



**families
outside**

supporting
families affected
by imprisonment

Paying the Price: the cost to families of imprisonment

**Louise Adams & Sarah Rogers
Children in Scotland Conference
30th May 2024**

    @FamiliesOutside

Our Vision

For all children and families affected by imprisonment to be treated with justice and fairness so that they can live lives free from stigma and disadvantage.



Our Purpose

To improve outcomes for children and families affected by imprisonment, creating and promoting opportunities for families to uphold and defend their rights.



Quiz

How many prisons does Scotland currently have?

How many children in Scotland experience imprisonment of a parent each year?

How many people, on average, are in Scottish prisons on any given day?

How much is the risk of reoffending reduced where family contact is maintained?

What percentage of people in prison have a child under the age of 18?

What proportion of people in prison lose contact with their families due to their imprisonment?



The impact of imprisonment on families

Housing

Financial
Concerns

Media
Intrusion

Stigma

Family
Dynamics

Travel &
Transport

Lack of
Information

Victimisation

Physical &
Mental
Health



In their own words – recent reflections from children and young people we are working with

- “Mixed feelings, confusion as I miss my dad but hate what dad has done to us.”
- “Things are much better at home, no shouting and fighting.”
- “We have less money but more peace at home and my mum and sister are less stressed.”
- “I have to go and visit him in prison at the weekends instead of seeing my friends.”
- “I get to see my dad more often now; he didn’t used to turn up to see us.”
- “Quite a lot changed. Less shouting in the house, but I miss his scratchy beard when he cuddles me.”
- “I miss him a lot. I just want to cuddle him and never let go. It’s been a long time now.”
- “I can’t go to the park with dad anymore. Sometimes if I don’t have a visit I go to where we used to play together.”
- “It feels there is no end in sight, I just try to get on with my life.”
- “I got used to dad being in prison and I am nervous about him getting out and how things will be when he gets home.”
- “One less person and an extra chair that’s empty, we keep it on top of the tumble dryer.”



Paying the Price research project

Background information

- Research project funded by abrdn Financial Fairness Trust and conducted by Dr Briega Nugent to understand the financial cost to families of supporting someone in prison and after release.
- 51 interviews across Scotland: 49 were women, 1 teenage daughter and 1 man (who supported someone after release), from January to July 2022.
- 30 caring for 58 children; 3 were kinship carers.
- 4 earned the Minimum Income Standard and had around £1200 to spend a month after paying rent. For the other 46, after paying rent and after tax, people were **living on around £500 a month.**
- Often dealing with other complex issues, e.g. mental and/or physical health, past trauma.

Paying the Price research project

Costs of remand, sentence and release

- **Remand:** The average monthly total cost was £300. Several families spent all their income to afford this, and most were spending around half. Families spent on average £70 a month on travel, £60 on snacks at visits, £100 into the personal prison account, and £55 on other costs.
- **Sentence:** The median monthly total cost was £180 - around a third of the household income. Families spent an average of £77 a month on travel, £36 on snacks, £88 into the personal prison account, and £75 on other costs.
- **Release:** A third had financially supported the person upon release, costing between £30 to £1000 a month; the average cost was £300. The first two months were the costliest before benefit claims were set up.



Paying the Price research project

‘Coping’ with the costs

- Sacrifices and Silent Suffering
- Food poverty
- Fuel Poverty
- Not buying clothes, shoes or material goods
- Permanent lockdown
- Loss of car
- Lack of ‘free’ or ‘me’ time
- Loss of connections and isolation
- Debt

Recent reflections from children and young people we are working with:

- “Less money for school trips, football and clothes.”
- “My mum is stressed about money as my dad earned a lot. It costs a lot to visit, and the vending machines are a rip off.”
- “We don’t get to stay with him at weekends anymore, he used to take us out and buy us games and stuff. He paid for our school trips. Money is tighter now.”

Paying the Price research project Conclusions

- Families already in poverty are being squeezed financially, to the point of being crushed.
- The research highlighted the role of prison in **creating, sustaining and deepening poverty amongst children and families.**
- Women had given up hope and could not cope but their sense of obligation to others and support from organisations was helping them to keep on going.
- They showed tremendous resilience but also fragility and were intensely aware of their diminished life and felt punished. **They paid the price.**



Families are Paying the Price

Navigating the possible financial costs to families when a family member is involved in the justice system



Paying the Price research project Recommendations

1. Reduce costs to families
2. Improve access to funds and financial support for families
3. Provide more accessible information to families
4. Increase opportunities for people held in prison to support themselves and their families
5. Introduce and sustain systemic changes
6. Reduce the stigma families affected by imprisonment face in society

For more information access the [full](#) and [summary](#) research reports.



Imprisonment, poverty and children's rights



Rights at risk include: Article 2 non-discrimination, Article 3 best interests, Article 9 separation from parents, Article 12 respect for views, Article 16 privacy, Article 24 health, Article 27 adequate standard of living, Article 28 education, Article 31 play

The rights of children affected by imprisonment and poverty are at risk.

Imprisonment of a household member is an ACE and is associated with a fivefold increase in exposure to other ACES.

Negative impacts of imprisonment

Stigma of imprisonment

Negative impacts of poverty

Stigma of poverty

'This Is Me' - Child Impact Assessment Toolkit

- Co-created with children with lived experience of having a mother in the criminal justice system, the toolkit provides a framework which aims to ensure children are listened to at every stage of their parent's journey in the criminal justice system.
- To ensure that children are meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care and support needs
- To ensure that children's rights are recognised and upheld within criminal justice processes
- Child Impact Assessments should be promoted at each stage of the criminal justice system. (This does not mean that the professional highlighting the CIA will be the person carrying out the assessment.)



The importance of Article 12 respect for children's views



RESPECT FOR
CHILDREN'S VIEWS

You have the right to
speak up and have
your opinions listened to,

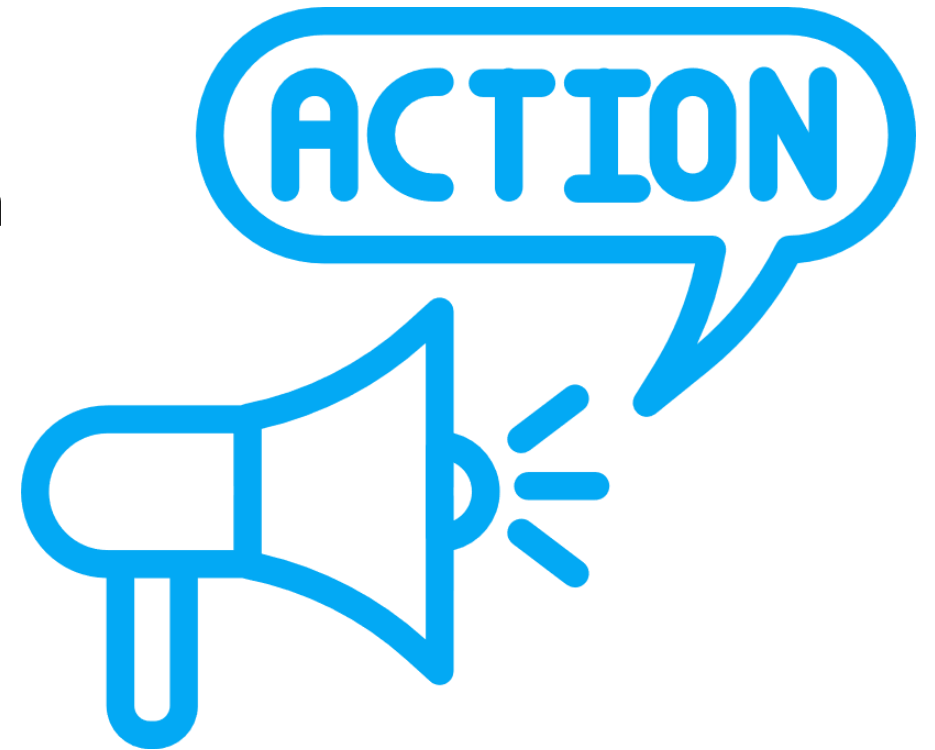
and be taken seriously by adults
on things that affect you.

What can you do to support families affected by imprisonment?

- Be aware of, and raise awareness of, families affected by imprisonment across your work.
- Sign post families to available support:
 - ✓ Families Outside (national helpline, 1:1 support, peer support)
 - ✓ Prison Visitor Centres
 - ✓ Help with Prison Visits Scheme
- Attend Families Outside accredited training
- Promote and/or support the use of the Child Impact Assessment Toolkit



Using the pledge cards provided, write down one action you will take away from today's workshop.





supporting
families affected
by imprisonment

Contact Us:



Helpline

0800 254 0088

support@familiesoutside.org.uk

Text FAMOUT to 60777



Head Office

0131 557 9800

admin@familiesoutside.org.uk

Thank you so much for listening! If you would like to get in touch, please email us at:

louise.adams@familiesoutside.org.uk

sarah.rogers@familiesoutside.org.uk

Find us online:



@FamiliesOutside



Families Outside



www.familiesoutside.org.uk