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Improving wellbeing and educational outcomes for children in Wales affected by parental imprisonment: Literature, policy, and practice reviews

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The ASPIRE Project:

Improving wellbeing and educational outcomes for children in Wales affected by parental imprisonment: Literature, policy, and practice reviews.

To give the project a clear identity for stakeholders, the acronym 'ASPIRE' (Actioning a Schools and Prisons Independent Research Evaluation) was used throughout the project.

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary

ACE

Adverse Childhood Experience

ASPIRE

Actioning a Schools & Prisons Independent Research Evaluation

COPE

Children of Prisoners Europe

ESTYN

Estyn is the education and training inspectorate in Wales

FABI

Families Affected by Imprisonment

FFOPs

Families and Friends of Prisoners

HMPPS

His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer, plus any other sexualities and genders not specified by the first five letters

NEET

Not in Education, Employment or Training

NICCO

National Information Centre on Children of Offenders

PACE

Protective and Compensatory Experiences

PACT

Prison Advice and Care Trust

POPS

Partners of Prisoners Support Group

UNCRC

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

VRU

Violence Reduction Unit

YOI
Young Offender Institution

Acknowledgements

This report is informed throughout by the views and experiences of children and young people with experience of parental imprisonment, parents and carers in the community, and parents in prison. The ASPIRE team is extremely grateful for their input and that of the expert advisory group (see Annex A), as well as practitioners and policy leads from education, social work, criminal justice, and the third sector. To preserve anonymity, names have not been used.

The ASPIRE Team

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2023, the Welsh Government commissioned the ASPIRE Team (Actioning a Schools and Prisons Independent Research Evaluation) for a period of 12 months to provide options and considerations for a national model of support to improve wellbeing and educational outcomes for children in Wales affected by parental imprisonment. The ASPIRE team is a collaboration led by Families Outside (a national Scottish charity that supports families affected by imprisonment) and supported by the University of Huddersfield, Cardiff University, two independent consultants specialising in policy and practice related to children affected by imprisonment, and two research assistants.
- 1.2 ASPIRE was delivered over five key phases from July 2023 to June 2024. These included:
- phase one: scene setting, including a review of the literature, policy and practice related to children with a parent in prison and a baseline survey of the provision of support for children in Wales with a parent in prison
 - phase 2: a case study of His Majesty's Prison and Young Offender Institution (HMP and YOI Parc)'s School Zone model
 - phase 3: a pan-Wales multi-agency stakeholder event at Cardiff University
 - phase 4: consultation with key stakeholders: children and families, education staff, prison staff from all prisons in Wales and HMPs Styal and Eastwood Park (women's prisons), parents in prison, local authorities, and government decision-makers
 - phase 5: a [final report](#) summarising key findings and options for possible models of support for children and young people who have a parent in prison
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the literature, policy and practice reviews that were carried out in phase one.

2. Literature review

The impact of parental imprisonment on children

- 2.1 As Flynn (2017) states, whilst numerous studies have highlighted the potentially devastating impact of parental imprisonment on children (Condry and Scharff Smith, 2018; Jones et al., 2013; Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019; Robertson 2011), there is limited literature regarding what works in improving outcomes for children. As well as a significant sense of loss, many children experience stigma, social isolation, shame, and fear (Jones et al., 2013). Studies have identified that shame and stigma were some of the most challenging aspects of parental imprisonment, and many families are treated as guilty by association (The Centre for Social Justice, 2022; Cooper et al., 2023; Flynn and Eriksson, 2017). Despite not committing the crime themselves, the punitive responses from the criminal justice system and society exacerbate challenges faced by children who have been referred to as collateral convicts (Robertson, 2011). Parental imprisonment can negatively impact children's short-term emotional wellbeing as well as their long-term health and social prospects (McGillivray, 2016).
- 2.2 Children with imprisoned parents are up to three times as likely to experience mental health difficulties (Philbrick, 1997; Families Outside, 2017). A major pan-European study (The Children of Prisoners: Interventions and Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health) concluded that children impacted by parental imprisonment are at a significantly greater risk of suffering mental health difficulties than children who have not had parents in prison (Jones et al., 2013). Children with a parent in prison may experience low self-esteem, depression, disturbed sleeping patterns, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress (Myers et al., 1999). Many children do not have enough support, feel stigmatised, and often do not speak about what they have experienced, which may explain why they are more likely to experience mental health problems than other children (Jones et al., 2013).
- 2.3 It is common for children with a parent in prison to experience disenfranchised grief, which is the grief 'that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported' (Doka, 1989:4). Consequently, children may feel emotions associated with grief (sadness, loss) in addition to a range of other emotions related to their parent being in prison, such as anger, guilt, confusion, loneliness, and fear (Roberts, 2012; Kincaid,

Roberts and Kane, 2019). However, whilst support systems are often in place in schools to help children cope with bereavement, the same cannot be said when a child's parent goes to prison (Worden, 2009), leaving children vulnerable and unsupported.

- 2.4 Separation from a mother is particularly traumatic for children, especially if she is their primary carer (Rees, Staples and Maxwell, 2017). Women tend to receive short sentences for non-violent crimes without apparent consideration of the impact on their children (Baldwin and Epstein, 2017), something which is highlighted in the Women's Justice Blueprint (Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government, 2019). Minson (2020) has coined the term 'confounding grief' due to the variety of negative emotions and disruption experienced when a mother is in custody in comparison to the imprisonment of another family member. Children often face greater disruption when a mother goes to prison, for example, having to move to live with relatives or friends, challenges at school or having to change schools (Minson, 2017 and 2020; Beresford, 2018), and potentially being separated from siblings (Rees, Waits, and Bezczky, 2023). As Wales has no women's prison, children have to travel greater distances to visit their mothers in custody (Rees et al., 2022), which can have a significant financial impact and push them into (even deeper) financial difficulties (Families Outside, 2023 and 2024). This is particularly problematic, as barriers to maintaining frequent contact with the imprisoned parent can result in the deterioration of the parent-child relationship and adjustment problems for the child affected (Robertson et al., 2016; Lösel et al., 2012). The disruption caused by maternal imprisonment means that the children affected are at higher risk of adverse social and psychological outcomes than their peers (Poehlmann, 2005; Murray and Murray, 2010).

Parental imprisonment as an Adverse Childhood Experience

- 2.5 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that can significantly affect the future health and wellbeing of people. Research generally identifies ten ACEs ranging from experiences of domestic violence, abuse, parental drug and alcohol misuse, and includes imprisonment of a household member (Felitti et al., 1998; Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019; Brown, 2020). Furthermore, having a household member in prison is associated with a fivefold increase in exposure to other ACEs (Turney, 2018). However, despite research demonstrating that children affected by imprisonment are disproportionately exposed to other ACEs, research

does not state whether parental imprisonment is an independent or specific ACE or the extent to which this affects the outcomes of children independently of other ACEs (Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019).

- 2.6 Multiple studies have been undertaken in Wales to understand individuals' experiences of ACEs better, aiming to mitigate their impact (Barton, Newbury and Roberts, 2018; Hardcastle et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2020).
- 2.7 Studies indicate that positive childhood experiences set the foundation for adult mental health. Ten specific protective and compensatory experiences (PACEs) have been shown to promote positive outcomes in the face of adversity (Morris and Hays-Grudo, 2023). PACEs have been found to have a buffering impact on ACEs and highlight the importance of support services provided by trusted adults for children impacted by parental imprisonment (Rees et al., 2022).

Identification and e-collection

- 2.8 Whilst no systematic recording and monitoring of children impacted by parental imprisonment is in place, the 2024 Ministry of Justice: Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD) estimated that between 1 October 2021 and 1 October 2022, an estimated 192,912 children in England and Wales had a parent in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2024). Again, this figure is based on linked data rather than through any systematic data collection. Globally, almost no systematic collection of data takes place regarding the number of children left behind when a parent goes to prison (The Centre for Social Justice, 2022).
- 2.9 Understanding the number of children who experience parental imprisonment can assist in planning and coordinating support for children and their families. Authorities can use data to make decisions and create policies that have a positive impact on children affected by imprisonment, including specific groups of children such as ethnic minority communities (Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE), 2019).
- 2.10 Beyond data collection, publication and dissemination of aggregated data are also important. COPE (2020) argues that 'making data available to the public is a fundamental element of awareness-raising and triggers political actions' while importantly keeping data anonymous to protect children's right to privacy.
- 2.11 Gathering and sharing information to support children when a close family member goes to prison responds to children's rights to special care and assistance when deprived of their family environment, as per Article 20 of the [UN Convention on the](#)

[Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC); the right to information, as per Articles 9, 13, and 17 of the UNCRC; and the right to support under Article 6 of the [Council of Europe \(2018\) Recommendations](#) regarding children with imprisoned parents. There is, however, a real risk that gathering information exposes the fact of a parent's imprisonment without the family's consent. This in turn risks breaching Article 2 of the UNCRC in relation to discrimination based on the status of a parent; Article 16 of the UNCRC in relation to the right to privacy; and Article 55 of the 2018 Council of Europe recommendations regarding exposure by the media.

- 2.12 Data collection when a parent goes to prison raises ethical questions. Whose information is it for the purpose of data protection and consent (the child's or the parent's)? What is the balance between the right to privacy and the need for support or child protection? Is it in the best interest of the child to enforce mandatory reporting to assess what the impact of the imprisonment may be? Or should families have the freedom to choose to seek support and information themselves?
- 2.13 The stigma of imprisonment can make families difficult to identify, and families in this position rarely seek support or draw attention to themselves when they are struggling. The collection of data should be used to highlight issues surrounding the impact of the imprisonment of parents and must not become a barrier to families when accessing support (Prison Reform Trust, 2022). Even for children who are known to be impacted by parental imprisonment, very few local authorities have developed plans to support children with a parent in prison (Raikes, 2021; Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019).

The role of schools in supporting children affected by parental imprisonment

- 2.14 Children spend a significant amount of time in school. Schools provide regularity, structure, and can ameliorate the difficulties children face; it is where they can be supported and feel safe (Mannay et al., 2015). Schools can, therefore, be a lifeline for children impacted by parental imprisonment and have the potential to provide an important community of compassion for families (Roberts, 2012; COPE, 2022a). A collective multidisciplinary approach between schools, prisons, and third sector organisations is crucial in providing holistic support to children (COPE, 2022b).
- 2.15 It is important to recognise that there are several barriers that can prevent children with an imprisoned parent from receiving support in schools or the community. The most prevalent of these is the bias and stigma associated with the criminal justice

system (COPE, 2022a). McGillivray (2016:31) made clear that schools, whilst supportive to some, are commonly the “locus of manifestation of stigma, in the form of bullying and ostracism”. Children with a parent in prison are often viewed differently from their peers, with classmates and teachers alike associating the actions of the parent with the children themselves (Warren, Coker and Collins, 2019; Roberts, 2012). This can manifest in the reactions of teachers towards the child, particularly when the parental imprisonment is negatively impacting a child’s behaviour, attendance, and attainment (Phillips and Gates, 2010). Warren, Coker and Collins (2019) found that teachers maintained low expectations of students they knew had an imprisoned parent, demonstrating that this is a significant factor in perceptions of the competence levels of a student. Similarly, Dallaire, Ciccone and Wilson (2010) found that teachers showed a greater negative bias towards mothers who were absent from parent meetings due to imprisonment more than any other reason, for example, illness. Teachers’ attitudes and judgements can lead to children feeling increasingly isolated and not accepted in school environments, reducing the likelihood of disclosing information and receiving support (Saunders, 2018).

- 2.16 Schools need to be aware of the impact for children of having a parent in prison and the support they require: a coordinated approach is necessary to increase children’s overall wellbeing and their educational outcomes (Roberts, 2012; Roberts and Loucks, 2015). Schools play an important role in helping to counter the dominant discourse that children with imprisoned parents are more likely to enter the justice system – an unsubstantiated claim that Conway and Jones (2015) state is both stigmatising and dangerous.
- 2.17 Pilotto (2024) states that prison-school initiatives alone are insufficient to improve relationships between schools and families affected by imprisonment and that training and preparation are crucial. Morgan et al. (2013) highlighted that schools often felt they did not know enough about the existence of children with imprisoned parents or what their specific needs were. Similarly, many teachers may feel like they need more specialist knowledge, but this can be remedied with training and an increase in awareness raising (COPE, 2022a). Goldsmith and Byrne’s 2018 study noted that most practitioners had either very little or limited knowledge about the criminal justice system and its impact on families and, consequently, were less confident in their ability to provide support. As a result, Cooper et al. (2023) found

that support for children in schools continues to be limited. Children affected by imprisonment are not a priority group in the majority of schools, and unless there are safeguarding or bullying concerns, schools may feel there is little they can do. This can be a particular issue in schools in more affluent areas, as they may consider this issue less relevant (Long et al., 2022).

A multi-agency approach

- 2.18 COPE's briefing paper (2022b) emphasises how a collective multidisciplinary approach between schools, prisons and community-based organisations is the strongest way of ensuring children receive the support they need. Similarly, research by Kincaid, Roberts and Kane (2019) highlights the need for joined-up, whole family, cross-sectoral support to benefit the diverse needs of children and their families. They suggest joint protocols between local authorities, prisons, and probation services would help address the needs of families of people held in prison based on an assessment of the needs of children.

Safeguarding

- 2.19 Parental imprisonment is often defined as a safeguarding issue in and of itself (see Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019, p.23). In reality, parental imprisonment does not automatically equate to a safeguarding issue, as many children have appropriate care in place whilst their parent is in prison. Practitioners commonly, but falsely, assume that by going to prison, parents (and especially mothers) no longer have parental rights and that it will be damaging for children to visit their parent in prison (Rees, Waits and Bezeczký, 2024). Many children wish to retain contact with their parent (Rees, Staples and Maxwell, 2017), and their views must be considered in line with Article 2 of the UNCRC.

Recognising the needs of all children

- 2.20 The literature emphasises the need to consider the individual needs of children affected by parental imprisonment (Sutherland and Wright, 2017; Prison Reform Trust, 2022). Children with a parent in prison are not a homogenous group; they come from a wide range of social, economic, and ethnic communities. Children in Wales affected by parental imprisonment may:

- be Welsh-speaking
- be from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities
- be from GRT communities

- be from migrant or asylum-seeking families
- be neurodivergent (e.g. autistic, dyslexic, have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder etc.)
- have mental health challenges
- identify as LGBTQ+
- be care-experienced
- have witnessed, or experienced, abuse (domestic, emotional, physical, and sexual)
- have been neglected
- have no, or limited, language (this may be due to their age, as with babies or very young children, or because of a medical condition)
- be carers of other children or adults

2.21 There is also diversity within the experience of having a parent in prison. The support a child needs may vary if, for example, their imprisoned parent:

- is their mother and primary caregiver (Minson, 2014)
- is not in prison in Wales (this is the case for all children whose mothers are in prison and a significant proportion of those whose fathers are in prison) (see Annex D for the location of prisoners from Wales)
- has committed a particular kind of offence (e.g. sexual, high profile, or inter-familial offences) (Families Outside, 2016)
- is in prison abroad (Prisoners Abroad, 2023)

All children will react differently to their circumstances, and their needs will change over time; importantly, the age (Deacon, 2019) and resilience (Sutherland and Wright, 2017) of the child will affect how they may react to parental imprisonment and the subsequent psychological impact this may have. A child's resilience can vary due to their innate qualities; family stability; quality of close relationships (such as those with siblings); their ability to sustain a relationship with their imprisoned parent; and opportunities to openly discuss their situation (Sutherland and Wright, 2017; Jones et al, 2013; Kincaid, Roberts and Kane, 2019). Child impact assessments have been shown to help identify the needs of each individual child (Prison Reform Trust, 2022).

2.22 Not all children with a parent in prison may be attending school or educated in school; over 6,000 children in Wales are home-educated (Welsh Government,

2024a), and 6.6% of 16–18-year-olds in Wales were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the year ending March 2024 (Welsh Government, 2024b). In addition, 2,597 pupils are in Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) (Welsh Government, 2024a).

- 2.23 Around a third of prisoners do not receive visits from family or friends (Prison Reform Trust, 2024), so support for children with a parent in prison cannot be solely prison-centred. The literature identifies several reasons why children may not be visiting, including no longer having a relationship with their imprisoned parent (either through choice or lack of opportunity), safeguarding concerns preventing contact, the financial and/or practical implications of visiting a prison (including transport, food, and, for some families, overnight accommodation), children not being aware that their parent is in custody, a parent’s belief that prison visiting is not in the best interest of the child, and a child’s, or their accompanying adult’s, disability and resulting accessibility issues (Minson, 2020).

3. Policy review

Children's rights

- 3.1 The Children's Commissioner for Wales developed The Right Way framework for developing a children's rights approach throughout Wales (2022). Grounded in the United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), organisations across Wales are asked to prioritise children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy, and practice.
- 3.2 The Council of Europe's (2018) Committee of Ministers (of which the UK remains part) recommended in 2018 to member states that children with imprisoned parents are treated with respect for their human rights and with due regard for their situation and needs. Commensurate with the UNCRC, the recommendations state that children's views should be heard, directly or indirectly, about decisions which may affect them; that children's rights and best interests should be of primary consideration; and that the child's right to an emotional and continuing relationship with their imprisoned parent must be protected. The committee also recommended awareness-raising activity to overcome prejudices. There is, therefore, a compelling case for children's rights, and the centring of their voices, to be embedded within all policies to ensure that practice takes appropriate account of their needs. Only then will children with imprisoned parents, who are currently largely invisible in criminal justice processes, and at best an add-on to the rehabilitation of their parents, be recognised and empowered (Donson and Parkes, 2021).
- 3.3 The following policies help ensure support for children with a parent in prison is rooted in a strengths-based children's rights approach:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Although Wales became the first country in the UK to make the UNCRC part of its domestic law in 2011, this only required Ministers to give due regard to UNCRC principles. In December 2023, Scotland passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act, which incorporates the UNCRC fully into domestic law and provides precedent for Wales to do the same.

The Children's Rights Scheme (Welsh Government, 2021a) is structured around the five principles of the Right Way approach. This provides a strategic framework for integrating children's rights into decision-making, policy, and practice.

Children First (Welsh Government, 2017). This is not a policy or programme so much as the Welsh Government's stated approach to working collaboratively to benefit children and young people.

Safeguarding

- 3.4 Keeping children safe must be central to any policy and practice supporting children with a parent in prison. The Welsh Government (2022a) issued a Code of Safeguarding Practice to support the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which applies to all children, thereby including those with a parent in prison. In addition, it published guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children through its guidance [Keeping Learners Safe](#) (2022b). It also hosts the Safeguarding Wales website (Social Care Wales, 2021a), which includes a range of publications and practice documents regarding safeguarding principles, effective practice, key definitions, and processes. The All-Wales Practice Guides (Social Care Wales, 2021b) highlight different categories of children but, thus far, do not include children with an imprisoned parent.
- 3.5 International resources and guidance are readily available to inform the work of child safeguarding. These include the Keeping Children Safe (2024) global resources and, crucially regarding children with imprisoned parents, Children of Prisoners Europe's Child Safeguarding Toolkit (COPE, 2023).

Identification

- 3.6 Article 2 of the UNCRC requires State Parties to ensure that no child is discriminated against for any reason. Without data that at a minimum give a robust and accurate number of children who experience a parent's imprisonment, State Parties will struggle to ensure discrimination does not occur.
- 3.7 Rule 7f of the [UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners 2015, the Nelson Mandela Rules \(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016\)](#), requires the names of family members, including children, their ages, location, and custody or guardianship status, to be recorded for every person entering prison. The rule does not specify whether this information can be shared or aggregated; indeed, it does not state the purpose of recording this information at all. However, this information could go a long way to ensure that children who experience a parent's or carer's imprisonment are supported and protected through education, health, and other agencies that may otherwise never know their circumstances. The recording

of the number of children and young people with incarcerated parents is also a requirement under Rule 3 of the [Bangkok Rules \(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015\)](#).

3.8 Wales does not currently follow these rules regarding systematic recording of information on these children and young people, despite having signed and ratified the tools above as part of the UK. Instead, only estimated figures are available. Only systematic collection, aggregation, and publication of data provide the information required to make accurate assessments of need and meaningful responses to these assessments through policies and resources. However, how this is done and how the information is used can be highly sensitive, as noted in the literature review. This issue is explored further in the findings from the ASPIRE project.

Education policy

3.9 Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, aims to improve the quality of education, training, and outcomes for all learners in Wales. Estyn's 2020 report, *Knowing your children – supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences (ACES)*, underpins the ASPIRE project. The report highlights the importance of a trauma-informed approach when supporting children who have experienced ACEs and contains recommendations for schools, local authorities, and government that align exceptionally well with support for children impacted by parental imprisonment. These include:

- providing training and support all secondary school staff, not just those involved in pastoral work, to understand their role as a potential trusted adult for vulnerable pupils (schools)
- assisting schools to develop ACE-informed strategies to support vulnerable pupils (local authorities)
- promoting the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information, encouraging the timely sharing of information about vulnerable pupils and families with schools (government)

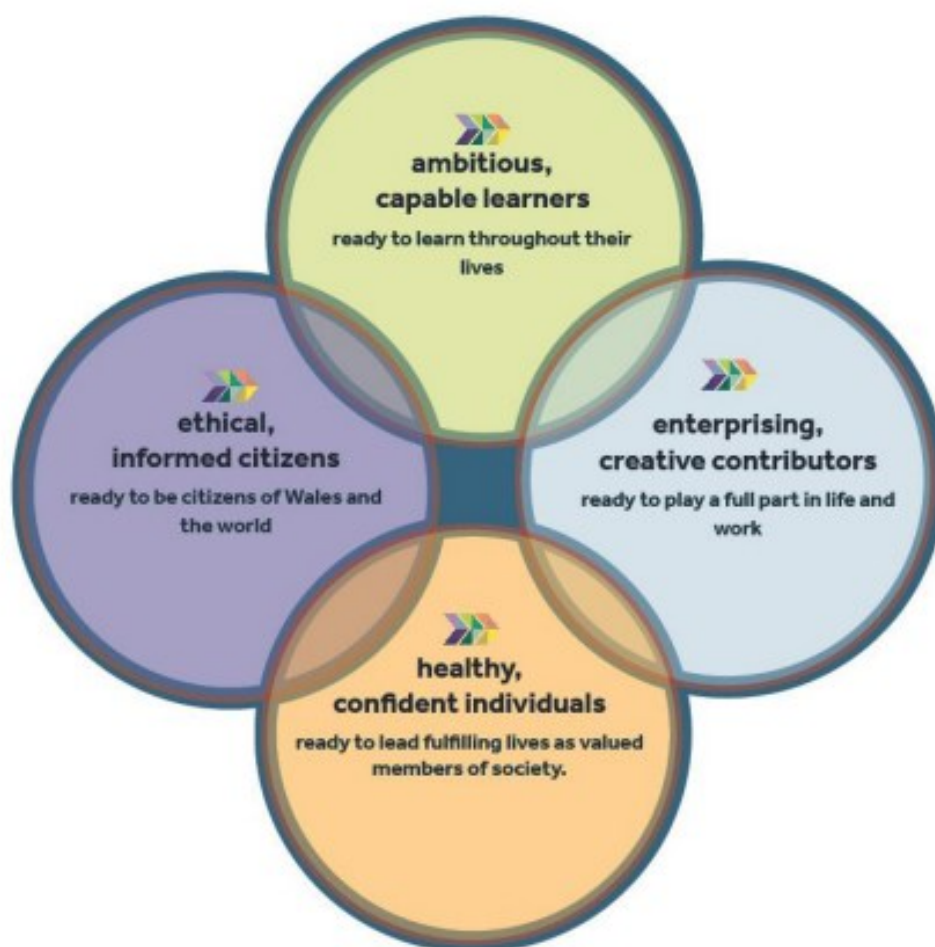
3.10 Estyn's 2020 report highlights the importance of effective collaboration between education and other public services in supporting children.

3.11 In 2021, the Welsh Government created a framework to embed a whole-school approach to children's emotional and mental wellbeing (2021b). The framework

seeks to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of all children, recognising the variety and complexity of needs that children may have. Whilst schools alone cannot meet all needs, this whole-school approach is part of a broader whole-system approach to meeting the wellbeing needs of children and young people (ibid). Notably, the framework was issued as statutory guidance to governing bodies, and schools and local authorities must regard this when developing action plans. The whole-school framework states that, in recent years, whole-school training includes “attachment disorder, emotion coaching, restorative approaches, and supporting the children of imprisoned parents/carers and those exposed to domestic abuse” (2021:46).

- 3.12 In addition, the central Hwb for Education in Wales specifies four purposes of the curriculum (Welsh Government, 2022c; Structural learning, 2023) as follows overleaf:

Figure 1: Four purposes of the curriculum



3.13 The four purposes have obvious parallels to the needs of children when a parent goes to prison, which the findings of the ASPIRE project evidence.

Child wellbeing

3.14 In 2022, the Welsh Government introduced the [Children and Young People's Plan](#) (updated in 2024), which includes the ambition for all children to “have the best start in life and go on to lead the kind of lives they want to live”. A number of priorities within this plan resonate clearly for children with a parent in prison, in particular that all children and young people should be supported to have a fair chance in life and receive the support they need to stay together or come back together with their family, if possible.

3.15 The Welsh Government also has clear policies in place to address ACEs. The 2021 Welsh Government review of their ACE policy stated that the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all children in Wales have the best start in life and should all have the opportunity to achieve their potential. This review highlighted the

need to ensure that ACEs, and the language used to describe children's experiences, do not become deterministic (Welsh Government, 2021c). A focus on PACEs (protective and compensatory childhood experiences) may be more helpful (Ratliff et al., 2024).

- 3.16 Cymru Well Wales established the ACE Support Hub to help drive the achievement of the collective vision for Wales as a leader in ACE-free childhoods. This includes the development of an ACE-informed school approach in recognition of the crucial role schools play in mitigating the traumatic impact of ACEs. A Public Health Wales evaluation of ACE-informed School Approaches in three secondary schools in Wales found that these approaches can build knowledge and understanding among staff, which in turn creates organisational change (Barton, Newbury and Roberts, 2018). Whilst stressing the crucial role schools play in supporting children, the report highlighted the need for a system change within the education sector as a whole. HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Farmer Review recognised the Invisible Walls and School Zone work at HMP YOI Parc as an example of this (Farmer, 2017).
- 3.17 The Welsh Government has set out programmes such as [Taking Wales Forward](#), (2016) [Children First](#) (2017), and [Prosperity for All: the national strategy](#) (2019) to build up 'ACE-aware' public services. These initiatives, and the creation of an ACE Hub, have played a key role in raising awareness of ACEs.
- 3.18 The Welsh Government also created [Wellbeing of Wales, 2022: children and young people's wellbeing](#) (2022d). The reports lays out goals to create "A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)". The 'Getting it Right for Every Child' policy (GwE, 2017) focuses specifically on support for adopted children and their families and paves the way for a similar framework to be developed for children with a parent in prison.

Criminal Justice policy

- 3.19 Lord Farmer's reviews into strengthening family ties for men (2017) and women (2019) in prison have had a significant influence on His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) policy and practice. Importantly, Lord Farmer stated that "family contact tends to be treated as a privilege rather than a right" (2017:28) and, therefore, that a culture change would be required to embed the importance of

families into the framework of prison policy, acting as a “golden thread running through the new policy frameworks” (2017:32). Lord Farmer highlighted the role families can play for the imprisoned person and significantly raised the profile of the role of families within prison policy. Whilst the reviews were seminal, the focus remained on children and families as a tool for effective rehabilitation and reducing offending, rather than recognising families and children as rights-bearers in themselves. The Farmer Review for Women Progress Report (Ministry of Justice, 2023a) similarly emphasised the importance of family ties and supportive relationships but did not specifically recognise the needs of the children.

- 3.20 The importance of addressing ACEs is highlighted in key Welsh criminal justice policies such as A Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales (2018), the HMPPS in Wales Family and Significant Other strategy (2019a), and the Women’s Justice Blueprint (Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government, 2019). However, most policies that mention children impacted by parental imprisonment sit within HMPPS or private prison providers and are not child-centred; rather, they focus on the adult in the justice system, or the young person in the case of Youth Offender Institutions.
- 3.21 In Wales, Criminal Justice is not a devolved matter (unlike Education), and all policy sits under Westminster. The primary national policy for the families and children of imprisoned people is HMPPS’s Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties Framework (2019b). This aims to create opportunities for those in prison to interact positively with their family and significant others, whilst specific family services are usually run by third sector organisations.
- 3.22 From April 2018, all prison establishments were required to develop, and make freely available, their family and significant other strategy (HMPPS, 2019a; 2022). All prisons in Wales have a family and significant other policy in place; these are published on the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) website.

Women from Wales in prison

- 3.23 The Women’s Justice Blueprint for Wales (Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government, 2019) recognises the vulnerabilities of women within the criminal justice system (who are often victims themselves), acknowledging their needs as distinct from those of men who offend. The aim is to create a joined-up approach to

improve emotional and physical health and wellbeing, building positive, supporting relationships within families. To achieve this, the Welsh Government, the UK Government, and the police forces in Wales are working together to deliver blueprints for delivery of female offending and youth justice services as a whole-system approach.

- 3.24 The Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-2025 lays out the Ministry of Justice's updated framework to improve support for women in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2023b). This strategy was updated with a fourth aim: "the effective resettlement of female prison leavers back into communities, to reduce the risk of reoffending" (2023b:3), the only implied reference to engagement with children and families.
- 3.25 In reviewing the policy, there is a disconnect between prison-focused policies promoting family contact and policies relating to the needs and rights of children. Few policies refer to the specific needs of children with a parent in prison. The Committee of Ministers for the Council of Europe, however, highlighted the need to place the "rights and best interests" of children with a parent in prison (or with an incoming sentence) as the "primary consideration" and note that "Children with imprisoned parents shall be treated with respect for their human rights and with due regard for their particular situation and needs" (Council of Europe, 2018). The rights and best interests of the child must be protected; policies and practice should therefore be child centred.

4. Practice review

- 4.1 To inform the considerations for a pan-Wales model of support, the ASPIRE team undertook a review of a range of models of practice across Wales, the UK, and further afield to support children affected by imprisonment. This is not an exhaustive list of all the practice that exists, nor is it necessarily 'best practice', however it provides an illustration of the range of interventions, services, and models that exist both in the UK and internationally to support children who have a parent in prison. See Annex B for details of UK-based organisations supporting children affected by parental imprisonment, and Annex C for details of Wales-based organisations.

Prison-based family support

- 4.2 In England and Wales, HMPPS commissions the delivery of [prisoner, family and significant other services](#) in public prisons. Specifications vary, depending on the needs and size of the prison population; however, they all include the delivery of core services including visit 'meet and greet' support, children's play facilities, visit centre information and advice, and delivery of enhanced family visits. Enhanced visits may include visits targeted at children and young people, such as Baby Bonding sessions where new parents can spend time with their babies, homework clubs where children are supported to engage with learning activities with their parent in custody, and family visits which create informal, activity-focused events for children to spend time with their family member. Some provider organisations may also deliver initiatives such as parenting and relationship programmes and one-to-one casework support for parents in custody, as part of these contracts.
- 4.3 In England and Wales, the following organisations deliver prisoner, family and significant other services contracts: Barnardo's, Lincolnshire Action Trust, Ormiston Families, Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), Partners of Prisoners (POPS), Jigsaw, Nepacs, Invisible Walls Wales, and Spurgeons (see Annex B for information about each organisation). Each organisation may then extend their prison-based services or resources for families/children through additional grant and voluntary funding. For example, at HMP Winchester, Spurgeons delivers [Behind the Wall Beyond the Gate](#), a resettlement service that puts the needs of children and families at the centre. Nepacs, which delivers visit contracts in north-east prisons, has created '[youth zones](#)' in some of their prison visitors' centres, providing targeted support for young people aged eight to seventeen. Invisible Walls Wales, which has

the contract for visit services at eight establishments including four in Wales, delivers the [School Zone](#) model in some of their sites (see case study at the end of this section).

- 4.4 G4S established a Family Interventions Unit in HMP YOI Parc in 2010. The 60-bed unit is for men who have been identified as having a specific need of support with regards to their family situation, relationships or parenting and entry to the unit is dependent on applicants passing through an assessment board. All the men on the unit sign a compact committing to complete relevant interventions, and to abide by the strict rules of the unit, where being a 'Family Man' is the model to aspire to. Everyone on the unit has an allocated case worker and is supported to engage in interventions such as parenting and relationship programmes. Individuals spend on average eight to fourteen months on the unit (HMP YOI Parc Family and Significant Others Strategy, 2024-25).
- 4.5 Delivered by Pact, Visiting Mum provides specialist support for mothers in custody and their children: one service supporting mothers from Wales at HMPs Styal and Eastwood Park (funded by HMPPS and the Welsh Government), and another at HMP Downview (funded by Comic Relief). The initiative includes one-to-one support for both mothers and their children and has been found to impact positively on both parents' and children's wellbeing. In an evaluation of the pilot run in HMP Eastwood park, Rees, Staples and Maxwell (2017) found that outside of this initiative, children received little to no support and therefore valued the scheme enormously.
- 4.6 Together a Chance, a pilot scheme run by Pact and being trialled in HMPs Eastwood Park and Send, places a social worker within the prison to support mothers and their children. An evaluation of the project concluded that mothers involved 'can, with the right support, continue to play a role in their children's lives, and be involved in decisions relating to their welfare, where it is in the best interests of the children' (Rees, Waits and Bezeczky, 2024:13). It also found that mothers who could not have contact with children were still able to contribute to children's lives in other ways, for example, through life story work (ibid).
- 4.7 Storybook Dads is a UK-wide charity, operating in prisons in Wales. It supports parent-child relationships by helping parents in prison record stories for their children to listen to at home. Evaluation of their work found that 97% of families said that hearing the stories made the child feel closer to their imprisoned parent (Storybook Dads, 2024).

4.8 A number of organisations delivering family support in prisons use family group conferences to support family relationships. Pact staff, for example, working in their [Routes to Change programme](#) at HMPs Brixton and Isis (a ‘whole family relational approach’, aiming to deliver end-to-end integrated rehabilitation and resettlement support programme to prisoners and their children), are trained in family group conferencing techniques. In Wales, the charity Y Bont, which supports children who are separated, or at risk of being separated, from their family delivers a project called [Cwlwm](#). The aim of the Cwlwm project is to offer every woman from North Wales leaving HMP Styal in Cheshire an opportunity to access Y Bont’s Conflict Resolution Service, so they can plan post-release contact and living arrangements for their children. All women are offered the opportunity to access Y Bont’s family group conference service to help facilitate the plans for their children. The family group conferencing model is a strengths-based approach which recognises families’ strengths and empowers them to use their resources to meet both parents’ and children’s needs.

School resources and support

4.9 Several organisations in the UK have developed resources specifically related to providing schools with guidance and tools to support children affected by parental imprisonment. Families Outside published the second edition of their [Guidance and Resources for Schools in Supporting Children Impacted by Imprisonment](#) in 2018, which provides an e-resource for schools including film clips and lesson ideas, tools, and helpful guidance for supporting children in school settings. Pact recently produced a [Schools Toolkit](#), available via the medium of English and Welsh, that includes films, lesson plans, age-appropriate activities, school policy frameworks, and guidance for delivering an in-school, young person’s peer support group for children affected by imprisonment. Barnardo’s has also developed a number of resources focused on supporting schools, including the [Invisible Walls Accord Service Toolkit](#) (Barnardo’s, 2014), available via the medium of English and Welsh, that informed the development of the Invisible Walls Wales School Zone project. The toolkit aims to increase the confidence of school staff to recognise and support families affected by parental imprisonment and provide resources for enabling effective support via a whole-school approach. Children Heard and Seen has developed a [model school policy \(2020\)](#) for supporting children with a parent in prison. The policy was developed in partnership with children, parents and teachers.

- 4.10 Further afield, Children of Prisoner's Europe (COPE) drew from practice across the world to develop [Reading Between the Lines: a toolkit to help schools support children with a parent in prison](#) (2022a). The toolkit includes examples of school-based support, resources and recommendations for practical suggestions for how schools can develop their practice to better meet the needs of children affected by imprisonment. In the United States, the [Joining Forces](#) literacy and arts-based curriculum has been developed as a school resource for students across all year groups and is designed to create a supportive space for children and young people who have been impacted by the imprisonment of family member.
- 4.11 While Invisible Walls Wales' School Zone model offers one example of prison-school collaboration (see case study at the end of this section), a number of organisations across the United Kingdom have developed school-prison initiatives to raise awareness about the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment, signpost staff to resources, and provide guidance as to how best to support children and their families in the school environment. Barnardo's, for example, piloted a [Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Champion model for schools](#), training staff members across primary and secondary school clusters to recognise and support the impact of imprisonment. School Champions meet regularly to review school policies, share good practice, and continue to develop their learning and understanding.
- 4.12 It should be noted that, although not specifically targeted at children with a parent in prison, there are school-based initiatives that support the emotional wellbeing of children. In Wales, these include Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) and the Thrive initiative, which have been developed and supported by educational psychologists and scientific research, to provide emotional support to pupils.
- 4.13 The Croatian Rijeka Schools Project was a set up in 2021 following the Croatian Ombudsman for Children's publication, 'Both sides of the Bars, What we owe children whose parents are in prison'. Based at the Nikola Tesla Primary School in Rijeka (located close to Rijeka Prison), and under the guidance of the school psychologist, the project involved a collaboration between the Ombudsman's office, children, prisons, schools, the broader educational system, parents, prison directorate, citizens, and the local community and highlighted the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach.

- 4.14 In the United States, [POPS Clubs](#) are delivered in high schools across a number of states. The clubs are art-based and aim to provide an inclusive, empowering space for children who have experienced the imprisonment of a loved one. Every year, POPS publishes a book containing the artistic work created by children and young people attending the POPS clubs. There are several examples internationally of in-school support groups for children and young people affected by parental imprisonment. These have been found to increase children's resilience and improve emotional wellbeing (Roberts and Loucks, 2015).
- 4.15 The [Handle with Care](#) scheme was first piloted in West Virginia in 2013 and now operates across other states in America. The scheme is a model of collaborative working between law enforcement agencies, mental health, and schools. The model dictates that if a law enforcement officer encounters a child during a house call, primarily for incidents of domestic abuse (which may include the arrest of a family member), that the child's name and three words: 'handle with care', are forwarded to the school before the start of the next school day. Schools involved in the scheme are supported to implement individual, class and whole school trauma-sensitive approaches so that children are 'handled with care'. Whilst there has been some critique of this model (Adalist-Estrin, 2021), namely the discretionary application of these policies and unintended consequences, the valuable role of school counsellors in sharing information, providing support, and advocating for children has been highlighted (Warren, Coker and Collins, 2019).

Community-based support

- 4.16 McGillivray (2016) established that community-based support for families affected by imprisonment, delivered by third sector organisations, has grown considerably and is seen to be impactful. Research also highlights the importance of those third sector agencies working in collaboration with the public sector and other organisations, to deliver effective models of support and share their learning and expertise. A significant number of third sector organisations across the United Kingdom are delivering a range of services and interventions to support children affected by imprisonment (see Annex B). Models of support for children and families in the community include:
- peer support and befriending for adults and children (via telephone, face to face, and online groups)

- children and young people's support/activity groups
- drop-in support and information groups for adults
- children and young people's events and residentials
- help and information telephone lines
- one-to-one case work for both children and adults (online, via telephone, and face to face)
- mentoring for children and young people
- arts-based projects (including drama, art and film-making) that enable children and young people to share their views and experiences
- empowerment programmes that are focused on providing children with the opportunity to influence policy and practice

4.17 While most community-based support is provided to families where a parent is serving a custodial sentence, some support services are extended to children and families throughout their journey through the criminal justice system - from support and advice in courts to support with release and resettlement. Support for families is varied and reflects the wide-ranging impact of family member imprisonment, including finances, emotional wellbeing, housing, relationship support, advocacy, information and guidance, parenting, and signposting. The third sector has also developed a wide range of resources to support work with children, young people and their families. These include:

- videos and animations for children, adults and professionals focusing on the impact of the criminal justice system on children, information about prison life, feelings associated with parental imprisonment
- books (both fiction and non-fiction) for children and young people aimed at answering some of the frequently asked questions regarding parental imprisonment
- resources to support parents in supporting their children
- guides and toolkits to support practitioners to work with and protect the rights of children affected by imprisonment
- workbooks, tools and activities for professionals to use alongside children to encourage them to explore their feelings and identify questions

4.18 While these resources are mainly held on individual organisations' web pages, the [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#), delivered by Barnardo's, has

collated resources into a centralised online information hub for professionals in England and Wales. It has three directories: research, resources, and services, and while it is not targeted at children and young people, it provides links to resources that may be useful. In the United States, the [National Research Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#) provides a similar national knowledge hub containing research, policy, and tools to support practitioners working with children affected by imprisonment.

- 4.19 The Prison Reform Trust's [This is Me: A Child Impact Assessment Toolkit](#) was developed in collaboration with children, young people, and parents. The resource has been adopted by a wide range of practitioners across England, Scotland, and Wales, from statutory to third sector services, as a tool to understand children's needs better, ensuring the focus remains on what children say they need and feel when their parent is involved in the justice system. The toolkit was designed to influence how practitioners in the community are working with children affected by parental imprisonment and is currently being evaluated.
- 4.20 A number of third sector organisations have been commissioned to develop strategic or local-authority wide initiatives to support children affected by parental imprisonment in the community. Bristol City Council, for example, has commissioned [everyFAMILY](#) to work with key partners (including prisons, probation, schools, and early help teams) across Bristol and South Gloucestershire to develop a strategic approach to supporting children affected by parental imprisonment. This has included the facilitation of a multi-agency strategy group, the development of a pan-Bristol strategy for supporting children affected by imprisonment, delivery of multi-agency training, and the establishment of a multi-agency Champions' network. Champions exist in a wide range of third sector and statutory agencies across Bristol and South Gloucestershire and are trained to provide children and families with support, advice, and guidance, as well as signposting to appropriate services.
- 4.21 In North Wales, the [Families Affected by Imprisonment \(FABI\) project](#)¹ is commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in North Wales to deliver a regional, multi-agency, strategic approach to establishing clear, quick pathways to supporting, guiding, and listening to children affected by imprisonment. The work is led by a multi-agency steering group of over 40 third sector and

¹ Funding for this project ceased at the end of August 2024.

statutory representatives and includes delivery of awareness raising training for professionals.

4.22 In Oxfordshire, Children Heard and Seen (a specialist charity supporting children and families affected by imprisonment) has worked in partnership with Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and Thames Valley Police to pilot [Operation Paramount](#), which aims to identify children rapidly when a parent is sent to prison and offer targeted support. When an individual with children living in Oxfordshire is sent to prison, the Thames Valley VRU notifies the local neighbourhood policing team, which then contacts the family and offers a referral to Children Heard and Seen for support. While this programme aims to support the needs of children and ensure their voices are heard, some necessary amendments have been recognised, including that it may be more appropriate for Children Heard and Seen to visit families rather than the police. This would avoid further criminalising families and mitigate stress for children who may have negative perceptions of the police following the arrest of their parent. The pilot of Operation Paramount is currently testing different models to determine who is best suited to conduct welfare visits in family homes. A similar model was piloted in Wales in December 2022, run by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (Violence Prevention Wales, 2022) however, this has not been continued.

4.23 Charters have also been developed by organisations in partnership with children and young people to establish multi-agency commitment to supporting the rights and needs of children affected by parental imprisonment. Pact developed the [Our Voice Charter](#) with young people in London with experience of parental imprisonment, and Barnardo's has worked with local authorities to encourage a shared, multi-agency commitment to standards developed by children, for example in both [Essex](#) and [Isle of Wight](#).

Training

4.24 Many of the third sector organisations specialising in support for children affected by parental imprisonment deliver training to multi-agency practitioners to raise awareness about the impact of imprisonment, develop skills and confidence within the workforce, and promote interagency working. A range of training programmes, both online and face to face, are being delivered across the United Kingdom including:

- short awareness raising sessions for multi-agency audiences
- training courses developed for specific sectors – such as education, social care, or police
- training courses linked to specific resources/toolkits for supporting practice with children affected by parental imprisonment
- in-prison training sessions providing practitioners with the opportunity to ‘walk in the shoes’ of a child visiting a parent in prison (often based on Hidden Sentence training that was originally developed for Action for Prisoners’ Families, although this organisation no longer exists)
- Continuing Professional Development accredited training (both Families Outside in Scotland and Children Heard and Seen in England provide accredited training programmes)

4.25 Many of the training programmes being delivered have incorporated the voice of children and young people, by including direct quotes, case studies, or short films representing their experiences. Some organisations, such as Partners of Prisoners Support group (POPS), have included families with lived experience of the justice system in the development and delivery of their training. [Echoes of Incarceration](#), based in the US, works with young people with lived experience of parental imprisonment to create films that are used in training for criminal justice stakeholders including police, prison staff and social workers (Echoes of Incarceration, online).

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Annex A: Expert Advisory Group members

Pact

HMPPS - Women's Justice Blueprint for Wales

HMPPS – Reducing Reoffending

CLINKS

Education welfare - Blaenau Gwent

HMPPS - Women's Justice Blueprint for Wales

Expert by Experience - Young person with a mother formerly in prison

Expert by Experience - Mother formerly in prison

Education welfare - Swansea

Public Health Wales

G4S – Invisible Walls Wales

Wrexham Council FABI programme

Barnardo's

Pact

Education welfare - Neath Port Talbot

Welsh Government - Education

HMPPS – Family Services

HMPPS Wales

Annex B: UK-based organisations supporting children affected by imprisonment



Organisations currently delivering services in Wales

Name of organisation	Description	Website
Action for Children	UK-wide charity supporting children and young people, which includes provision of a prison Visitors' centre at HMP Grampian	Home – Action for Children
Apex Scotland	National Scottish criminal justice charity with services that include running a visitor centre service at HMP Inverness	Apex Highland
Barnardo's	UK-wide charity supporting children and families including specialist work focused on children with a parent in prison: delivering training programmes, prison visitors' centres (HMP Berwyn, HMP Isle of Wight, HMP Edinburgh) and support in the community and online	Children with a parent or relative in prison Barnardo's (barnardos.org.uk)
Children Heard and Seen	A charity working across England supporting children impacted by parental imprisonment. Offering 1-1 support, volunteer mentoring, parent support, peer support groups for children, online activities for children, and activity days	Home - Children Heard and Seen
Corona Kids	A London-based organisation that delivers Hidden Sentence training and prison-visit experience training for practitioners working with children. Also runs support projects to strengthen family ties and equip schools.	Corona Kids
The Croft	Set up specifically for prison visits to HMP Barlinnie to welcome visitors, provide information, and link to support	The Croft Prison Visitors' Centre
CrossReach	Delivery arm of the Church of Scotland's Social Care Council, contracted by Scottish Government	Perth Visitors Support & Advice Centre

	Community Justice to provide visitors' centres at HMP Perth and HMP & YOI Polmont.	Polmont Prison Visitors' Centre
Cyrenians	Scottish organisation focused on prevention of homelessness and runs the prison visitors' centre at HMP Addiewell	HMP Addiewell Visitor Centre
Early Years Scotland	Scottish charity that runs the Young Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Programme (Fathers' Programme and Learning Together Through Play sessions) in six Scottish prisons as well as prison visitors' services at HMPs Greenock and Low Moss.	Early Years Scotland Prison Services
The Ebb	Leicester-based support for families of prisoners	The Ebb
Every Family	Commissioned by Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council develop a strategic approach to supporting children affected by parental offending	Children Affected By Parental Offending everyFAMILY
North Wales Families Affected by Imprisonment Programme (FABI)	Multi-agency, strategic programme to improve support for children affected by parental imprisonment, including training for professionals	North Wales Families Affected by Imprisonment (FABI) Programme 2023 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales (northwales-pcc.gov.uk)
South West Wales Families and Friends of Prisoners (FFOPS)	Delivering support to families affected by the criminal justice system in southwest Wales via a drop-in centre	About Us — FFOPS
Families First, YSS	Provides support to children in Worcestershire with a close family member (parent, grandparent, sibling) currently going through the criminal justice system, from the point of arrest to prison release	Families First YSS
Families Outside	The only national charity in Scotland that works solely to support children and families affected by imprisonment, providing professional training, peer	Help, information, and support for families affected by imprisonment Families Outside

	support, 1-1 support, a national helpline and strategic development	
Forth Valley Inclusion	Faith-based charitable organisation that provides support for people in prison and their visitors at HMP & YOI Stirling and HMP Glenochil	Home – Forth Valley Inclusion
Getting Better Together Ltd	Community-based health initiative which promotes the education, health, and wellbeing of North Lanarkshire residents, including running a prison visitors' centre at HMP Shotts	HMP Shotts Family Time Project
Himaya Haven	A Birmingham-based organisation that focuses on working with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities	Himaya Haven
Invisible Walls Wales	A Community Interest Company providing family support, training, visit centre services (at HMP Parc, HMP Cardiff, HMP Usk, and HMP Prescoed) and school-based support	Home - Invisible Walls
Jigsaw	Delivering visitor centre and family support services at HMP Leeds and HMP Wealstun	HOME Jigsawcharity
Lincolnshire Action Trust	Delivering visitor centre and family support services in prisons across Lincolnshire	Family & Significant Other Support - Lincolnshire Action Trust (latcharity.org.uk)
National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO)	An online directory for professionals in England and Wales to support work with children affected by parental imprisonment	NICCO
NEPACS	Working in north-east England, the charity delivers prison visit centre services and 1-1 and group support for children and families affected by the criminal justice system	Nepacs
NIACRO	Working across Northern Ireland the charity aims to reduce crime and the impact on families, delivering visit centre services, 1-1 and group work support	NIACRO

One Small Thing	A London-based organisation that delivers training to practitioners in the community and justice-based sectors on the impact of trauma	One Small Thing
Ormiston	Provides a range of services for to support families affected by the imprisonment or offending behaviour of a relative, including visit centres in 8 prisons in south-east England and the Breaking Barriers service offering 1-1 support to children and young people	Working with families affected by offending - Ormiston Families
Out There	Charity providing emotional and practical support and an information service for families of prisoners in Greater Manchester.	Out There (SFOP) Charity - Manchester 0161 232 8986 (outtherecharity.org)
Pact	A national charity working across England and Wales that delivers a significant range of services supporting children affected by parental imprisonment including school-based support, professional training, 1-1 and group work support and visit centres in over 60 prisons (including, HMP Swansea, HMP Style and HMP Eastwood Parc)	Home - Prison Advice and Care Trust
POPS (Partners of Prisoners Support group)	Delivering visitor centre and family support services in eleven prisons across north-west England	Partners of Prisoners POPS provide information and support for offenders' families from the point of arrest through to release and beyond.
Prison Reform Trust	An independent UK charity working to create a just, humane and effective penal system. They have produced resources to support work with children affected by parental imprisonment and campaigned on their behalf	‘This is Me’: A Child Impact Assessment toolkit Prison Reform Trust
Prisoners’ Families Helpline	Delivered by Pact, this service operates across England and Wales providing a free helpline and online information hub for families	Prisoners' Families Helpline (prisonersfamilies.org)
Spurgeons	A national children’s charity working across England, they deliver visitor centre and family support services at HMP Winchester as well as a through	BTWB TG Help for Released Prisoners UK (spurgeons.org)

	the gate resettlement service to support families	
Summerhill Community Centre	Local charity in Dumfries with a Community Learning and Development commitment to improve the conditions of life and relief of poverty for all ages in the wider community. Includes personal development in Education, Recreation, Sport, Health & Wellbeing, social gatherings, and environmental activities	Summerhill Prison Visitors' Service
Sussex Prisoners Families	Local charity working in Sussex to support children and families affected by the criminal justice system including 1-1, group work and activities	Home - Sussex Prisoners' Families (sussexprisonersfamilies.org.uk)
Time Matters UK	Merseyside charity that supports children who are impacted by parental imprisonment, both in groups and individually, face to face and online. They have developed a range of resources in collaboration with young people to support professionals, children and their families	Home - Time-Matters UK (timemattersuk.com)
Y Bont	A charity based in Wales which supports children and young people who, for whatever reason are separated, or are at risk of being separated, from their families (including those affected by parental imprisonment). The organisation offers counselling, group programmes and 1-1 support	Y Bont Helping children, young people and families

Annex C: Welsh services and resources for children affected by parental imprisonment

Type of service/resource	Provision
Prison-based family support and visiting services	<p>Invisible Walls Wales: HMPs Cardiff, HMP Usk, HMP Prescoed, and HMP and YOI Parc</p> <p>Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust): HMP Swansea, HMP Eastwood Park, HMP Styal, and Visiting Mums programme</p> <p>Barnardo's: HMP Berwyn</p> <p>Families and Friends of Prisoners (FFOPs): HMP Swansea family peer support</p> <p>Y Bont: HMP Styal Cwlwm project</p> <p>Storybook Dads</p>
School and community-based support for children and young people	<p>Pact: Reach Out project, school outreach and peer support and befriending services for adults.</p> <p>Barnardo's: partnership work with schools and links with community-based services, including online parent-teacher meetings.</p> <p>Invisible Walls Wales: School Zone</p>
Strategic development work	<p>North Wales Families Affected by Imprisonment (FABI)²</p>
Training for professionals	<p>Pact</p> <p>Barnardo's</p> <p>FABI³</p> <p>Invisible Walls Wales</p>
Welsh resources and toolkits	<p>Pact Welsh Schools Handbook (2024)</p> <p>Barnardo's Family support for children and families affected by imprisonment - A handbook for Families First services in Wales (2012)</p> <p>Barnardo's Invisible Walls Accord Resource Toolkit (2024)</p> <p>Barnardo's Wales School's Handbook (2014)</p> <p>Welsh Government's Tips for Parents, Supporting your children when a parent goes to prison (2023)</p>

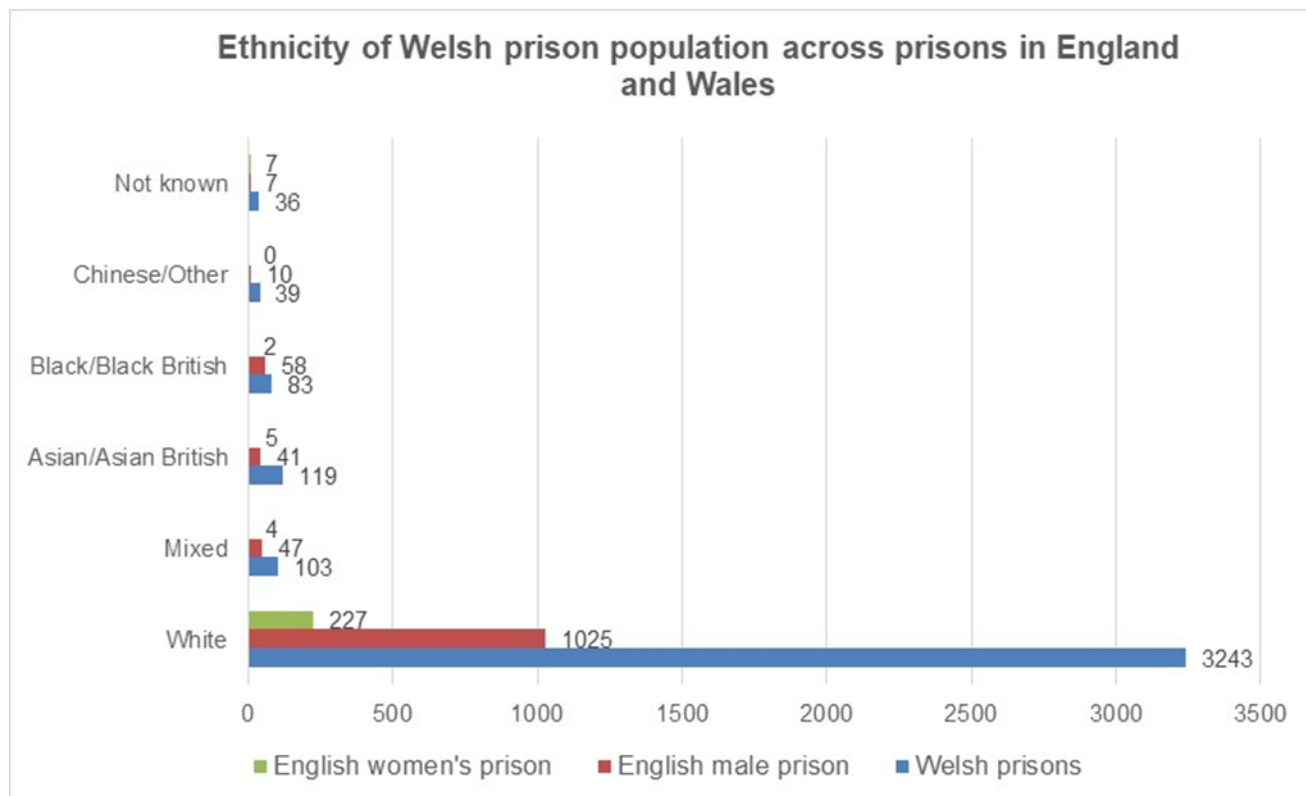
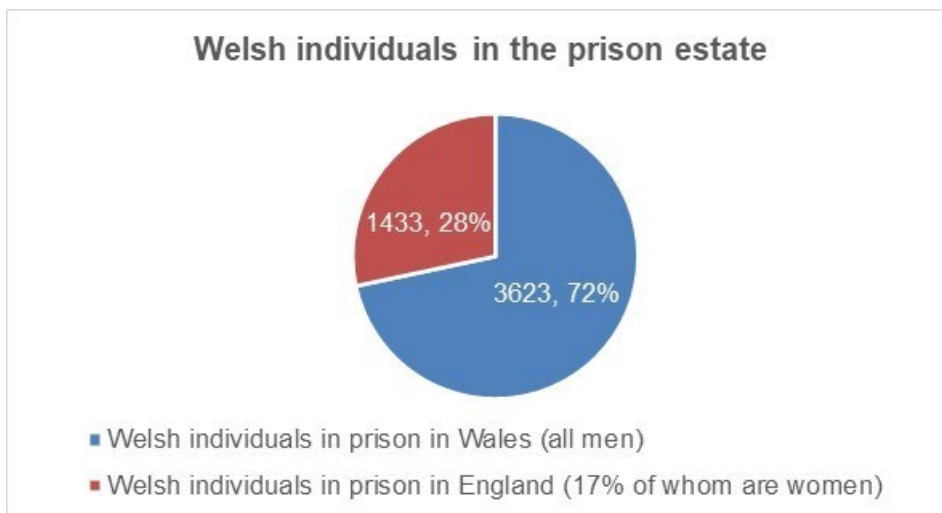
² Funding for this service ceased at the end of August 2024

³ *ibid.*

Annex D: Welsh prison population

The following data were taken from a Freedom of Information Request submitted to the Ministry of Justice in 2023⁴. It represents a snapshot of the number of Welsh people in custody on 1st September 2023.

4,811 Welsh men and 245 Welsh women were in custody in England and Wales on 1st September 2023.



⁴ Freedom of Information Request 230831045 Welsh people in prison by Ethnicity 2023, cited on: [Welsh people in Prison - a Freedom of Information request to Ministry of Justice - WhatDoTheyKnow](#)