothers in their parenting, and showed increases in self-esteem and self-confidence, allowing the service users to make friends and to move on from abusive relationships. Like the Inspire project, the outcomes closely relate not only to a reduction in risk factors for female criminal activity, but also a reduction in ACEs for the children of the women involved. Practical issues such as finance and housing were found to be successfully addressed by TWP, with many service users found to have reduced their debts and increased their income as a direct result of the assistance provided by the programme.

In terms of child outcomes, 30 service users had their children removed from the Child Protection Register or returned home. The service users were able to build on their parenting skills through attending courses and experiencing positive modelling through the crèche workers, as well as availing of individual key-worker support on

parenting. The mothers were quoted as saying "*I am a much better mum now*" and "*I'm less stressed as a mum*". The reduction of ACEs as well as the promotion of positive mental health, wellbeing and self-esteem, and the reduction in practical issues such as financial pressure and accommodation difficulties, can all positively influence the child and family system around the female offender.

The key factors in TWP outlined by the evaluation lay in the gender-specific nature of the programme, the holistic nature of the service and the respectful nature of the staff and service users alike. These factors are very similar to what appears to work for the Inspire project, and again, the outcomes show the TWP to be another very successful intervention.

Other Support

Financial and Practical Support

Imprisonment can have detrimental financial effects on individuals and their families. A link between poverty and offending rates is widely recognised. Female prisoners in one study noted the difficulties they had in accessing money and claiming benefits upon their release. Community support services should be available to them to support them in understanding whether they are entitled to financial assistance through benefits and to assist them with filling in forms, so that the financial burden is eased as quickly as possible, with pressure on the family reduced as a result.

Social Support

In the UK, it has been reported that only 5% of children stay in their own homes when their mother goes to prison, usually being cared for by other family members. Twelve percent are placed into care (Corston, 2007). Further research found that 17,000 children are separated from their mother per year through imprisonment, only 9% of whom are being cared for by their father. The rest are in the care of social services or friends and family members (Together Women's Project, 2018). Children therefore require specific support in working through the circumstances they find themselves in.

Mental Health Support

One study (O'Neill, 2015) found that female prisoners reported feeling anxious, depressed, lonely and fearful of their ability to cope on their own prior to their release. In one small study of 37 female offenders, schizophrenia, personality disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, brain injury, learning disability and bipolar disorder were also listed alongside anxiety and depression. Community interventions focused at improving mental health and coping strategies would be useful in order to promote self-efficacy and self-esteem among those released from prison, which could have knock-on effects on their ability to manage family life.

Chapter 7: Moderating Risk within the School Community

We have seen that a child's age, sex, social supports, neighbourhood supports and mental health supports can alter the impact of the outcomes positively. Given the numbers of children within the Northern Ireland school population believed to be affected by parental imprisonment and given what we understand about risk and moderating and mediating factors, schools, as children's most accessible source of support, should recognise the needs of this group in their policy documents and their practices and procedures. This chapter aims to consider potential sources of support within the school community or neighbourhood.

School Policies

Schools may not have policies and procedures which specifically mention children of prisoners. They may also not have policies and procedures outlining how best to support children of prisoners. It would be important for schools to appoint a designated member of staff to support children of prisoners (Gloucestershire County Council, 2007). Many schools use their SENCO, Pastoral Vice Principal or designated Child Protection Officer. This member of staff may need to attend additional training on children of prisoners as well as any multi-disciplinary meetings. The designated member of staff would be able to coordinate with the SENCO in order to draw up an action plan for any children of prisoners so that each member of staff (as appropriate) is aware of how best to meet their needs in the classroom (Barnardo's, 2015).

O'Keeffe (2014) suggests that schools develop an 'action plan' which they can put in place if a pupil has an imprisoned parent.

The action plan should include:

- Encouraging the remaining parent or caregiver to share information with the school. Staff should reassure anyone disclosing this information and remind them about confidentiality. Staff should discuss who the information will be passed on to.
- Information about the school's key contact person for any children of prisoners and their families and how to get in touch with them.
- Information about external agencies who can support the family and how to access them.
- How the school will communicate with the imprisoned parent, if appropriate (Hollins, 2016).
- How the school will work with the family to support visiting the imprisoned parent (Rossen, 2011).
- How the school will monitor the wellbeing, academic progress and behaviour of children of prisoners.

Other key policies include Equality and Diversity Policies addressing intentional and unintentional attitudinal barriers in the entire social context of the school; Behaviour policies, specifically anti-bullying policy and strategies; Special Educational Needs policies that recognise and respond to cognitive risk; and Mental Health and Well-being policies which should aim to ensure schools are as 'attachment friendly' as possible and thus provide a secure base for children who may be experiencing ongoing relational trauma.

Staff Training

What will be key to change is awareness raising amongst school staff regarding the lived experience of these young people. What we know from research and have seen detailed above is that the children of prisoners often grow up in families where there is an increased likelihood of poverty, poor parenting, lower IQ, antisocial behaviour and psychiatric morbidity (Murray, 2013). We have seen that this risk can be mediated by loss of income resulting from incarceration, disruptions to attachment bonds, loss and grief, trauma and shame, hypermobility, disrupted friendship and family groups and by trauma arising from circumstances relating to the nature of the parent's crime, events at time of the arrest and length of the parent's sentence.

School staff need to be cognisant of the vulnerability of these children, emotionally, socially and academically. They need to be made aware of the fact that the child has done nothing wrong (Barnardo's, 2015) and of key facts and figures about parental imprisonment and of pre-existing disadvantage (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016). In addition it will be important for staff to understand that school readiness may be impacted, that children's development can regress or slow when a parent is imprisoned, that they are at increased risk of SEN particularly in terms of literacy and numeracy difficulties and of speech and language delays, that children's attitudes towards their academic work may be impacted, their memory, attention and problem-solving skills may decline, that they may have poor attendance and/or have missed schooling and thus may have 'gaps' in their knowledge and that they are likely to struggle more with major transitions such as nursery school to primary school and primary school to secondary school. Additional key information for school staff includes the following:

- The importance of children's right to maintain contact with the imprisoned parent for their wellbeing when it is appropriate (Morgan et al., 2013) and information about prison visits – e.g. that they often must take place during the day; security procedures; inappropriate space for children; that they may not include physical contact; and the child's reactions during and after the visit.
- That support may need to continue even after the imprisoned parent has been released and has returned home (Morgan, Leeson, Carter Dillon, Wirgman & Needham, 2014).

- The role of stigma and how teachers can avoid stigmatising children of prisoners (Dallaire et al., 2010).

Cognitive and Learning Supports

We have seen that children of prisoners have an increased vulnerability to poor attention and concentration, memory difficulties and poor attainment. Whilst staff should support children in terms of adapting teaching approaches to the evolving needs of the child, providing opportunities for support to 'plug' gaps in knowledge and providing support in relation to likely difficulties in executive functioning, it is also important that they understand that the child is not necessarily destined to fail or be imprisoned themselves.

Social Supports

We have seen that social support is a clear moderating factor in child outcomes. Thus school, given its prominence in a child's social life, should aim to minimise the social exclusion that is likely to be experienced by these children outside in the community. Schools should make sure that the child is aware of a key person within the school who can take time to build a warm and trusting relationship with them and can check in with them to monitor well-being. In addition, they might consider the establishment of friendship groups to promote a sense of belonging. O'Keeffe (2014) recommends schools develop and implement a mentoring scheme to help support all pupils, but particularly children of prisoners. Mentoring can provide pupils with a peer confidant who can be vital to preserving emotional wellbeing if they are struggling with friendships and social situations, and also potentially act as a liaison between individual pupils and staff. What is important is that school should provide as much social scaffolding as possible, particularly in less structured situations such as the playground to ensure that children are included with their peers, and should foster social networks by adopting flexible class groupings with appropriate peers and showing that the benefits of friendships with the pupil outweigh the costs by giving the child roles and responsibilities in class in order that they are viewed positively by their peers.

Emotional Supports

In recognition of the importance of maintaining attachment bonds with imprisoned parents, schools should be sufficiently flexible so as not to deter these children from visiting their imprisoned parents. In addition, it will be important that they put strategies in place to support children in terms of missed learning and the emotional fallout from visits. Home school links should be enhanced sensitively as the family of the child may also be experiencing trauma and shame around the arrest, and thus may be reluctant to engage with school staff.

The following strategies may be useful:

- Children and families should have a key contact in whom they can confide and share information on a regular basis. For example, school staff need to know when a child is attending a prison visit as their emotional needs may change in response.
- All staff in school should be made aware of enhanced vulnerability whilst maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the child and his/her family.
- There should be safe spaces within the school environment to which the child can retreat when overwhelmed.
- Staff should be alert to triggers or potentially sensitive topics in the curriculum.
- Children should be prepared for disruptions to school staff with whom they have most contact.
- Staff should take care not to trigger further shame for the children.

Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology staff too will need to be made aware of the policies and procedures schools should have in place to support children of prisoners and should be provided with practical support as to how to best support schools to develop these policies and procedures, or to augment existing policies and procedures. It may be appropriate for EPs to deliver the training outlined above. However, this will necessitate EPs up-skilling themselves in relation to knowledge and research in the area. Training for EPs might focus on the experiences of the children of prisoners in our schools as well as EA policies and procedures in relation to children of prisoners, and the sharing and storing of information. However, of particular note are more practical issues outlined below.

Developmental Histories

EPs taking developmental histories need to sensitively ask whether or not a family member living with the child has spent time in prison, is currently in prison or is on remand. EPs should explain that this information will be held confidentially, and that this knowledge helps to inform their understanding of the child and how best they can support the child. If a family member is currently in prison or was previously it will be important to ask about mediating variables e.g. whether or not the child was present during the arrest; whether or not there was time to prepare the child for the family member going to prison prior to sentencing; what the child's relationship with the parent was like prior to the imprisonment and what the relationship is like now; how frequent the prison visits are or were and what the nature of the visits was/is. It will further be important to know if the family is being supported in any capacity by other family members and friends as well as organisations who support the families of those who are in prison.

When completing formulation work or considering factors within a risk assessment, EPs may also need to be reminded of the additional factors involved whenever a child has or has had a parent imprisoned, including the likelihood of pre-existing difficulties and that imprisonment and release can create considerable problems within the family (see Chapter 3).

Multiagency Contacts

EPs need to ask what, if any, other services are involved with the child and the family. In addition to social services, children of prisoners may be more likely to be involved with education and welfare officers due to reports of high rates of absences and possible school refusal.

The Voice of the Child

Since EPs have experience in eliciting children's voices, particularly from 'hard-to-reach' children, they are perfectly positioned to apply these skills to children of prisoners who they may be working alongside. Moreover, EPs may be able to provide advice to schools on how best to obtain the voices of children of prisoners so that their needs can be met within the education system. EPs can play an important role in advocating for children of prisoners and setting an example for other practitioners to do the same (Evans, 2009). Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) argue that the voice of children of prisoners is especially important as decisions that impact their lives are often made without their input, opinion or assent. Further, children are often unaware of what is happening regarding the imprisoned parent because they are unable to voice their concerns, questions or comments to those who may explain appropriately what is happening. EPs can attempt to include the voices of children of prisoners by gaining their opinions on decisions that affect them, particularly in relation to statutory and therapeutic work. EPs are already asked to include the voice of the child in their reports and some EPs provide feedback directly to the children and young people with whom they are working. All these steps help to ensure that the voices of the children of prisoners are included and acknowledged. EPs can then take this further again by advocating for the child based on their needs and decisions, ensuring that their voices are heard, and then feeding back to the child on the outcome.

Testing Considerations

Children of prisoners may be more difficult to test owing to a number of factors. They may not trust EPs, making it more challenging to engage and motivate them to complete test material. Children of prisoners may be reluctant to comply with testing due to their mistrust. They may also present with unusual or skewed profiles on typical test materials, making interpretation more difficult and subsequent recommendations more problematic. The 'toxic shame' experienced by some children of prisoners may make testing difficult and test results more complex. Toxic shame may further reduce compliance with testing as children of prisoners may feel that this is another thing that they will fail, perpetuating their sense of shame.

In addition, feedback must be provided sensitively as caregivers may be receiving 'more bad news' on top of their existing challenges. Caregivers may not trust practitioners or systems and may challenge EPs on their findings and recommendations. Some caregivers may have learning difficulties or mental health issues that may make it harder for them to understand the meaning of the EP's feedback. EPs need to think carefully about the language they will use in providing feedback and how they will ascertain that caregivers have understood them. EPs also must consider the means by which they might feedback to the imprisoned parent. This might be achieved through Skype or telephone call. The logistics of assessing imprisoned parents may need to be discussed with prison liaison officers.

EPs must be cautious about what information regarding the imprisonment they include in their reports. They should follow EA policy and the family's wishes regarding what is included and shared. They should check when providing feedback to the family and the child that they are happy with what is included.

Storing and Sharing of Information

Parental imprisonment can be a sensitive issue, and as such EPs should discuss with families what information they are happy to be included in the EP report which may be shared with external agencies. If families are not happy for this to be shared, EPs can discuss placing a 'file note' in the child's file explaining about the background and that the family are not happy for this information to be shared formally or with specific agencies/people. The EP report may make some general acknowledgement of the imprisonment without specifically labelling it, for example, by stating that one of the parents was absent for a period of time. The wording should be discussed with the family prior to the report being finalised. Families should also be reminded that any information collected and stored about them and their child will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and that they can access any information about their child through a Freedom of Information request (Freedom of Information Act, 2000).

Therapeutic Work with Children

EPs could provide more therapeutic support to children and young people, helping to reduce the load on these services, if they were able to move away from being gatekeepers to other services. EPs are trained in terms of counselling, and many have experience in cognitive behaviour therapy, attachment, parenting programmes, social and emotional wellbeing programmes, attention deficit disorder interventions, etc. In addition, 'Team Around the School' meetings may be useful to bring professionals involved with children of prisoners together in order to coordinate support services in conjunction with the child's education. EPs can chair these meetings or participate alongside other professionals.

What is clear is that EPs should lobby for more intervention time and for more psychologists to be upskilled. An increase in the therapeutic input provided by EPs

within school communities can result in a better understanding of the cognitive and learning needs of this vulnerable group of children and for their educational and social outcomes to be improved. A first step is to recognise that these children exist, to have a clear means of identifying them, to recognise their vulnerability and to work at the community and school levels to minimise the risk posed by the imprisonment of their parents.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Children of prisoners are clearly a vulnerable group that is typically unseen and unheard by society. The available research suggests that children of prisoners can suffer trauma and loss due to imprisonment, which, in addition to pre-existing difficulties, can lead these children to experience significant problems throughout their lives. Parental imprisonment impacts the whole family system and can lead to problems in other areas of that system such as poor caregiver mental health, externalising difficulties in children and educational difficulties. However, a number of moderating and mediating factors have been discussed and a number of key issues have been identified as having a role in reducing the impact of adversity and improving child adjustment outcomes.

What is clear is the importance of identifying risk at an early stage and providing practical and emotional supports in areas of low socio-economic status and amongst minority groups and families with an intergenerational history of offending. Practical and emotional supports should be recognised in social policy and might for the parents of these children include attachment workshops, parenting skills, behaviour management, mental health and well-being support, and literacy and numeracy programmes.

In addition, it is important that arrest protocols and the manner of separation where children are present be carefully considered. Likewise, the court system should consider the gender of the parent and/or their caregiving role when sentencing offenders to minimise the likelihood of relational disruption. It is also important that as a society we ensure that offenders with families are clearly identified and that offenders are placed in institutions as close to home as possible in order to minimise the time children spend travelling for visits and the cost of the travel. Where imprisonment is unavoidable, we should ensure that prisons are as child friendly as possible to minimise the impact of secondary trauma arising from prison visits and to ensure that when children visit they can have sufficient contact to ensure that attachment threats are minimised.

There is a clear role for the school community in providing emotional support for the children of prisoners through interventions targeting ‘loss and change’ trauma and shame and promoting attachment-friendly schools with key attachment figures as an alternative ‘secure base’ from which children explore the world. These should be tailored according to the individual needs of the child, including gender, age, stage of emotional development and their experiences around the nature of the crime, the nature of the arrest and the length of the sentence. To this end, teaching staff and other members of school communities who can be a source of social support for children and young people should be educated in order that they can have a clear

understanding of the issues faced by these children and in order that they can ensure that further ‘toxic shame’ is minimised.

It is important for EPs to be aware of the timeline of difficulties which exist in the lives of children of prisoners in order for them to establish how best to support their needs. Moreover, EPs need to be aware of how imprisonment can impact every aspect of a child’s life, from their basic care needs through to their self-esteem and goals for the future. EPs can also help to address the research gaps which exist in this area by exploring the needs of children of prisoners in Northern Ireland and the training needs and understanding of EPs in relation to these children; they also can educate schools with regard to the application of psychological theory to the needs of this group of children and can act as key liaison agencies between home and school, gathering information which will enrich formulations regarding the distinct needs of these children. Only when children of prisoners are recognised as needing additional support will current services begin to change. EPs can be instrumental in lobbying for this support and in changing their own practice to ensure that children of prisoners are provided with the necessary resources to help them overcome disadvantage.

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