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This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

How young people experience the imprisonment of a family member: critical
reflections on policy.

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Doctor of Philosophy
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2016

Declaration of Original Work

I hereby confirm that I have composed this thesis and that this thesis is all my own work. I also declare that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed _____on _____.

Abstract

The research question is:

How do young people experience having a family member in prison?

This question is posed within the Scottish policymaking context, in which high rates of imprisonment and reoffending are entrenched problems for the Scottish Government. In relation to children and young people, there has been a focus on the performance measurement of holistic policies accessed through the universal services of health, education and social work.

Although there has been a growing awareness of some key issues that affect families affected by imprisonment, concern tends to be focused on parental imprisonment, ignoring wider family relationships. In addition, older teenagers and young adults have largely been overlooked. This stage of development is an important one, because it represents the time when young people make the transition into adulthood. As such, it is highly intertwined with issues relating to self-identity.

The thesis addresses the policies that are most relevant to young people, as well as the policies that more generally relate to families affected by imprisonment. It takes an approach informed by critical discourse analysis to critique the construction of young people and families, arguing that Scottish policymaking fails to address the core needs of these young people, and that the Scottish Government only deals with families affected by imprisonment at arms length. This leaves a policy gap, which third sector organisations step in to fill.

The research includes empirical data from young people, who described their experience in open-structured interviews. A thematic analysis of the interview data shows the complexity of the emotional state that young people enter when faced with the imprisonment of a parent, sibling or partner. A discussion of the resultant psychological effects, with reference to classic sociology of imprisonment literature, demonstrates that imprisonment is potentially traumatizing, causing feelings of isolation and a sense of being ignored or even silenced.

The empirical data also includes semi-structured interviews with professionals from third sector organisations, whose evidence shows that the policy environment presents a number of obstacles that block the way to providing appropriate services to young people. In addition, the topic of family imprisonment is under-explored by the professionals and this increases the risk that young people will feel the need to stay silent.

In conclusion, the thesis reviews the theoretical framework, the policymaking environment and the lived experience of the young people and the professionals who work with them to conclude that there is a pressing problem, which is

inadequately understood, and which requires the more insightful approach that research such as this can help to inform.

Lay Summary

When someone is sent to prison, it often means that members of their family suffer practically and/or emotionally. This is a serious problem in Scotland where a comparatively high number of people is imprisoned each year. Although the needs of prisoners' families are better known than in the past, the needs of older teenagers and young adults has rarely been considered.

This thesis sets out to understand what it means for young people aged 16+ when a family member is sent to prison. Young people, and professionals who work with them, were interviewed, in order to gain a fresh insight into the situation. In addition, the thesis considers how the problem has been catered for in terms of policymaking by reviewing the policies that affect young people generally, and families affected by imprisonment in particular.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to all of the young people who met up with me and told me about their experiences. Their willingness to participate has made this thesis possible. In addition, I would like to thank the professionals who supported the research, and who also gave up their valuable time to enable me to interview them.

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CHAPTER 1   Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In order to set the scene for the thesis and the empirical research within it, this chapter begins with reference to my research questions. I then describe the wider Scottish context, including national and local governance and the specific issues that relate to imprisonment. Thereafter the chapter explores the place of families affected by imprisonment within this broader context. The chapter notes the future concerns that the Scottish Government has flagged up in relation to imprisonment and reoffending rates, and concludes by laying out the structure of the thesis as a whole.

1.2 Research questions

My research begins with the question:

> How do young people experience having a family member in prison?

I pose this question in the context of the Scottish criminal justice system, in which a significantly higher proportion of the population is sent to prison than in other jurisdictions. The question is specific to young people over the age of 16 and up to their mid-twenties because this is an age-group that appears to be largely missing from the research on families affected by imprisonment, as I will seek to explain.

I will also argue that young people of this age are in transition from childhood to adulthood, during which time they are in the throes of trying to arrive at a secure sense of self-identity: this is therefore a time when young people are vulnerable and in need of understanding and support. The initial research question therefore leads to a further question:

> Does the imprisonment of a family member pose problems that are particular to young people during the transition to adulthood?

The thesis explores the contention that although the problems of imprisonment and rates of reoffending occupy Scottish policymakers to a considerable extent, the

consequences of the imprisonment of a family member for young people are largely ignored. This begs the question of why it is that Scottish policymakers appear to have lost sight of the needs of these young people. Therefore, I seek to address an additional question, namely:

> How do Scottish policymakers approach the issue of family imprisonment for young people in transition to adulthood?

In an effort to answer the first two research questions, I have undertaken empirical research by conducting interviews with a group of young people aged from 16 to 26 years, each of whom has experienced the imprisonment of at least one close family member. I have also interviewed a group of professionals working in third sector agencies to support young people, in order to gain an additional perspective on the situation. To address the third question, I first considered whom the term 'Scottish policymakers' encompasses, before examining the range and nature of relevant policies. Having identified some key policy discourses, I have critiqued these, in order to show the extent to which the needs of young people are represented in the policy landscape, or even whether these needs are represented at all.

The aims and objectives of the thesis are thus to describe the Scottish policymaking context, and the place that imprisonment occupies within it. Against that background, I set out to examine the effects of imprisonment from the perspective of young people aged over 16 who have a family member in prison for whom, I contend, any problems they encounter will be exacerbated by the fact that this age group is in transition from childhood to adulthood. I also sought to come to an understanding of the experiences of these young people from the perspective of the professionals that work to support them. With the benefit of the insights from the empirical evidence, I set out to form a view about the adequacy or otherwise of current Scottish policy in relation to young people from families affected by imprisonment, and ultimately to suggest ways in which this issue could be taken forward both by researchers in the future, and by an alternative approach to policymaking.

The research questions offer an opportunity to make an original contribution to academic knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, the views of young people who have a family member in prison families are largely absent from the literature, and the original research I have undertaken helps to remedy this. Secondly, as Chapter Two explains, I have returned to the literature of the sociology of imprisonment from the 1950s and 1960s in order to illuminate the data, and to provide a deeper insight into the experiences of the young people. In particular, I have set out to show how young people are affected psychologically, in ways that pose a threat to their developing sense of self-identity. Thirdly, by undertaking research with professionals who work with young people, I have been able to show that, without sufficient insight into what imprisonment really might mean to them, even the most well-intentioned interventions may not be adequate to address the actual needs of young people, especially those in transition to adulthood. Finally, by including both empirical evidence and a review of policy the thesis sheds light on why the problems affecting families of prisoners appear to be so entrenched, and why the policymaking response is quite inadequate.

1.3 Context: National and local governance, public service reform and processes of measuring performance

The policy developments that are the concern of this chapter, and of the thesis as a whole, have occurred in the years since devolution in 1999. At the time of devolution, some policy-making powers, such as taxation, were reserved to Westminster while others, including law and order, health and social services, housing and local government, were devolved to Scotland.[1] Legislation on devolved issues is passed at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and there are some functions of government that are delivered nationally, such as the management of prisons, which is carried out by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) as an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. Other duties that flow from legislation, usually known as 'statutory duties,' are delivered at a local level by 32 local authorities. For example,

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[1] The full list of devolved powers can be viewed on the website of the Scottish Parliament at http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/25488.aspx accessed on 21st January 2016.

education, housing and social work are the preserve of local authorities. The fact that Scotland has so many local administrative areas, some of which are geographically quite small, has certain advantages in that services can be tailored to local needs. However, the disadvantages include the scope for duplication of services and a costly and unwieldy administrative burden on the country. This has led to the urge to reflect on better ways to deliver public services.

In order to implement a redesign of public services, the Scottish Government established the Christie Commission in 2010 to review the situation, and to make recommendations for future service delivery (Public Services Commission, 2011).

While the Commission's report had a financial impetus, considering how best to deliver public services within severe budgetary restraints, it also set out to address issues of poverty and inequality in Scottish society. The Commission recommended a range of approaches to meet these challenges and improve the efficient delivery of services, always continuing to make the case that preventative measures to address inequalities should be a priority. The emphasis was upon services that would not be 'top down', but would have their roots in local communities, and more streamlined joint working. In addition, there should be a focus on continual improvement of performance and reduction of costs. The Scottish Government responded positively to the report, making specific commitments in four key areas: prevention, integrated local services, workforce and leadership, and improving performance (The Scottish Government, 2011).

To aid the reform and to provide an overarching framework for monitoring outcomes, in 2011 the government refreshed the National Performance Framework (NPF), which had been set in place in 2007.[2] The revised NPF sets out a hierarchy of aims. It begins with the Government's purpose of 'creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.' This is followed by five strategic objectives, which are: safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer, greener, smarter, and healthier. Next

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[2] Details of the changes between the original and the refreshed NPF are set out on a government website, and the current framework is also available here - http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/NPFChanges accessed on 20th January 2016.

there are sixteen national outcomes and fifty national indicators. The NPF relies for its efficacy upon a further instrument of management, the web-based Scotland Performs.[3]

Since the NPF was instituted, all Scottish Government policy has to make it clear how it relates to, and will ensure delivery of, outcomes within the NPF. For example, in 2008, a coalition of national agencies produced *Preventing Offending by Young People. A Framework for Action* (The Scottish Government, 2008). The framework highlighted four of the fifteen national objectives, which it set out to address. Similarly, a post-16 transitions framework published in 2012 stated, 'This model is central to facilitating delivery of the Scottish Government's National Indicator to increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work. It is against this Indicator that…success…will be measured' (The Scottish Government, 2012).

The NPF is not just applicable to national policies, however, as statements linking to the NPF are to be found in all current policy documents published by partner agencies (such as local authorities, health boards or third sector organisations). To take one example, the City of Edinburgh Council's strategic plan for reducing reoffending has a section on Performance Management within which it sets out a number of the NPF national outcomes it aims to achieve, and how it will measure progress towards this aim (City of Edinburgh Council, 2014).

Thus, the context within which legislation is enacted, and in which services are delivered, is one in which the stated aims of the Scottish government are to reduce inequality and public spending according to a clearly defined and rigorously monitored set of targets and objectives.

1.4 The problem of imprisonment in Scotland

The issue of imprisonment is highly significant within criminal justice policy-making in Scotland. Imprisonment is a very expensive sanction – in 2015, the cost of each prison place in Scotland was £37,059 per annum.[4]

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[3] http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms accessed on 25th January 2016.

Imprisonment is reputedly the punishment of last resort, which marks it out as a severe and symbolically important punishment (Tombs, 2004). However, there is considerable evidence that imprisonment is ineffective because the recidivism rate is high: in 2009/10, 46% of Scottish prisoners were reconvicted within a year of leaving prison.[5] Furthermore, the Scottish Government commits approximately £3 billion a year on the total economic and social costs of reoffending. This figure was calculated in 2014, in an Audit Scotland report about efforts to reduce reoffending, which also noted that, 'In 2010/11, more than one in five people convicted (9,500) had ten or more previous convictions' (Audit Scotland, 2014).

Using the measure of the number of prisoners per 100,000 of the population, Figure 1 shows that Scotland had the second highest rate of imprisonment in Western Europe in 2015.
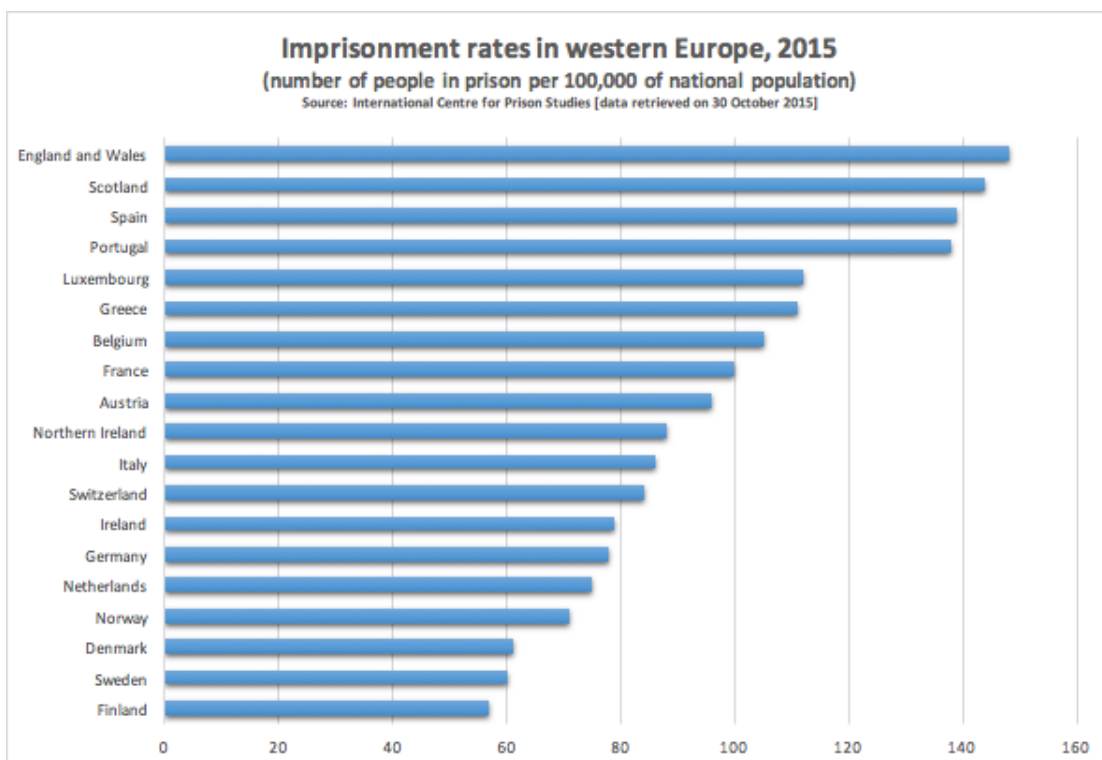
Figure 1. Imprisonment rates in Western Europe, 2015. Source - Howard League Scotland

[4] http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Publications/costcrimjustscot/costcrimjustdataset accessed on 19th June 2015.
[5] http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0040/00402666.pdf accessed on 15th January 2016

In addition, the rate of imprisonment steadily increased over time. Between 2004/05 and 2011/12, the number of prisoners in Scotland increased from 6,776 to 8,057. However, in line with a global trend, the numbers in Scottish prisons have decreased since 2012, to 7,762 in April 2016, and the predicted average annual prison population is 7,800 for the ten years from 2016.[6]

Within the statistics on imprisonment rates and prisoner numbers, the issue of women's imprisonment gives rise to an added concern. In Scotland, the female prison population almost doubled between 1999/00 and 2008/09 (when the number of women in prison increased from 210 to 413), despite the fact that rates of commission of crime among women did not rise within the same period (McIvor & Burman, 2011). In 2010/11 women represented 5% of the Scottish prison population, increased from 3.5% in 2000 (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012).
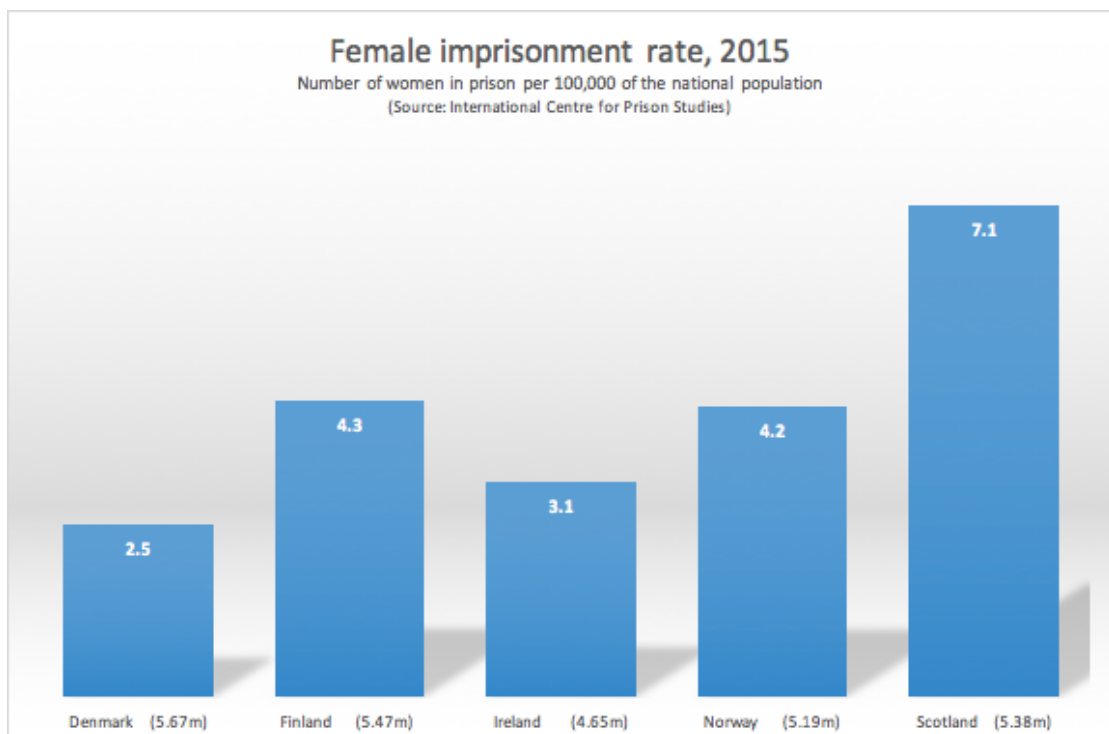
Figure 2. Comparison of women's imprisonment rates. Source – Howard League Scotland

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[6] Scottish Government figures available at - http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00499515.pdf accessed on 22nd April 2016.

1.5 Identifying families affected by imprisonment

In such an environment, with significant numbers of prisoners, many of whom return to prison time and again, there will inevitably be an equally significant number of family members who are affected by imprisonment. There is a problem with producing a statistically accurate picture because, at the time of writing, there is no official record of how many family members each prisoner has. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) carries out an annual prisoner survey, which asks the question: 'Do you have children below the age of 18 years?' If the answer is yes, prisoners are asked to indicate the number of children below age 18, ranging from one child to six or more. There are several problems with this method of counting, and the way the figures are reported. For example, in 2015 a prisoner survey was published indicating a 55% response rate across the prison estate, including young offenders.[7] The responders were 92% men and 8% women, but the report only gives percentage responses and not numerical ones. So, for example, it can be seen that 40% of the responders said they had one child below the age of 18. Because the 40% figure is not provided as a number, there is no indication of how many children that would represent.

A separate report on women prisoners does give numerical data as well as percentages.[8] This report says that 65% of the women who responded to the survey indicated they had children below age 18, and it also gives numerical data for each possible answer (i.e. 50 women said they had one child, 64 said they had two etc.) Although it might be possible to find a way to use these figures to calculate the total number of children for this population of women prisoners on the date of the survey, such a calculation would be of limited use partly because of the fluctuating nature of the prison population.

The daily prison population is a changing figure because prisoners are discharged and new prisoners are received throughout each week of the year. Therefore, any calculation based on the numerical data in the survey in an effort to establish the

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[7] http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-3895.aspx Accessed on 13th July 2016.
[8] http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-3905.aspx Accessed on 13th July 2016.

number of children affected by maternal imprisonment would not validly represent the number of children each day because of the daily 'churn' of prisoners, and the actual number of children affected is likely to be higher. Counting children in terms of prison receptions is no more statistically accurate because any prisoner who is convicted more than once in a year will be counted as a new reception in connection with each conviction, and there is therefore a risk of over-counting if prison receptions are used. For these reasons there is a variation in the figures that are in the public domain: the Scottish prisoners' families charity, Families Outside[9], cites a figure of 27,000 children per year affected by parental imprisonment. Meanwhile, the Scottish Prison service has published a figure of 17,000 per year on its website. When I queried this figure in February 2016, I was advised that Justice Analytical Services in the Scottish Government believed 20,000 to be a more accurate estimate, based on 10% of the English figure, itself an estimate.[10] Any of these figures is sizeable, and points to the fact that parental imprisonment is a significant problem, but the degree of variation and the lack of consistency in counting are also concerning.

In addition, the information upon which any of these calculations is made is voluntary: there may be very many reasons why prisoners do not want to give out information about their family circumstances, even in an anonymous survey, or during the initial screening process on entry to prison. Furthermore, information is only ever sought in relation to the parent-child relationship, and there is no detailed information sought about siblings, or other relationships.

On this evidence, and in contrast to the wider emphasis upon monitoring and outcomes fostered by adherence to the National Performance Framework, it appears that although they are significant in number, accurate statistics for the families of

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[9] Families Outside is a national charity in Scotland that exists to support families affected by imprisonment. It operates a telephone helpline, and has a base in several prison visitor centres, where it offers direct help and support to family members.
[10] Email correspondence with the Director of Research at SPS and Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services, 17th-19th February 2016.

prisoners have to date remained elusive.[11] This contrasts with the more robust, and more widely pubished and debated, statistics that can be found on prisons and prisoners, or offending and reoffending rates.

1.6 Looking ahead: a changing approach to imprisonment

When there was a change of Cabinet Secretary for Justice in the Scottish Government in 2014, the post was taken up by Michael Matheson of the SNP. One of the new Cabinet Secretary's first actions was to cancel a contract for a large, new-build national women's prison. In his statement to the Scottish Parliament immediately following this announcement in January 2015, the Cabinet Secretary said:

> When it comes to the justice system, we must make smarter choices and be more sophisticated in how we deal with female offenders. To do that, we must make sure that we tackle the underlying causes of offending, including mental health problems, drug and alcohol use and all the other issues that can result in a person committing a criminal offence in the first place.[12]

As part of the smarter choices and different approach envisaged, the plan has developed into one where there is now to be a smaller national prison for women, supplemented by two regional units attached to existing prisons and five 'community custodial units' in locations across Scotland. In addition, the Scottish Parliament passed the *Community Justice (Scotland) Act* in 2016, in which the administration of probation, community payback orders and other non-custodial punishments has been reorganised.

These policy approaches are clearly directed towards reducing the use of imprisonment, starting with a 'more sophisticated' approach to the women offender population, and reducing reoffending rates for both men and women. There has been

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[11] As discussed at p19 below, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 requires a notification to be made in connection with the children of prisoners, and once this comes into force it may mean more accurate statistics are available in future.
[12] http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=9751&i=89334&c=1793056&s=Inverclyde Accessed on 12th July 2016.

action taken in respect of families affected by imprisonment, too. Briefly, two principal actions in this regard have been firstly, the passage of an Act of the Scottish Parliament, which requires a notification to the named Person to be made in relation to the child of any adult remanded or sentenced to custody by a Scottish Court (*Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016*). It is envisaged that this notification will lead to an assessment of need and provision of support. Secondly, in 2015 the Scottish Government committed funding to enable the establishment of a Prison Visitor Centre at every Scottish prison, under the auspices of a National Prison Visitors Centre Steering Group. These policy responses are considered in more detail in Chapter Five.

1.7 The structure of the thesis

The contextual issues outlined above provide an essential backdrop to understanding how policy is made in Scotland in relation to both young people generally, and also to imprisonment and families affected thereby. Making these contextual issues explicit helps to situate my argument about how and why policymaking has been inadequate in its response to the problems faced by families affected by imprisonment.

The thesis progresses in Chapter Two by offering a literature review in which I explore the concept of identity in some detail, as it was clear from my background research that this was likely to emerge as a key theme in the data. In Chapter Two, I also highlight the work of Sykes (1958) and Goffman (1961) in particular, drawing upon their arguments about the way in which imprisonment has the capacity to affect the prisoner's sense of self. These insights are of particular significance to my subsequent analysis of the young people's data, which returned frequently to issues connected to self-identity. In addition, Chapter Two makes a link between issues of multiple identities, intersectionality, and gender.

The literature review continues in Chapter Three, in which I discuss the literature that has developed specifically in relation to families affected by imprisonment,

noting that this reveals some consistent findings about the impact of imprisonment, but that there are gaps, especially in relation to the inclusion of young people in research. The chapter also discusses the fact that much of the literature comes from research projects undertaken by and for third sector organisations, and considers the significance of this (a theme that is further developed in Chapter Five). The review goes on to explore some key issues for families, such as stigma and labelling, loss of voice and ambiguous loss (a key concept, which I explain in some depth in Chapter Three).

Chapter Four sets out the methodological approach underpinning the thesis, including the practical steps I took to secure the interview data, and explains how I approached the analysis of both the data and of policy.

Next, Chapter Five provides a more detailed discussion of the policy environment, considering both the law and policymaking activity of the Scottish Government and its agencies, and also the activities of voluntary organisations, which are most often tasked with providing services to families affected by imprisonment.

Chapters Six and Seven comprise the thematic analysis of the data gathered from the young people, and in Chapter Eight I go on to analyse the data of the professionals. Chapter Eight also provides an opportunity to reflect on the similarities and differences between the professional data, and what the young people themselves said about their experience in the two preceding chapters.

The thesis concludes, in Chapter Nine, by revisiting the research questions, and considering how the research undertaken has helped to suggest some potential answers to these questions. The final chapter also sets out to identify ways in which the research points forward to additional research and alternative policymaking that could help to better support young people from families affected by imprisonment.

CHAPTER 2   Literature review (1): Identity

2.1 Introduction

Central to the concerns of the thesis is the understanding that the formation of identity is of crucial importance during the adolescent and young adult years. In the present chapter, I firstly set out the basis for this key contention, before going on to explore the concept of identity in broader terms. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the important connections between identity, family and society as well as the role of narrative in the formation of a secure adult identity.

In the subsequent sections, the chapter links identity and the literature on the sociology of imprisonment by focusing on the writings of Gresham Sykes (1958) and Erving Goffman (1961). Finally, the chapter notes that paying attention to the multiple facets of identity, as this thesis seeks to do, links to issues of intersectionality, and that gender is particularly relevant to the present research.

2.2 Identity, adolescents and young adults

Adolescence is not defined by a numerical age. Rather it is the period between childhood and adulthood and it is recognised that the formation of identity is a process, starting at puberty, which of course occurs at different ages for different individuals. The term 'adolescent' does not imply a set age-range, and none of the literature provides a firm age-scale for the various stages of development. Reviewing a range of identity studies reveals that the term adolescent is applied from age 11 into the early or mid twenties (Arnett, 2000; Schwartz, 2005; Kruse & Walper, 2008; Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010; McLean & Jenning, 2012). The fluidity of the age at which adolescence and the transition to adulthood occur is an important issue to acknowledge, and the discussion of policy in Chapter Five shows that it is often difficult for policy to develop in a similarly fluid way, with negative consequences for young people as a result.

That is not to say that identity development does not occur at a younger age than 11, that is, in early adolescence: Schwartz et al (2012) note that several studies 'have detected identity development activity in young adolescents' (p. 1210), but the preponderance of studies by psychologists has focused on older adolescents and young adults. Furthermore, Schwartz highlights the fact that, although identity development is commenced at an earlier age, older adolescents have to navigate a number of transitions such as leaving home, undertaking further education or beginning long-term intimate relationships which 'will require further reconfiguration and adjustment within one's self-concept' (Schwartz, Klimstra, Luykyx, Hale III, & Meeus, 2012, p. 1221).

As well as recognising that identity formation can stretch back to early adolescence, it is also argued that identity work continues into adulthood and later years. This is particularly true of narrative identity, discussed in more detail below. For example, periods of change tend to occur within 'the arc of an adult life' and when an individual realises that finding a way to define oneself is a responsibility only he or she can fulfill, they remain preoccupied with self-definition throughout adulthood until old age (McAdams, 1993). In making the point that identity formation continues throughout adulthood, McAdams disputes the Eriksonian contention (elaborated below) that identity construction rests solely with adolescents, arguing that the later developmental phases are also concerned with identity. However, McAdams does adopt a similar psychosocial approach to that of Erikson (1968) when he discusses the exploratory phase of identity development (the moratorium - see footnote 1), and he concedes that the process does begin in adolescence:

> From adolescence onward we face this task of creating an integrative life story through which we are able to understand who we are and how we fit in the adult world (McAdams, 1993, p. 91).

If identity formation is not exclusively confined to adolescence, what is the rationale for focusing on young people aged 16+ in the present research? The continuation of the literature review in Chapter Three suggests this to be a neglected age-group, and a policy justification will be advanced elsewhere (Chapter Five), but in addition there is a widely accepted understanding that adolescence and young adulthood are the

most crucial periods for identity formation. The teenage and young adult years are critical as the time when young people make the transition away from parental dependence, make choices about what to do after compulsory schooling ends, consider their future life and undertake vital 'identity work' (Erikson, 1968). In addition, modern life has altered the nature of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, leading to the recognition of a phase of life that stretches into the early twenties termed by some as 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett, 2000). It is a phase of life that occupies the 'blurry space between dependence and independence' (Setterstern Jnr, 2005, p. 553). These factors make a study of the 16+ age group compelling, especially if their situation is one where their identity might be affected or compromised by external circumstances, such as the imprisonment of a close family member.

To deeepen the understanding of just how critical it is to be aware of issues of identity for young adults, the chapter next goes on to explain some key aspects of identity, including the interaction of identity with family and society, and the importance of narrative identity.

2.3 Identity: some key aspects

At this point, I note that some theorists make the distinction between the terms 'self' and 'identity', (Baumeister, 2011; Côté, 2006). However, the terms are considered to be 'associated' (Baumeister, 2011), 'conceptually similar' (Schwartz, 2012) or at the very least to overlap (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). It appears that it is far from fatal to use the terms interchangeably, which I propose to do as the thesis progresses.

Broadly speaking, identity can be viewed as individual, relational or collective. Individual identity is 'self-definition at the level of the individual person', relational identity is about the roles we assume such as parent, brother, teacher etc., while collective identity describes how we identify with a social group to which we belong (e.g. ethnic or religious group, or gender) (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011).

This study is most concerned with individual and relational identity.

In unpacking the meaning and evolution of the term identity, Gleason (1983) notes that the popularity of the term largely stems from the work of the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, while also observing that Erving Goffman is credited with being among the first to move from the terminology of the self to that of identity. Erikson (1968) conceptualised the formation of identity as a developmental process, and considered adolescence (the stage between childhood and adulthood) to be an important stage. He has also been acknowledged as being the first to appreciate the psychosocial nature of identity and the important role played by the community:

> Erikson, however, appreciated the importance of context to this process. He saw identity development as a reciprocal development between individual and context, a process of recognizing and being recognized by 'those who count' (Kroger, 2004, p. 11).

Despite Erikson's appreciation of the intersection of psychology and context, identity studies tend to divide into two distinct camps, psychological or sociological, with little interdisciplinary overlap (some exceptions are described below).

From the psychological perspective, it would be difficult to over-emphasise the influence and importance of the work of Erikson (1902-1994). It was Erikson's theoretical framework that was adopted in its entirety in America in 1950 as the basis of a national charter for child and adolescent development (Kroger, 2004). Erikson plotted the journey from infancy to adulthood by describing the eight discrete stages of development key to his framework. Although he was trained in Freudian psychoanalysis and the developmental stages he described do relate to the familiar Freudian themes of developing sexuality and the id, ego and superego, Erikson recognised and named a fourth stage, namely the development of the ego identity (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson's framework was taken up and advanced by numerous developmental psychologists such as Marcia, who created a method of categorising identity

'statuses'[13], Blos, who preferred the term 'character' to that of identity and Loevinger who described the ego as 'the master trait of personality' and used empirical data to create a paradigm of development (Kroger, 2004), to name but a few. Although these theorists differed in their language and approach to the concept of identity, they shared Erikson's belief in the continuity of the self through change. Elsewhere, in contrast to the developmentalists, a number of post-modern psychologists have argued that there is no such thing as continuity within individuals and that identity is fragmented in such a way that different identities emerge in response to different situations (Kroger, 2004). This plurality of identities encompasses gender, ethnicity, sexuality and adoptive identities (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). However, the notion of a 'multiplicity of selves' is disputed (Baumeister, 2011; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). As these critics point out, if the continuity of the self is denied and only multiple selves remain, the whole notion of identity is at risk of becoming so theoretically weak that it is no longer really a tenable concept that can withstand analysis. This critical argument posits that the self adopts different roles in response to different situations (for example I might adopt the roles of mother, partner, student, solicitor, volunteer etc.), but these multiple aspects of identity 'are not independent of each other, rather they intersect and interact with each other' (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011, p. 4). This stance clearly allows the relational and social aspects of identity to be taken into account without going so far as to say that there is no such thing as continuity of self within individuals. The approach to identity adopted in my research asserts that there is a continuing self, albeit one that adopts different roles at different times and in different contexts.

Sociological interpretations of identity acknowledge the roles ascribed to individuals, and such theories give recognition to historical and cultural contexts. For example, in a bygone age one's path in life would largely be determined by accidents of birth such as gender or family background (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). For young

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[13] Marcia's identity status model distinguishes between 'commitment types' by ascertaining whether or not individuals have achieved their identity and whether they have or have not done so by active exploration or by simply adopting and committing to adult roles. The statuses are: A, achieved; F, foreclosed; M, moratorium and D, diffused (Kroger, 2004) (p37).

people living in a pre-industrial era[14], employment opportunities and adult roles would arise at a relatively young age whereas in more recent times, adulthood is postponed (by a legally determined school leaving age, for example) and it is arguably more difficult for adolescents to find a suitable adult role, risking the experience of 'chronic identity confusion' (Côté & Allahar, 1994, p. 83).

Erikson, who commented on 'the new meaning of generations', foreshadowed an approach to identity that acknowledges the impact of societal change. At the time he was writing the topical issues were 'the Bomb and the Pill' (Erikson, 1968, p. 30) but Erikson was alive to the fact that historical and cultural changes could not be ignored. Many authors have commented on the way in which changes to education and employment have re-shaped and extended the journey from youth into adulthood (Côté, 1996; Arnett, 2000; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). The acknowledgement that structural changes impact on identity throws up its own problems and questions, though. If it is accepted that in modern times people are less circumscribed by their geographical location and social class than in a previous age (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996), does identity then become wholly about agency? Writing about the interaction of structure and agency in the desistence process, Healy (2013) suggests that to adopt such a stance risks problematising young people making the transition to adulthood:

> When structural problems are regarded as personal shortcomings that must be resolved through individual action, young people feel responsible for their inevitable failure to achieve life success (p. 565).

Furthermore, in addition to feeling that a failure to succeed equates to a personal failing, adolescents who are disadvantaged by social structures and have to look within themselves to find an identity as the former certainties of occupation and social status have become less certain (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996) may struggle to achieve a settled adult identity:

> The de-centring of identities in late modernity mean that young people, especially those from less advantaged socio-economic positions, must find

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[14] Social change is often categorised by linking it to dominant employment modes e.g. agricultural, pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial where increasingly employment is found in the service sector. The term post-industrial is contested, but is widely used to represent the late twentieth century onwards, and thus, reference to a 'pre-industrial' age represents the era preceding this (Marsh, 2000).

ways of managing or rationalizing fragmented and incongruent identities (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007, p. 60).

This brief outline of some key development in the study of identity does not seek to steer a path towards one definition of identity in preference to another. Instead, it hints at the complexity of the concept of identity and the different, and sometimes opposing, stances that may be adopted. Identity can be viewed as a within-individual phenomenon that persists through change, or as fragmented and multiple. Equally, it can be seen as a response to historical and cultural factors or as a reflection of roles ascribed by society. In addition, the way we describe our lives to ourselves and to others also contributes to our individual identities, as the discussion of narrative identity in section 2.5 below considers. To advance consideration of identity further, the next section of the chapter considers the interaction of self-identity with family and wider social connections.

2.4 Identity, family and society

It seems highly likely, if not inevitable, that adolescent and young adult identity will be affected if a significant event such as the imprisonment of a relative occurs contemporaneously with this intensive period of identity formation and transition, bringing as it does family disruption and changing roles within the family. As Chapter Three notes, it may be the case that for some families the imprisonment is a relief and a welcome event because of the offender's disruptive behaviour, but even then it imposes changes on the young person's life that have to be catered for and are likely to affect the course of identity formation.

Studies that have explored the impact of family structures and family functioning on identity have arrived at the conclusion that a supportive and stable family environment is key to secure identity development: a meta-analysis of identity formation studies between 2000 and 2010 considered the issue of parenting in relation to adolescent identity. Nine longitudinal studies had been carried out and their findings were examined individually, leading the author to conclude that there

was systematic evidence that 'warm and supportive parent-adolescent relationships are associated to a more mature identity' (Meeus, 2011). And in one study among Hispanic youth the link between secure identity and family functioning was explained:

> Poor family functioning may exacerbate both identity confusion and behavior problems in early adolescence and… well-functioning families may help to protect their early adolescents against both identity confusion and behavior problems' (Schwartz, Pantin, Prado, Sullivan, & Szapocznik, 2005, p. 413).

It has also been observed that families with more resources (not just money, but also educational attainment and strong family functioning) help young people to achieve a successful transition to adulthood (Setterstern Jnr, 2005).

There are thus important links between family structures, family functioning and the formation of identity in adolescence. Inevitably, with the removal of a family member to prison, the dynamics of the family unit will be affected, and there is the potential for the reorganisation of familial roles. Young people themselves have described how relationships shift as a result of such a situation. This might be, for example, a mother assuming the role of disciplinarian previously carried out by the father ('My mum does the shouting now. My dad used to do it' in the words of one five year old) (Boswell, 2002, p. 19) or a young man of 18 who felt he had to adopt the role of 'head of the family' when his father and brother were imprisoned (Brown, 2001). Teenagers quite frequently mention having more responsibility for siblings, but they also adopt more responsibility for their remaining parent (McCulloch & Morrison, 2001). It is therefore not uncommon for adolescents to undertake new roles within the family following the imprisonment, with consequential impacts upon their relational identity.

There is also evidence that merely being separated from one's parents is not the greatest risk factor for secure individuation[15], but rather that interparental conflict is riskier (Kruse & Walper, 2008). This observation rests upon an examination of

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[15] Individuation is the term used by Blos to describe part of the process of character formation during adolescence, (Blos preferred the term 'character' to the Eriksonian term 'ego identity'), and secure individuation leads to a more well adjusted person and better emotional outcomes (Kroger, 2004).

studies of households where the separation arises from divorce, but it is hardly a step too far to suggest that interparental conflict is also present in households where the arrest and conviction of one parent occurs. Evidence for this can be found in studies relating to young people in such families:

> "After dad had been in prison 5 or 6 months, he contacted Social Services about mum not coping with all the kids even though he wasn't at home. The house was a bit of a mess, so the 3 younger ones were taken into foster care. Dad didn't have faith in mum. I was worried about mum, because dad still didn't trust her. He's let mum down and all of them, but he's still trying to give mum orders from prison" (12 year old male, father in prison).

> "My Step-dad was violent so I got worried when he was coming out, but Mum wanted him back home so I just thought, well that was that. It is mint (sic) when Dad gets out" (16 year old female, father and step-father in prison) (Brown, 2001).

> " When he was at home there was lots of tension in the house. Dad was emotionally up and down. At 7.0am one morning there was a knock on the door. The police had come to arrest Dad and search the house. Within minutes my mother was saying 'that's it, I want a divorce'. He stayed in the house from charge to sentence and life was hell for everyone" (Jim, 19 years) (Boswell, 2002).

The assertion that interparental conflict, not mere separation from one's parent, poses greater risks for adolescent emotional well-being chimes with those studies of prisoners' children that have sought to identify whether it is the separation that is the aggravating factor in consequent poor outcomes for children. Murray and Farrington, for example, found that separation alone could not explain subsequent antisocial behaviour by the sons of imprisoned fathers (Murray and Farrington, 2005 cited in Porter & King, 2012). As noted in the following chapter, Murray et al conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on children with an imprisoned parent, which included a number of studies that compared such children with those who were separated from their parent because of divorce. In their analysis the authors found that 'it is clear that parent– child separation *per se* is not the main influence explaining children's outcomes after parental incarceration' (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012, p. 191).

However, it is not just the family but also the dominant social structures that can impact upon adolescent identity, and this is a further reason why it is apt that my

research is broadened out to consider not only the individual situations of young people but also the policymaking environment. Côté has written extensively about the 'problem of youth', noting that in a post-industrial age young people face new difficulties in navigating 'the uncertainties of prolonged adolescence'. Being one of just a small number of psychologists who have highlighted some of the problems of identity in late-modern society, Côté considers the status of marginalised young people, acknowledging that they face particular problems because they have 'little or no societal structure and guidance on which to rely in forming a sense of who they are' (as discussed in Schwartz, 2001, p. 46). Côté also expresses criticism of a purely psychological approach to adolescent identity which, by ignoring evidence that young people experience disadvantage, ends up blaming the young for their own problems by recognising that they are troubled, but failing to attribute their troubles to circumstances over which they have no control (Côté & Allahar, 1994).

In addition, the argument that we should acknowledge that young people in the modern age face new problems that can impact on their identity rings true in today's cultural, financial and political climate. In the twenty first century, mass consumerism and lack of secure employment among other modern trends mean it still remains true to say that:

> social life in late-modern society is becoming increasingly problematic for the individual in terms of establishing a stable and viable identity based on commitments embedded in a community of others (Côté, 1996, p. 423).

It has been observed that late modern society is marked by changing patterns of transitions for young people including that from school to work, which has 'become much more protracted, increasingly fragmented, and in some respects less predictable' (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, p. 26). Furlong and Cartmel argue that the increasing uncertainty inherent in modern society is a reflection of the assessment of modernity set out by Giddens (1991), in which it is argued that society has become more individualised, and that the development of a self identity 'presumes reflexive self-awareness' (Giddens, 1991, p. 52). However, having provided evidence through analysis of patterns of youth transitions between school and work from the 1970s to the mid-1990s, they also argue that Giddens has over-emphasised the significance of

self-reflexivity. This leads to a failure to recognise that 'the social divisions which were seen as shaping life chances in modernity are still central to an understanding of structural inequalities in late modernity' (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, p. 112).

Subsequent studies of youth transitions have similarly observed that the de-industrialisation that is characteristic of late modernity has played its part in consigning some young people to 'churning, non-progressive movement around low-level jobs, training places and time 'on the dole' (Shildrick, MacDonald, Webster, & Garthwaite, 2012, p. 50). However, these authors agree with Furlong and Cartmel (1997) that place, which Giddens (1991) has suggested has lost its significance in late modernity by a process of 'disembedding,' is actually still important:

> Living and growing up in neighbourhoods of multiple and concentrated deprivation meant that the interviewees faced wider disadvantages beyond their difficulties in accessing decent, lasting employment' (Shildrick, MacDonald, Webster, & Garthwaite, 2012, p. 163).

In a study of youth transitions of 18 – 33 year-olds moving from offending to desistence, Barry (2010) notes that such structural constraints co-occur with the 'unequal distribution of power for young people in transition' (Barry, 2010, p. 27). These structural constraints, coupled with the lack of status and autonomy associated with youth, at least partly explained why Barry's participants resorted to offending during the phase of transition to adulthood. Thus, youth studies have consistently shown the importance of acknowledging that inequality, reproduced through social structures, continues to have an impact on the emerging identities of young people as they move through the transition from childhood to adulthood.

The fact that most of the psychological work on identity places very little focus on the sociological and remains rooted in the 'intrapsychic' is problematic. The proliferation of studies that are based on Marcia's identity status model (see footnote 13), for example, has unsurprisingly produced results that focus on typologies. The problem with studies of this kind, which classify individuals as types such as 'secure,' is that they do not take account of variations in the individual circumstances of the participants. Côté's theory, about the 'social viability' of one's identity, is an exception, as Schwartz notes:

Identity components such as specific skills, beliefs, or attitudes are seen as resources that individuals can utilize in the process of negotiating for social memberships, status, and other societal assets. Individuals who have something significant with which to negotiate are more likely to be successful in obtaining social resources than those who do not. (Schwartz, 2001, p. 40).

The idea that social resources play a role in identity formation is echoed by McAdams, who, however, notes that not all resources are equally available to all people:

Modern American society offers middle-class and upper-class people a rich variety of resources for the making of identity. Working–class and poor persons are given fewer options. Women are offered somewhat different options than are men (p95).

Thus both McAdams and Côté set identity formation firmly within one's social milieu, be that a set of tangible resources such as schooling and employment options or less tangible resources such as skills, beliefs or attitudes.

Such considerations of the social order have a great deal of relevance in the context of the study of families affected by imprisonment because imprisonment unduly affects people from deprived areas. This point is illustrated by research that took a snapshot of prisoners in Scotland on a single day and analysed their home address postcodes. The analysis showed that there was a distinct correlation between areas with high levels of social deprivation and rates of imprisonment (Houchin, 2005). Lack of educational qualifications and exclusion from school are also prevalent among adult repeat offenders (Farrell, Bottoms, & Shapland, 2010). Research among prisoners' families must recognise the social context in which the lives examined are being played out. This is particularly important because identity research is open to the accusation that it is all too often conducted with college or university students ('samples of convenience' (Côté, 2006)). Academic bias of this nature risks adding to the further social exclusion of prisoners' families[16] and skews identity research away from young people from lower socio-economic classes. Historically there has been very little research on the links between economic status and identity (Yoder,

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[16] Murray defines such social exclusion as comprising pre-existing disadvantage, loss of material and social capital following imprisonment, stigma, linguistic exclusion, political exclusion, dynamic exclusion and administrative exclusion (Murray J. , The cycle of punishment: Social exclusion of prisoners and their children, 2007).

2000; Phillips & Pittman, 2003; Schwartz, 2005) and such a narrow focus by the academy serves to exclude the families of prisoners almost entirely from research.

What this discussion endeavours to show is that, in understanding matters of identity for adolescents and young adults who have a relative in prison, there are some specific issues to be taken into account. Young people in the age group from 16 into their 20s have a number of unique transitions to navigate. During this time the resources available to them in forming their identity, such as money, education and the power to make key decisions for themselves play an important part in the development towards adulthood. Thus it is important that social context in general, and in particular the likelihood that this group of young people may be deprived of resources available to other more affluent groups, is recognised in policy and in research, in order to avoid the risk identified by Healy, and noted above (p26): namely, that young people feel their lack of resources to be a personal failing. In addition, the roles ascribed to young people in families are likely to shift and change as a result of the imprisonment and this also has consequences for identity.

Identity development also occurs through telling one's own story, a capacity that is otherwise known as narrative identity, and the chapter now turns to consider this aspect of identity and its importance to young people.

2.5 Narrative identity and the importance of telling one's story

The concept of narrative identity has become increasingly familiar in criminology, and plays an important part in the work of Maruna, among others, on desistence from crime (Maruna, 2001). Condry (2007) also acknowledged the roles of narrative, self and identity for family members engaged in the process of making sense of their relative's serious crime. Narrative identity is formed through recounting one's life story or events that have occurred in one's life, so that 'that each of us comes to know who he or she is by creating a heroic story of the self' (McAdams, 1993). McAdams also affirms the notion of continuity of self, while recognising that the

self-myth is subject to continuous review as we 'recapture and reformulate essential aspects of our own past' (p. 95).

McAdams argues that it is in late adolescence and early adulthood that the attempt to make sense of one's own identity through narrative becomes a serious enterprise. However, by his own acknowledgement most of his subjects of study have been college students, and McAdams presents a romantic picture of the 'college years' where young people can explore ideas and engage with possible other selves. What of those who cannot access the college environment? Although he recognises that there is inequality in society, as already noted above, McAdams (1993) somewhat bleakly says that in forming their identity people simply have to make the best of the cards that they are dealt. Yet this seems to run counter to the theory of desistance (such as advocated by Maruna, 2001), which is based upon McAdams' work, in which even those from socially deprived backgrounds can carve out a new, prosocial, identity through narrative.

Following on from McAdams, a whole host of studies has been carried out in relation to narrative identity. These have used interviews, questionnaires and written biographical materials to examine the part that story telling plays in the formation of identity. This body of research is concerned with the process of narrative and provides evidence that the ability to tell stories about oneself (narrative processing) is linked to well-being, and to the ability to turn negative events into redemptive ones, with beneficial effects on well-being (see, for example, McLean & Breen, 2009; Chen, McAnally, Wang, & Reese, 2012). Writing about narrative identity in late adolescence, McLean sets out the multiplicity of processes occurring simultaneously for adolescents:

> The life story begins to emerge in adolescence because of the onset of formal operations, physiological maturity, and often the demands for establishing oneself in the world through work, school, and family, demands that tend to allow for or even require meaning making…Further, during disruptive episodes, such as transitions, cognitive demands are higher to make sense of new experiences (McLean, 2005, p. 683).

In common with other psychological studies of identity, narrative analysis tends to be focused on developmental issues and tends to be about the process of telling a

personal story, thereby missing out on the full richness and potential significance of the story itself. Nevertheless, the literature on narrative identity emphasises the valuable contribution that the telling and re-telling of one's life story, or events within it, make to the formation of identity.

2.6 Identity in the work of Sykes and Goffman

As I wish this chapter to help to advance my argument that having a family member in prison is strongly linked to issues of identity, I turn at this point to some of the best known literature from the sociology of imprisonment. I do so because these writings appear to me to make the case that imprisonment is a psychological assault on the individual's sense of self. That argument is one that I develop in particular in Chapters Six and Seven, where my analysis of the data gathered from young people leads me to draw parallels between the role of prisoner and that of a prisoner's family member.

My starting point is the work of Gresham Sykes in 1958, *The Society of Captives*. This was a prison-based study in which Sykes took the approach, unusual for its time, of studying a prison as a 'social system' in its own right. In the course of this work, Sykes identified a number of deprivations suffered by the prisoners, which he classified as the 'pains of imprisonment': the deprivation of liberty, of goods and services, of heterosexual relationships, of autonomy and of security.

For example, Sykes explains that the deprivation of autonomy is brought about by the enforcement of rules and regulations, often without adequate explanation as to why a rule is being enforced. This results in 'the frustration of the prisoner's ability to make choices,' and what Sykes asserts is so painful about this experience is that it involves 'a profound threat to the prisoner's self image.' This, Sykes argues, represents a return to the 'weak, helpless, state of childhood.' And he avows that to be returned to a state of childhood is a threat that has the capacity to 'arouse acute anxieties' (Sykes, 1958, pp. 72-76). Similarly, when he discusses the deprivation of security (that is, whether the prisoner is safe or at risk from other prisoners), Sykes

argues that this also provokes anxiety in the prisoner because it raises questions for him about how he stands in the eyes of others. How the prisoner reacts to any act of aggression will determine how he will be treated in the future, and what causes great anxiety about this is the fact that the type of man he is will be 'evaluated in public view' (Sykes, 1958, pp. 76-78).

Each of the pains of imprisonment enumerated by Sykes is analysed by him in a similar way. In each case, Sykes returns to the argument that the pain arises from the fact that the prisoner has to re-evaluate himself, and to know that he is being evaluated by the other prisoners, by the prison guards and also by society, by whom there has been a 'moral rejection.' In this way, Sykes points to imprisonment as a punishment that is not just physically uncomfortable, but one which goes beyond the physical, and ultimately threatens the individual's 'personality and sense of personal worth' (p. 64).

Those who are critical of Sykes' work tend to take issue with his observations about the interactions among the prisoners, or between the prisoners and the prison guards, rather than with his articulation of the 'famous five' pains of imprisonment (Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay, 1996). Or they suggest that the prison is actually less of a closed society and more permeable and more susceptible to outside influences than Sykes described (Irwin & Cressey, 1962-1963). Other writers have suggested that, whereas the physical discomforts of prison and overtly cruel treatment may have receded, the psychological threats remain, and further 'pains' could be added. Poor health care, anger, frustration and a sense of injustice, or the effects of 'prisonisation' can be added to the list (Irwin & Owen, 2005), and Crewe argues that the pains identified by Sykes in the 1950s still exist, and that the psychological effects have become both deeper (more regulation, more risk assessment) and tighter (more indeterminacy of sentences creating uncertainty, more self-improvement required of prisoners) (Crewe, 2011).

Sykes' proposition that imprisonment was most harmful as a psychological punishment was soon augmented by Goffman's work on closed institutions, *Asylums*

(1961). Goffman took a job in a psychiatric hospital from which vantage point he observed and reported on the routines of the hospital, which he characterised as a 'total institution,' noting that prisons, army barracks and religious orders could also be classed as total institutions. In a similar vein to Sykes, Goffman's observations of the patients led him to describe how their self-identity was threatened as they suffered 'mortifications,' such as losing all their personal possessions, or having their appearance altered by haircuts and uniforms. In response to their situation, Goffman argued, the patients undertook 'adaptations' that would allow them to retain a sense of self in the face of the institutional regimes and physical confinement. This might involve 'situational withdrawal,' at one extreme, or 'colonisation' at the other. In either case, Goffman asserted that 'a peculiar kind and level of self concern is engendered' (p. 66). Goffman described the 'secondary adjustments' that patients would make in order to try and subvert the system and retain a sense of self:

> Secondary adjustments provide the inmate with important evidence that he is still his own man, with some control of his environment; sometimes a secondary adjustment becomes almost a kind of lodgement for the self, a *churinga*[17] in which the soul is felt to reside' (p. 56).

According to Goffman, numerous 'secondary adjustments' were adopted, such as 'make-do's' (ways of modifying the rigours of institutional life) or 'working the system' (gaining advantage by subverting routine procedures of the institution). Adopting the same terminology as Sykes, Goffman notes that adjustments made by those incarcerated in total institutions are a means of 'rejecting the rejecters,' and of thereby achieving a vital form of self-preservation (p. 315). The importance of secondary adjustments were that they determined not just 'getting around the organisation's assumptions as to what he should do and get,' but that these were also a way of combatting assumptions about 'who he should be' (p. 172).

Thus, Goffman's observations of how a total institution operates were also concerned with the psychological impact upon the patients, or inmates. His theoretical approach underlines the great burden that is assumed by individuals in such institutions in

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[17] Italics in the original. A churinga is 'an object carved from wood or stone by Aboriginal tribes in central Australia and held by them to be sacred.' http://www.dictionary.com/browse/churinga accessed on 21st June 2016.

order to retain a sense of their self-identity. As with Sykes, more recent theorists have criticised Goffman's work, arguing, for example, that in *Asylums* Goffman focuses too narrowly on 'a narrow vision of the self,' thus ignoring the more multi-faceted self that inhabits the world outside the institution (Schudson, 1984), or that the idea of the world outside the institution and the life of the individual before entry is 'undeveloped' (Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay, 1996, p. 55). Nevertheless, the characterization of the assaults that imprisonment makes upon the interior life, the sense of self, remains influential and can be expanded to uncover new ways in which prisons threaten 'personal boundaries and definitions' (Crewe, 2011, p. 515; Van Ginneken, 2015).

If the families of prisoners suffer pains of imprisonment too, then it should follow that there are likely to be similar concerns with identity, and with attempts to preserve a sense of self. These are issues that I explore in chapters Six and Seven, drawing from the works of Sykes and Goffman to illustrate my argument.

To conclude the discussion of identity, and its importance to young people, the chapter now returns to the concept of the multiplicity of selves referred to at p25 above, and links this to the concept of intersectionality and thereby to a discussion of the role of gender.

2.7 Identity, intersectionality and gender

The issue of multiple identities not only occupies psychological debates, but is also the focus in studies of intersectionality. Although it lends itself more to the discussion of collective, social or group identities, intersectionality has implications for individual identity. With its roots in feminist theory, intersectionality concerns itself with different aspects of identity such as ethnicity, class or gender. It requires researchers to acknowledge, for example, that discrimination against women will be experienced differently by a black woman than a white woman in a predominantly white patriarchal society, with the result that the black woman may experience double discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). This understanding is arrived at by

acknowledging that gender and ethnicity are two aspects of an individual's identity that intersect, and such intersections render the life-experience of each individual to be unique. However, intersectionality is a potentially difficult concept to apply in relation to the identity of individuals. On the one hand, intersectionality research freely acknowledges that identity is complex (McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). On the other, Crenshaw's argument that black women should be seen as both women and black can be critiqued as failing to also account for their class or sexuality, for example, and arguably the question of agency is insufficiently addressed in intersectionality theory (Nash, 2008). So, in the same vein as those critics of multiple identities cited above, the question arises, how many intersections must be acknowledged? How can the whole person be understood if multiple intersections are identified? These reservations can be met in the same way as discussed above, if one is prepared to accept a continuity of self, notwithstanding a multiplicity of identities. Despite the criticisms the theory has attracted, intersectionality stands as a reminder to be on guard against stereotypes and essentialism, and the inadvertent disadvantages that occur when a more powerful group tries to eradicate discrimination without understanding what that might entail for the minority (Crenshaw, 1991). With its emphasis on the interplay of power and politics it also provides a framework for examining identity through the lens of current social policy. This has a salience for research involving young people, who often lack power to make choices about their situation.

The young people who took part in the current research were, by chance rather than design, all white and British, so the opportunity to consider ethnicity did not arise. However, there was a mix of young men and young women in the study, which meant that considering the young people as on the intersections of being affected by family imprisonment, in transition to adulthood, and as either male or female was relevant. So, a further key aspect of their identity to consider was that of gender.

In the existing literature, there has been very little attention paid to how young men and young women may respond differently to the imprisonment of their relative. A body of literature has grown to suggest that parental imprisonment influences subsequent delinquency in boys (Farrington, Coid, & Murray, 2009; Murray,

Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Some large-scale studies, such as the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (led by David Farrington) only include males, and in general there are 'limited numbers of longitudinal samples designed for studying delinquency and crime that include sizable female populations' (Unger, Land, & McCall, 2002, p. 350). This has led to a paucity of knowledge of, among other things, predictors of offending among female offenders. Thus, the predictive criminogenic effects of parental imprisonment, are under-examined in relation to females.

There is a similar lack of knowledge of other potential effects of the imprisonment of a relative upon either males in particular or females in particular. In one study where the impact of parental arrest and incarceration upon children was investigated, the authors did include an unspecified number of interviews with both boys and girls up to age 17, but although there was evidence that the gender of the parent had a bearing on the outcomes, the authors indicated that the study was underpowered to take into account the gender of the participating children (Dallaire & Wilson, 2010).

In a study of child trauma symptoms among children with a parent in prison, Arditti and Savla (2015) included data relating to equal numbers of males and females (n = 22M, 23F), but they reported that the sample size limited their ability to test the effects of trauma on, among other factors, the gender of the child. In contrast, a recent study of the effects of parental imprisonment used a sample of several thousand taken from several waves of the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Gender was factored into the analysis, leading to a finding that 'males are more likely than females when experiencing parental incarceration during their adolescence to have high levels of mental health problems in young adulthood' (Foster & Hagan, 2013, p. 664). One common factor among the studies cited here is their quantitative approach to the data available to them. Poisson tests, change score models, and Likert scales were among the tools employed. However, these are potentially unsatisfactory approaches if gender is an issue that may be of interest because quantitative studies 'can tell us little about social processes and how meaning is produced in interaction' (Daly, 2010, p. 242). Although as discussed in the following chapter, Murray et al (2012) have been somewhat critical of small

qualitative samples, nevertheless such qualitative approaches provide an opportunity to discuss nuanced and socially constructed issues such as gender, freed from the need to prove generalisability.

That being the case, it raises the question about an appropriate theoretical approach to issues of gender, especially in a study such as the present one, where identity is a central question. One theory that has often been called on in an effort to shed light on this is that of the 'ethic of care,' which was identified by Carol Gilligan in 1982 as an approach to moral reasoning that was specific to women, and incorporated 'an awareness of the connection between people,' and 'a recognition of responsibility for one another' (Gilligan, 1982, p. 30). According to Gilligan, the female ethic of care is in contrast to the male ethic of rights or of justice, which is based around a morality of rights, and of non-interference in the rights of others (separateness, in other words). These differing approaches are tied to the development of the self, and link to theories of attachment and individuation that are referred to earlier in this chapter.

Gilligan's theory has been quite strongly criticised for being an over-simplification, and methodologically flawed (Luria, 1986). Some critics have challenged Gilligan because, they say, the ethic of care theory cannot fulfill its 'universalistic pretensions,' despite Gilligan's own assertion that her findings were 'preliminary' and 'speculative' while other feminists have reacted against aligning women with a caring role (see Davis, 1992 for a thorough rehearsal of the arguments for and against Gilligan's theory). In addition, although the debate her work prompted was welcomed, the presentation of a dichotomous justice system that it suggested (Feminine/caring versus masculine/justice), was not (Daly, 2002).

Despite the criticisms that Gilligan's theory has attracted, it has continued to appeal to scholars researching attitudes to crime and punishment. One study found at best only a degree of support for the idea that women adopt an ethic of care approach to issues of crime and justice (Applegate, Cullen, & Fisher, 2002), although an earlier investigation of attitudes to the death penalty was clearer that the findings were in line with the ethic of care theory (Whitehead & Blankenship, 2000). Gilligan's

theory emerges as a recurrent explanation for why women in the USA are less likely than men to support the death penalty (Cochran & Sanders, 2009). However, in other studies, women have shown a more punitive attitude than men (e.g. Payne et al, 2004). Meanwhile, Cochran & Sanders (2009) could not prove the 'ethic of care' theory when they tested it in a secondary analysis of longitudinal data. A study of 80 (40F and 40M) young people in Pakistan, aged between 16 and 20 years, was carried out in 2012, with a view to testing Gilligan's theory of a gendered approach to moral reasoning (Kalsoom, Behlol, Kayani, & Kaini, 2012). It found that there was some support for the theory, in that girls scored more highly in relation to a caring approach. However, boys and girls scored equally in relation to a justice-based approach to moral reasoning.

Ultimately the research into the reasons for differences in attitudes to crime and punishment is beset by 'much incongruity,' and produces uncertain results, perhaps because it is:

> at the mercy of the social/economic climate, the kind of offence and offender, the expectations of what punishment should achieve and even the underlying influence of other belief systems. In addition, there is the possibility of dubious methodological approaches forcing respondents choices and the misconceptions that people may have of actual sentencing practices (Wood & Viki, 2004, pp. 31-32).

Nevertheless, the continuing interest in the ethic of care theory, despite its critics, suggests it has not yet been replaced by any better-evidenced theory. It is, I contend, of interest to my research because it links issues of development, self-identity and relationships, and draws attention to different, potentially gendered, approaches to moral reasoning. As noted in the following chapter, visiting prison is a burden largely shouldered by women and the concept of an ethic of care theory has the potential to help to critique why this should be.

2.8 Conclusion

From all of the foregoing, it can be seen that identity is a complex, sometimes contested, issue and one that is of central importance to a study of young people. In

addition to the within-individual aspects of identity, I contend that related issues of connection to family and to wider society ought not to be ignored.

I have drawn from the works of Sykes and Goffman because both authors make specific links between imprisonment and the self-identity of those imprisoned. As I will go on to show in Chapters Six and Seven, this is of considerable relevance to young people who have a family member in prison.

Finally, this chapter has flagged up the importance of developing a narrative identity, and has made the connection, with reference to the concept of intersectionality, to other aspects of identity that ought to be kept in mind, of which gender is important to the research presented here.

In the following chapter, the literature review continues with an examination of the more general research on families affected by imprisonment, and on significant related issues such as loss.

CHAPTER 3 Literature review (2): Families affected by imprisonment

3.1 Introduction

My particular interest is in young people within the age range 16-26 years, and this age group clearly falls within the definition of adolescence and early or emerging adulthood used by psychologists, as the previous chapter has noted. To continue the literature review, this chapter firstly shows how a body of research relating to families affected by imprisonment has developed. It then goes on to note some inconsistencies and limitations within the literature, especially in relation to the adolescent and young adult age group.

From this, it emerges that there is a significant gap in the literature, which is marked by the absence of young people from research. After discussing this, the chapter then goes on to reflect on some of the key issues that arise for families affected by imprisonment. Labelling and stigma, including stigma by association are discussed here before the chapter moves on to explore the losses that affect young people who have a family member in prison. Loss of voice is especially notable particularly because of its links to the secrecy that commonly surrounds imprisonment as an issue for families. Finally, a specific form of loss, known as ambiguous loss, has increasingly been linked to young people in this situation. An examination of the role of ambiguous loss therefore forms the penultimate section of the chapter. In conclusion, the chapter draws together the main arguments developed here and links these with the discussion of identity in the preceding chapter.

3.2 A critical review of the literature on families affected by imprisonment: The development of a body of literature

The most influential early study of prisoners' families was carried out in the 1960s by Pauline Morris when she conducted an extensive series of interviews with prisoners' wives (Morris, 1965). *Prisoners and Their Families* was a study

undertaken for the think tank, Political and Economic Planning, in which Morris interviewed the wives of more than 400 male prisoners in order to understand their views of their own situation, and to gauge the impact of paternal imprisonment upon their children. Morris interviewed only the mothers and not the children themselves, and she noted in a subsequent study that, with regard to children in this situation, 'Systematic information…is lacking…there exist very few studies of the problem (Morris, 1967, p. 424). Morris (1967) identified a number of key areas that she felt worthy of attention in the light of her understanding of the plight of families. Firstly, as noted, Morris urged that more systematic information should be kept, although she was clear that there was already sufficient understanding to know that:

> Few children are likely to escape the experience undamaged and even those who superficially remain unaffected may do so at considerable cost to the future state of their mental health (p. 428).

Because of this, Morris urged that the child's psychological needs should be brought to the attention of the court at the earliest opportunity during the offender's prosecution.

Morris was virtually a lone voice for a considerable period of time, but in 1987 Shaw undertook a study in a Leicester prison during which he spoke to male prisoners and the mothers of their children as well as health professionals and prison chaplains. As a result of his investigation, Shaw argued that the negative impact of imprisonment on children was such that their situation was nothing less than 'child abuse on a massive scale' (Shaw, 1987, p. 64).

The literature on families affected by imprisonment has steadily increased since the time of Morris and of Shaw. However, most of the research tends to focus upon the parent-child relationship, and focuses upon older prisoners and their young or adolescent children. Young mothers with a partner in prison, for example, are not often included in research (Reeves & Heptinstall, 2011), and there is very little research involving the siblings of prisoners (Meek, 2008). Despite this lack, some effects of imprisonment upon children, and upon their imprisoned or non-imprisoned parents are generally agreed upon: the negative impacts that are widely recognised

include financial difficulties (Morris, 1965; Dickie, 2013), and childcare issues, particularly in the case of maternal imprisonment (Flynn, 2013). Difficulties associated with visiting the prison such as the phenomenon of 'secondary prisonisation,' whereby visitors become subject to the regimes of the prison, such as having to submit to searches, or being closely watched during visits, are also widely recognised as presenting considerable difficulties to families (Comfort, 2007). These kinds of practical problems are compounded by a range of emotional difficulties such as stigma and shame (Hairston, 2007; Condry, 2007; Murray, 2007), and a strongly felt need to keep the fact of the imprisonment secret (Codd, 2008; Loureiro, 2010; Bedford Row Family Project, 2007).

A number of studies have focussed particularly on the children of prisoners, and identify psychological and practical impacts upon them. Having reviewed 40 publications containing empirical research among children, parents or caregivers, all of whom were affected by parental imprisonment, Arditti (2012b) found evidence that children of imprisoned parents were very likely to experience trauma. This arose due to the loss of their parent, the experience of being cared for by a substitute caregiver, or because the experience of visiting a parent in prison was traumatic. In a study of prisoners' families in Ireland, parents described the effects of imprisonment upon their children, with one mother saying her son was 'torn apart' by his father's imprisonment, while another described her daughter as feeling 'ashamed' because her brother was in prison and the child consequently 'failed to finish her education' (Bedford Row Family Project, 2007). Poor school outcomes (extended absences and failure to graduate) were also observed in a longitudinal study of data relating to American youth who came from a household affected by imprisonment. Notably, the study found that this effect was not restricted to parental imprisonment, but was linked to the incarceration of any household member (Nichols & Loper, 2012).

Although the evidence in relation to children suggests that imprisonment of a family member is likely to have a negative impact, the literature also suggests that, from the prisoner's perspective, ongoing contact with her/his family means that prisoners tend to manage their sentence more easily, and have a better chance of reintegration and

of desistance from crime. In one study, consisting of a wide-ranging literature review, the authors found 'strong empirical evidence' that the prisoner's family had a positive effect upon successful reintegration at the end of a sentence. However, this study only considered the benefits to prisoners of maintaining family contact without noting the potentially adverse effects upon the family (Visher & Travis, 2003).

In another study in which a large sample of longitudinal data from Florida was examined, it was observed that, although it was widely believed 'within most correctional systems' that visitation by friends and/or family would help to drive down recidivism after release, nevertheless 'relatively little is known about the impact of visitation on reentry and, in particular, recidivism' (Bales & Mears, 2008, p. 290). This study ultimately found some support for the contention that prisoners who received visits were less likely to reoffend in the two years after release. However, there was also a small effect suggesting that visits from children were associated with a greater risk of reoffending. The timing and frequency of visits in prison from family and friends was also acknowledged to have an important bearing on their impact upon the prisoners (Bales & Mears, 2008). Thus, although some research asserts that there is ample evidence that family support is beneficial to prisoners (Visher & Travis, 2003; Hairston, 2007) there are other studies that suggest the picture is more nuanced, and less well understood than may at first appear (Dixey & Woodall, 2012). In a recent detailed literature review, it was suggested that there was clear evidence of a beneficial effect for prisoners who received family visits, but the empirical evidence was of mixed quality, and the authors concluded that more reliable measures and controls within individual studies would be required in order to produce a more robust evidence base (De Clair & Dixon, 2015).

Most studies concerned with the impact of imprisonment on families tend to use the available literature to rehearse what have become well-recognised themes. For example, a recent summary of the literature, entitled *Families of Prisoners: A review of the Evidence*, (Weaver & Nolan, 2015), cites emotional and financial consequences for families when a parent is removed to prison, and notes that this can result in a transfer of caring responsibilities. The review goes on to reference the effect of imprisonment upon caregivers, and upon children, noting the evidence for

risks to psychological welfare and the potential for children to become involved in anti-social behaviour, or suffer poor educational outcomes. The paper also considers issues of family relationships, and how families are affected when the prisoner returns home. In all, the paper contains 90 references, and includes most of the literature that would be familiar to anyone who has had cause to look into issues that are relevant to the families of prisoners, particularly from a Scottish and UK perspective. The paper builds from other earlier reviews of the available research and writing on family imprisonment (see for example Murray, 2005; Hairston, 2007; Codd, 2008).

In a similar way, the recent European project carried out by the international organisation, Children of Prisoners Europe, took a comprehensive look at the literature, and concluded:

> Research evidence from across Europe, as well as the wider international literature, has shown that parental imprisonment is a strong risk factor for mental health problems in children. Many children of prisoners are more likely than their peers to experience significant disadvantages and to come from families with multiple and complex needs, including experiencing social exclusion, family financial difficulties, family discord, stigma, isolation and victimisation, and poor educational attainment (Jones et al, 2013, p. 148)

Dealing with the effects of having an imprisoned relative (such as the financial loss, disrupted childcare and the burden of visiting the prison) is a burden that is noted to fall most often upon women:

> Research on the collateral effects of imprisonment has shown consistently that it is urban women, living in poverty, who bear the heaviest burdens of a punishment that is supposedly directed at offenders (Breen, 2008, p. 61).

> Whether the prisoner is male or female, it is female relatives and friends who visit, send letters, provide goods, and keep in touch (Codd, 2007, p. 260).

Thus issues of gender are important to consider in a research project of this nature, as noted in the previous chapter.

In summary, the evidence shows that there are undoubted adverse effects for children and young people, although disentangling the causes is more complex (Jones et al,

2013). At the same time, it is recognised that there are studies which show that children can and do display resilience, aided by factors such as:

> having a positive sense of self, religiosity, gaining social support from non-family members, having positive parent-child relationships, and having other external support systems outside the family that both encourage and reinforce the child's efforts to cope and which instil positive values in the child (*ibid* p. 150).

Thus far, it seems apparent that the literature shows a broad consensus that family contact benefits prisoners, despite the underlying reasons for this remaining insufficiently explained, but the families of prisoners suffer from practical and emotional harms, which fall especially upon the shoulders of women. At the same time the literature shows that parental imprisonment has adverse effects upon children. There are, however, inconsistencies and limitations to the evidence, some of which have already been noted. The following section of the chapter identifies and explores a number of further inconsistencies and limitations.

3.3 Inconsistencies and limitations in the literature

Although the literature has shown common themes, as discussed above, there are some issues that indicate that the situation is not as clear-cut as may first appear. In amongst the general agreement about the negative consequences of imprisonment for children of prisoners, a few authors are careful to note that for some families, the imprisonment of a relative can be a relief. This may be because the offender is abusive within the family (Arditti, 2012b), or represents a largely absent figure who is a financial drain (Chui, 2010), but it may also be because of concern for the offender's own well-being prior to being caught and sentenced (Bedford Row Family Project, 2007). In the latter example one family member said she asked the police to imprison her son 'for his own sake,' because of his addiction to drink and drugs. Another mother said of her son: 'if he were not in prison he would be dead' (p. 45).

It has been observed that studies of children who have a parent in prison suffer from 'methodological limitations,' in that such studies tend not to include control groups, nor do they use 'standardised measures' (Phillips, Burns, Wagner, Kramer, &

Robbins, 2002). In an effort to use a more robust method, Phillips et al (2002) carried out a secondary analysis of data originally gathered to test a youth mental health treatment programme in the US. Data from more than 230 young people aged from 11 to 18 years were analysed, and it was found that parental incarceration was 'pervasive' among the sample. By controlling for a variety of risk factors, the authors of the study found that parental imprisonment 'may have a discrete effect on the course of certain emotional and behavioral problems' (p. 397). However, other researchers caution that although there seems to be a correlation between child mental health problems and parental imprisonment, the available studies cannot prove causation, because it is very difficult to isolate imprisonment from other social difficultites such as poverty, family instability or neighburhood violence, and in fact one or two studies appear to show no causal links between parental imprisonment and negative outcomes for children (Jones et al, 2013).

The uncertainties around the evidence relating to the effects of parental imprisonment were explored in a recent review and meta-analysis of the available literature, which noted that studies tended to be qualitative and using small samples. From an in depth analysis of 50 samples used in 40 studies the authors found, in contrast to Phillips et al (2002), that there were 'zero or only weak associations' between parental incarceration and the mental health, drug use or educational outcomes for children. However, the research appeared to show that children affected by parental incarceration 'are at significantly higher risk for anti- social behavior compared with their peers' (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012, p. 191). This finding was explored in considerable detail, but a number of hypotheses were suggested in order to explain the finding: social modeling, a genetic explanation (which was only hazily defined by the authors), stigma, or 'unmeasured confounding variables.' Ultimately, the authors asserted that, although children who have a parent in prison are 10% more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour than 'comparison children', nevertheless 'firm causal conclusions cannot be drawn' (p. 191). Thus, despite applying a rigorous methodology to the available research, the findings of this review were limited.

Arguably, research that focuses upon anti-social behaviour in this way problematizes

children and diverts attention from the injurious effects of imprisonment upon them. It is for this reason that one of the more contentious strands of the academic literature is that which suggests that children and young people who have a family member in prison are more likely to end up in prison themselves. A number of studies have demonstrated an association between the imprisonment of parents and the subsequent imprisonment of their children (Farrington, Coid, & Murray, 2009; Besemer & Farrington, 2012). Sibling imprisonment may also present an increased risk (Van de Rakt, Nieuwbeerta, & Apel, 2009). However, such studies do not prove a causal link, they only identify risk or predictive factors, and it is difficult to disentangle the other risk factors noted above from the effects of imprisonment of the parent. For example, Besemer et al point out that official bias and labelling, coupled with a harsher penal regime, have a significant role to play in their finding of evidence of intergenerational offending (Besemer, Farrington, & Bijleveld, 2013).

Thus, measuring the effects of family imprisonment on children and young people can produce uncertain results, particularly with regard to causal links between the fact of parental imprisonment and negative outcomes for the children in those families. Recent work by Foster and Hagan (2013) took a different approach by attempting to measure the effect of chronicity (i.e. number of repeated occurrences) of both paternal and maternal imprisonment upon adolescents. Their analysis of longitudinal statistical data relating to more than 9,000 American adolescents , whose ages ranged from 15 at the time of first interview to 32 at the time of the fourth wave of interviewing, shows that:

> The chronicity of both maternal and paternal imprisonment are influential on children's outcomes in both the internalizing and externalizing realms. We also consistently find for both paternal and maternal imprisonment that experiences during childhood (ages 0–18) are influential on child mental health problems' (p. 664).

This research therefore flags up the risk that repeated instances of parental imprisonment could result in in significant emotional (internalising) and behavioural (externalising) problems among young people.

A further inconsistent approach within the literature on family imprisonment occurs when considering the use of the term victim in relation to families, because it is hard to determine whether this is an expression used in a deliberate way to describe a particular kind of victimhood, or whether the term is used with less semantic precision because it is a word that is likely to evoke sympathy. The way in which families can be described as victims is highly inconsistent. For some writers, the family is the victim of the offence (Loureiro, 2010), or of 'crime' more generally (Breen, 2008). They may be 'secondary victims' of crime, rather than its direct, albeit hidden, victims (Bedford Row Family Project, 2007). For some commentators, children are victims of the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2007), or of 'our system of punishment,' (Scharff Smith, 2014), or of the 'war on crime' (Phillips & Gates, 2011). For still others they are the victims of imprisonment (Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo, & Knapp, 2007). In one study, families are variously described as the innocent, hidden or forgotten victims of the criminal justice system, of crime, of imprisonment, and of 'the failings of their imprisoned family member' (Light & Campbell, 2006). The status of victim appears to be agreed upon within the literature, but the causation of the victimhood is not agreed.

Although it can be said that in the period intervening between the Morris study in 1965 and now the occurrence of parental imprisonment has been researched quite extensively, it is the case that, with only very few exceptions, the problem of family imprisonment has been represented as one between children and their parents. There are one or two small studies that discuss how siblings are affected by imprisonment (Meek, 2008; Meek, Lowe, & McPhillips, 2010), as well as two key reports on the experience of teenagers affected by family imprisonment, including non-parental imprisonment. These latter reports are discussed below for their relevance to the experience as a whole, but also because the present research is not restricted to considering only the effects of having an imprisoned parent, but also reflects the views of young people with a sibling or an intimate partner in prison, both of which groups are largely absent from the literature to date.

Many of the parental imprisonment studies ask questions about what it is like to be a parent in prison, and whether one can 'parent' when incarcerated. In this way, the emphasis falls on the meaning of being a parent. It is the parenting that is foregrounded, with imprisonment occurring merely as an impediment to the parental role. For example, in one study, imprisonment is described as an, 'extreme case of nonresidential fatherhood' (as opposed to separation by divorce, for example) (Clarke et al, 2005). Clarke et al identified that a key factor in parenting within prison is the strength or otherwise of the family relationships prior to imprisonment. The emphasis of parenting studies indicates that the importance of family relationships at least matches, if not outweighs, the institutional barriers inherent in imprisonment, so that enforced physical separation and limited bursts of contact are not the only issues that need to be addressed to improve the experience of fathers in prison and that of their children (Swanson et al, 2013).

It is noticeable that many key resources have been authored by or on behalf of third sector organisations. This, I suggest, links to the issues which I go on to explore in Chapter Five on the policy context, namely that families occupy an indefinite space in policy terms. On the one hand, families are praised as having a role to play in helping prisoners to manage their sentence and reduce their reoffending. On the other, as the third sector tends to highlight, imprisonment is a painful experience for families, who need to be supported to manage in and around the prison as well as at home coping with the absence of their relative. Third sector organisations have an interest in promoting the needs of families. They do so in satisfaction of their role as 'moral crusaders' (Becker, 1991), but also in order to secure funding for their ongoing work, as the discussion in Chapter Five shows. This does not render the reports of third sector organisations suspect, but it does go some way to explaining why such reports tend to be descriptive rather than analytical. For example, a Barnardo's report on the children of imprisoned parents contains a number of interviews with both mothers and their children (Glover J. , 2009). The format of the report is to outline the risks for children as evidenced in the literature, and to illustrate some key points with quotes from the interview data. The report adds to and underlines what is already known about the negative impacts of parental

imprisonment but does not challenge or extend that knowledge. Similarly, research carried out for Families Outside consisted of interviews with a small number of children and young people (Loureiro, 2010). Some of the questions put to the young people were about how they would like to be heard, in particular by the judge when their parent's case was due to be sentenced. What the interviewees said was not analysed, but was collated and presented as the findings of the report. This evidence was important in the context of the campaign (led by Families Outside) for courts to allow child impact statements, discussed in Chapter Five.

In the round, although some studies differ from others on the issue of causation, or the nature of victimhood, there is a growing evidential base from which to argue that the imprisonment of a parent is a risky situation for children, in which they are liable to suffer harm. However, the literature has arrived at that understanding largely in the absence of any direct input from young people, as the chapter now goes on to discuss.

3.4 The absence of young people

Over the past several decades, there have been repeated attempts to interview family members in order to hear their experience first-hand (examples include: Morris, 1965; Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Condry, 2007; Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo, & Knapp, 2007; Comfort, 2007). The literature points to the difficulties inherent in engaging with prisoners' families; they are 'hidden' 'forgotten' or 'invisible'. Often this is because they do not want to self-identify, for reasons of shame or the fear of stigma. Some authors failed entirely to engage with any young people (Brown, 2001)[18], while others noted the difficulty in securing an interview sample of sufficient size (Loureiro, 2010; Brutus, 2012).

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[18] In this study, the lead researcher was unable to engage with any young people, although the other members of the research team had more success. Reasons for non-engagement included: 'fear that I would use information to lock the father up again; that it was none of my business; and because the young person ran away' (Brown, 2001 n6, P14).

Research on the the impact of imprisonment on children has grown despite these difficulties, but due to the 'practical and ethical issues involved' only a limited amount of the research has included direct consultation, observation, or interviews with the children of prisoners (Codd, 2008). In 2005, a review of qualitative studies found 43 involving prisoners' families and children, but only 13 of those included any direct interaction with the children (Murray J., 2005). This gap has been addressed in a small number of qualitative studies, but few studies recount children's experiences 'per se' (Jones et al, 2013). In particular, it can be seen that there is relatively little research conducted with adolescents (Eddy & Read, 2003), an oversight which has been consistently noted (Seymour, 1998; COPING project, 2013; Louriero, 2014). There are some examples of studies that do include children and young people, but these tend to show the limited numbers of older teenagers and young adults involved. One Scandinavian study included 37 women who had 93 children between them, of whom 22, aged between 12 and 18 years, were interviewed (Hissel, Bijleveld, & Kruttschnitt, 2011). In the UK, only five over 16s were included in research involving 25 children and young people with a father in prison (Boswell, 2002). Meek carried out 8 interviews with young people with a sibling in prison, of whom three were aged 16 or 17 (Meek, 2008). The Barnardo's study described on p52 above included interviews with 11 children aged 5 – 13 years (Glover, 2009), and the study by Louriero (p53 above) considered the perspectives of children and young people with a parent in prison and conducted 11 direct interviews with children, none of whom was older than 15 years (Loureiro, 2010). A Danish-led research project included case studies from several European countries, of which the Northern Irish case study involved 14 children aged from six to 17 years in interviews (Scharff-Smith, 2011).

Two reports carried out in 2001 stand out against this evidential gap. One was conducted in England, and one in Scotland. In the English study, which was the culmination of three years of work carried out on behalf of The Federation of Prisoners' Families Support Groups, 32 young people took part in 28 interviews, across three English cities (Brown, 2001). Approximately 15 of the interviewees

were aged 16-18, and the others were aged 12-16. The stated aim of the report was to 'identify support preferences and some major themes in the lives of young people with an imprisoned parent or sibling' (p. 21). The interviews followed a semi-structured interview schedule directed towards gathering general details about the young person, maintaining contact and visiting the prison, 'happenings' during the imprisonment process, and family life more broadly (p. 10). The issues of access to a sufficient number of research participants, and gatekeeping, figured highly in the report, and there was consensus among the researchers that, although it was often very difficult for the young people to talk about their experience, 'young people need information and someone to talk to' (p. 14). The final report was published with the title *No-one's ever asked me*, a quote which came from a 16 year old who pointed out that until now, no-one had asked him or his mother what they wanted, and a 14 year old with a brother in prison who said 'Someone should ask me what it is like for me, nobody had ever asked me what I think about it, how it has affected me, not until now' (Brown, 2001, p. 51).

The Brown report concludes:

> Most importantly, young people have identified their need to be able to talk to someone confidentially who will not judge them or their families; someone to whom they can air their views. Young people have also called to be independently kept informed of what is happening throughout the imprisonment of their relative. There are no avenues of redress open to young people. Within the prison estate they are powerless and reduced to a security risk assessment; within the broader community they are silent and silenced (p. 72).

Meanwhile, in Scotland, the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families also commissioned a research report on teenagers' experience of having a relative in prison (McCulloch & Morrison, 2001). Two researchers undertook 20 interviews with young people ranging in age from 12-18 years. The research was prompted by anecdotal evidence that teenagers tend not to visit prison, and the key aim was to investigate why this might be so. The researchers used a semi-structured interview schedule that was based around a sequential set of questions following the process from arrest, through trial to imprisonment. In a concluding section, entitled 'What young people need now' this report highlighted the finding that:

> Young people's needs at the moment centred on information and the recurrent theme of having someone to talk to…someone to talk to on their own who was there on a long term basis, not someone who popped up every now and again, or, worse, different people at different points along the way' (p. 31).

Like the young people in the Brown report, the young people in the Scottish report found it distressing that no one spoke to them about their situation. One 15 year old commented 'I was 15 and my dad got sent to prison. You'd think someone would've sat down and said to me 'is something wrong?' mad, isn't it?' (p. 30).

Here, then, is both the rationale for my initial thesis question, and its opportunity to make an original contribution. Firstly, there is a gap arising from the dearth of research involving young people. Secondly, from what little is known, young people DO want the chance to talk about their experience. These two concerns lead to a third, which is also a key question for this research. That is, by learning from young people in detail what the experience feels like to them, to begin identifying how policymakers have addressed the concerns of families affected by imprisonment to date.

Although questions of identity are present to some degree in the literature reviewed above, nowhere are they its primary focus. However, self-identity is of such importance to young people over the age of 16, as the previous chapter has argued, that I contend it should not be ignored, but should be a key concern of any research relating to this age group. This is especially true because stigma is so linked to self-identity, and labelling and stigma have a noticeable impact on families affected by imprisonment.

3.5 The effects of stigma and labelling

The literature on families consistently finds that stigma, both actual and perceived, is a major negative aspect of the imprisonment for family members (Lewis, Bates, & Murray, 2008; Codd, 2008). The literature involving interviews with young people

also picks up on stigma as an important issue, noting it can occur when the local press reports on the arrest or conviction (Brown, 2001), or when teachers make disparaging comments at school (McCulloch & Morrison, 2001). However, as Codd (2008) notes, 'the extent, nature and impact' of stigma, because it is not clearly or consistently defined, remains a 'matter for discussion' (p. 57).

One way of making sense of the effects of stigma, especially in relation to identity, is to consider labelling theory. Erikson (1968) recognised the significance of labelling to the identity process and specifically warned of the risks of applying labels to young people. Labelling theory has its early roots in the articulation of the self as a social construct and the argument that 'the way in which individuals act and regard themselves is in part a consequence of the way others see and react to them' (Muncie, 2010, p. 140).

As Maruna et al explain, this is the "looking-glass" concept of symbolic interactionism whereby 'a stigmatized individual will come to view himself based upon what he believes other people think he is' (Maruna, LeBel, Mitchell, & Naples, 2004, p. 274). However, these authors argue that the looking-glass self concept risks casting the labelled subject in an overly passive role, and suggest that it is better to understand the shift in identity as arising from a combination of "self as causal agent" and societal reaction. This serves to restore agency to the individual. Certainly it seems important to recognise that although prisoners' family members are impelled into a situation that is not of their making through a process over which they have no control, this does not render them into wholly passive beings. However, it does have implications for their self-identity.

The labelling/identity link can be understood by considering Paternoster and Iovanni's re-statement of labelling theory, written after labelling theory had been subject to a good deal of crtiticism. Paternoster and Iovanni (1989) describe the processes by which labelling may result in secondary deviance. The process starts at the point when a 'labelling' event occurs. Thereafter, depending on whether the label is kept private or made public, and depending on the reaction of society, the labelled

person will either accept or reject the label. Crucially, the turning point in the labelling process is argued to occur at the point where identity is either altered, giving rise to the possibility that secondary deviance will result, or maintained as before, thus avoiding secondary deviance. Even though the concept of personal identity is key to their study, Paternoster and Iovanni do not offer a definition of the term, although they do emphasise that there is an interaction between the objective identity that may be ascribed by others and the 'subjective reality' of the person, 'the identity construction process relies both on the objective information we receive from others and on our subjective interpretation of that information' (Paternoster & Iovanni, 1989, pp. 378-379).

The way that labelling is described by Paternoster & Iovanni makes it clear that there is a point in the process where the label is either accepted or rejected by the labelled person, so an active decision has to be made. Arguably, therefore, it is also clear that if the imprisonment of a family member is taken to be a 'labelling event,' the families of prisoners risk being labelled as deviant, due to the negative reaction of society to crime in general and prisoners in particular. There is also a point in the labelling process where it makes a difference whether the label is known about, or is kept hidden. In this regard, labelling is strongly linked to stigma, and in due course to stigma by association.

3.5.1 Stigma and stigma by association

According to Goffman, a stigma is some attribute that marks a person out as different from (and less desirable than) others in the categories of person available to him/her (Goffman, 1968). Goffman acknowledged the painfulness of stigmatisation: if a discrepancy between an individual's virtual and actual identity becomes known about, Goffman argued that this results in a spoiled social identity:

> It has the effect of cutting him off from society and from himself so that he stands a discredited person facing an unaccepting world (p. 19).

Goffman indicated that those affected by a stigma are either discreditable, where the stigma is not discovered, or discredited if it is visible or becomes known to others.

He emphasised that stigma is all about relationships, not attributes. It is acceptance, or the absence of it, by so-called normals which results in stigmatisation:

> Those who have dealings with him fail to accord him respect and regard which the uncontaminated aspects of his social identity have led them to anticipate extending and him to anticipate receiving; he echoes this denial by finding that some of his own attributes warrant it (p. 8).

At the same time, Goffman noted that individuals make efforts to often 'manage' their stigma and may even seek to avoid contact with normals as part of this process.

Differences exist between those who have an obvious stigmatised identity and those whose stigmatised identity is concealable (including, for example, having a criminal record) in that the psychological effects from stigma for people with a concealable identity are arguably greater than those experienced by people with an obvious stigmatised identity (Moore, Stuewig, & Tangney, 2012). One study with 229 recently released former prison inmates compared their views about how society might think about ex-prisoners as a group, about the individual personally, and experiences of actual rejection due to their status as a former prisoner. The results led to the conclusion that it is important to research the effects of stigma on psychological well-being, noting:

> It is therefore likely that perceptions of stigma will lower self-esteem and quality of life, and possibly increase the likelihood of recidivism among formerly incarcerated persons (LeBel, 2012, p. 104).

When the children of prisoners are described as innocent victims (Loureiro, 2010; Jones et al, 2013), this helps to separate them from the criminal act and reduce negative attitudes towards them, but by characterising any stigmatised group as victims we continue to mark them out as different, which may reinforce the stigmatisation (Phillips & Gates, 2011). For that reason, Phillips and Gates call for an approach to supporting children of prisoners that does not involve identifying them by singling them out, but rather provides routine support when a parent is sent to prison, thereby diminishing the chance of stigmatisation.

Prisoners' family members are stigmatised, not because they themselves have a stigmatised trait, but because of their affiliation with someone who does (Phillips &

Gates, 2011). Moreover, meaningful relationships, such as kinship, represent 'powerful conduits' for stigma by association (Prior, Reeder, & Monroe, 2012, p. 224)

Although there is not a great deal of evidence to show how stigma by association affects families of prisoners, the mental health literature provides some useful insights. There are many studies in the field of mental illness exploring how stigma can prevent patients from seeking or accepting treatment, and how the stigma of mental illness impacts on the family of the person with the condition. In particular, it is possible to make the distinction between parents, spouses and siblings who may experience stigma as being *blamed* for the mental illness, and children, who are more likely to be seen as *contaminated*. (Corrigan, Watson, & Miller, 2006). Condry (2007) also describes the 'web of shame' that envelopes the families of offenders as consisting of kin contamination and kin culpability, the combined effect of which is to invite the 'shaming gaze' of others.

In practice, families affected by imprisonment respond to stigma in a number of ways. For some families this might involve a physical response such as moving home to a new area where their situation is unknown to the local community. For others, it may involve a resilient approach and a refusal to accept a spoiled identity, such as the 15 year old boy who said 'Folk said daft things. I pretended I didn't know what they were on about' and the 14 year old girl who said that, despite receiving negative comments, the thing that was important to her was that her mum told her 'It doesn't matter. Your dad's still your dad' (McCulloch & Morrison, 2001, p. 17).

By no means the majority of families manage to deal with the stigma of their situation with such fortitude, however, and a common response to the situation is to use secrecy to keep the fact of the imprisonment concealed from the shaming gaze of others. The secrecy, or silence, of young people is a recurring theme, both in the literature and is much in evidence in the data analysed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The present chapter now goes on to discuss the implications of responding to stigma by secrecy and silence.

3.6 Secrecy, silencing the self and loss of voice

As already noted, young people are not often given the chance to talk about how they feel about having a family member in prison, and thus they miss out on a valuable opportunity to develop their narrative identity, an important aspect of self-identity as the previous chapter has described. Sometimes, however, young people actively choose to keep their relative's imprisonment a secret, for fear of stigma. However, it is recognised that the use of secrecy to combat stigma may have a number of consequences for the identity of young people. For example, it is vital for adolescents in developing a sense of themselves to be able to control what is kept private and what is made public (Smetana, 2011). It is a normal part of the separation from parents, which comes with growing maturity, that young people should want to keep parts of their lives secret and secrecy helps adolescents to establish emotional autonomy. On the other hand, secrecy is generally seen to require physical and psychological work and can result in physical and psychological problems (Finkenauer, Engels, & Meeus, 2002). Further, there is a difference between a secret that is kept private, and one that is selectively shared: whereas an individual secret can lead to psychosocial problems such as loneliness and isolation, shared secrets can lead to adolescents feeling empowered and in control (Finkenauer, Engels, & Kubacka, 2008; 53).

Arguably, therefore, those young people who feel they cannot disclose that their family member is in prison to their friends or their wider family or community may well be at risk of psychological harm. As observed, there is very little research with adolescents from which to draw, but a comment by a seven year old in one study helps to illustrate how secrecy puts children under psychological pressure:

> They bully me, say nasty things. I don't let them know I care, but sometimes I cry on the way home. The teachers don't know my dad's in prison and I don't want to tell them (Boswell, 2002, p. 19).

A 15 year-old in another study told researchers a similar story of suppressed emotions:

I felt upset at first, and I missed him all the time. But I was ashamed and didn't want to tell people (Brown, 2001, p. 38).

This is a matter that is highlighted in the existing literature on families affected by imprisonment, but beyond recording it as an occurrence, studies do not explore the impact of secrecy (or what happens when the desire for secrecy is denied) on the self-perception of the young people affected. The evidence gathered for this thesis meanwhile offers a valuable opportunity to consider this issue more closely.

The act of secrecy involves a conscious act of self-silencing. When an individual silences herself the resultant loss of voice impacts upon relationships, as observed in one study of depression among new mothers:

This struggle involved an active silencing of themselves within their relationships…This move into silence made sense psychologically, for it protected the mothers from what they experienced as the invalidation and dismissal of their feelings by others and by the culture in which they lived (Mauthner, 1999).

Mauthner drew on a theory of silencing the self, and used the Silencing The Self Scale, devised by Dana Jack in the 1990s, as a way to measure susceptibility to depression in women (Mauthner, 1999; Jack & Ali, 2010). By silencing themselves, the mothers hoped to protect themselves from having their feelings denigrated or ignored by those to whom they would otherwise be close. Although keeping quiet in this way may appear to be protective, it is usually associated with psychological risks, in this case, depression. The silencing the self theory takes into account cultural factors so that, 'when it becomes too dangerous, shaming, or socially discrepant to voice one's feelings or opinions, a person "silences the self"' (Jack & Astbury, 2014). In other words, silencing the self is an adaptive strategy employed by an individual in situations that feel threatening, especially when the individual feels at risk of stigmatisation. This is a strategy that is also adopted by rape victims, who fear that disclosing the assault will result in a stigmatising response (Ahrens, 2006). Although silencing the self was originally conceived as a gendered theory, it is acknowledged that silencing the self 'has negative psychological consequences for both men and women' (Jack & Ali, 2010, p. 10).

Losing one's voice through self-silencing has also been posited as an issue of power, whereby the least powerful are most vulnerable to silencing themselves. For example, it has been argued that women stay silent about domestic abuse because in a patriarchy women's voices are unlikely to be heard (Jack & Astbury, 2014). Families affected by imprisonment, when they are silenced, become disempowered and lack a 'civic voice' with which to challenge the situation (Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo, & Knapp, 2007), thereby suffering a loss of voice once again.

A discussion of loss of voice points to another way in which the families of prisoners suffer 'deprivations' similar to those identified by Sykes (1958), and discussed in the previous chapter. The absence of the family member while in prison creates yet another loss, which has many of the characteristics of bereavement, as the following section of the chapter explores in more detail.

3.7 Ambiguous loss

When someone is imprisoned, it can feel as if they have died, and the people left behind feel bereft, even though an actual death has not occurred (Hames & Pedriera, 2003). These feelings can be characterised as ambiguous loss, which has two forms: the first is where the person is physically present but psychologically absent, such as in cases of dementia or alcoholism. In its second form ambiguous loss occurs when the person is psychologically present but physically absent, such as in the case of imprisonment (Boss, 1999). Ambiguous loss has been cited in studies of families affected by imprisonment for a growing number of years, and its potential to inform understanding of the issues has gained recognition:

> ambiguous loss theory may shed important light on why separation from parents due to incarceration is associated with greater internalizing distress than other forms of separation from parents (Johnson & Easterling, 2012, p. 351).

Arditti has written extensively about the harmful effects of incarceration on families in the USA context, particularly its traumatising effects upon children. (Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Arditti, 2012a; Arditti, 2012b). Using the findings of

her study of families visiting prisons, Arditti speculates that both aspects of ambiguous loss may be in evidence:

> And yet, it is unclear what type of experience one has while visiting at a corrections setting: the incarcerated family member may be physically present for a period of time, but perhaps psychologically absent (a ''different person'' to use Boss's words) due to his or her own pain connected to imprisonment. It may be that parents and children visiting an incarcerated family member experience both types of ambiguous loss, fluctuating back and forth from visiting ''behind the fence'' to life on the ''outside.'' (Arditti J. , 2003, p. 117).

Arditti concludes that families affected by ambiguous loss in this way are at risk of social isolation.

The uncertainty inherent in ambiguous loss is traumatising. Ambiguous loss stems from the external factors that create the uncertainty around the family member's absence or presence, and is not a trait of the individual. Because the family member does not have control over the external factors (such as the term of imprisonment, location of the prison and so on) this makes it very difficult for individual family members to make sense of their loss, hence its ambiguity. Young people are disempowered by, and disconnected from, all of the processes leading to the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment. Thus, the conditions are ripe for a sense of ambiguous loss to take effect. This becomes apparent at an individual level when symptoms of grief are made more complicated due to the uncertainty of the situation and the fact that the person who feels bereft faces a problem they cannot resolve (Boss & Yeats, 2014).

In a study of ambiguous loss involving direct contact with primary school age children with a parent in prison, Bocknek et al (2009) noted various coping strategies. The principal coping strategy the children employed was to avoid other people and their own feelings. Other symptoms include a reluctance to share information, and 'flat affect' (an emotional state similar to depression) and 'fear of the consequence of knowing' – a resistance to clarifying the information about their relative as this would necessitate acknowledging their criminal status (Bocknek, Sanderson, & Britner IV, 2009). These authors acknowledge that ambiguous loss is

but one of many risk factors that may affect the lives of children of prisoners, which together contribute to their symptoms of posttraumatic stress.

In addition to ambiguous loss, families of prisoners suffer a form of grief that is 'disenfranchised', in that it goes unacknowledged, and is not considered as socially significant (Hames & Pedriera, 2003). One reason why the grief of family members is not acknowledged to be legitimate is 'because they were seen as somehow implicated and not free of blame' (Condry, 2007). Furthermore, such loss is not marked by recognizable 'bereavement rituals', and unlike other forms of loss, the usual forms of sympathy and support are not offered to the families thus affected (Arditti, 2012a). Ultimately, such feelings of disenfranchised grief lead to 'feelings of shame, embarrassment, and contribute to secret keeping' (Arditti, 2012b). Because of the ambiguity surrounding the loss of a parent to prison, and the emotional impact that it may have, it has been argued that it is important to ensure that young people who might become 'disenfranchised grievers' are supported to talk about their feelings (Weaver & Nolan, 2015).

Ambiguous loss is attracting more prominent attention in studies of families affected by imprisonment (Weaver & Nolan, 2015; Manby, Jones, Foca, Bieganski, & Starke, 2015), and, as noted above, it has been suggested as having the potential to illuminate why it is that separation from parents because of imprisonment causes worse emotional distress than other forms of separation (Johnson & Easterling, 2012). Thus, ambiguous loss is likely to be an important factor to consider when conducting research with children and young people affected by the imprisonment of a family member.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that, although there is a growing body of literature about families affected by imprisonment, many questions remain to be answered, especially in connection with the causal links between imprisonment and certain

outcomes for prisoners and their families. Nevertheless, it seems clear that children and young people are negatively affected by the imprisonment of a parent, or any household member, and by repeated instances of parental imprisonment. It also seems clear that women are unduly burdened by imprisonment of a relative and that while prisoners appear to benefit when their family stays in contact during the sentence, it is not properly understood why this effect has been observed.

The picture drawn by the literature explored here has largely been arrived at without involving the intimate partners of prisoners, or prisoners' siblings. Further, young people are hardly represented at all. Given that stigma, secrecy, silence, and loss of voice are all bound up with the issues of self-identity explored in the previous chapter, these are all surely issues that are of real importance to young people. Yet their relevance to young people has not been explored. The literature review presented in this and the preceding chapter therefore points towards a significant gap in the evidence – insufficient attention has been paid to the voices of young people and the impact of imprisonment of a family member upon their developing self-identity. It is this is gap in evidence that the current thesis sets out to examine and address.

CHAPTER 4   Methodology

4.1 Introduction

An important aim of this chapter is to make the research transparent by explaining the structure of the research project, and key decisions that I made as the research progressed. By describing the study in this way, and by explaining some of the theoretical issues that I took into account I seek to show that the research was approached in a reflexive and ethical way. I also hope to bring more clarity to the data itself by showing how and why it was gathered.

The chapter begins by describing the two types of data that I examined, namely policy and empirical data, including a description of the process of gathering and analysing the data. Firstly the chapter explains my approach to defining data, as well as my approach to its selection. Here, I also give my rationale for choosing to use discourse analysis in respect of the policy data. I then describe why I chose interviews as my method of conducting the empirical research and consider some key issues, such as the role of gatekeepers, payment and motivation for taking part in research as well as the interplay between ethics and power.

The chapter then goes on to explain how I conducted the interviews with young people, and with professionals, the process of transcription, how the concept of 'giving voice' was approached, and how I sought to make the research as ethical as I could. Finally, the chapter discusses the way in which I applied thematic analysis to the interviews.

The research was conducted according to the University of Edinburgh research ethics framework, and an ethics application was submitted to the relevant committee, which gave approval for the study to proceed in November 2013. A copy of the ethics form is included as Appendix One.

4.2 Policy data

The definition of policy adopted in this chapter is a broad one. This is of necessity, because although the contextual discussion in the Introduction (Chapter One) shows that Scotland is troubled by a stubbornly enduring problem of imprisonment that affects significant numbers of families each year, there is no single point of national or local government with responsibility for such families. In particular, young people with a family member in prison are not clearly identified. This meant that the search for policymaking activity had to be wide-ranging in order to piece together the national picture.

Policy, as argued by Souhami (2015), can include formal 'policy products', such as legislation, parliamentary papers and statements by ministers. However, Souhami also shows how the practices of officials contributed to the development of youth justice policy in England and Wales, thus offering a much more broad-ranging set of activities that could be designated as creating 'policy' (Souhami, 2015). The foregrounding of practice as a means of producing policy is key to the discussion here because, as I go on to argue in Chapter Five, the absence of a clearly articulated 'top-down' policy in relation to families affected by imprisonment has created the space for other agents to step into the resultant policy gap. In addition, where there may not be many politicians or civil servants with relevant expertise in the field, the search for authoritative voices may have to be cast more widely. Third sector organisations have been observed to be more involved in pro-active policymaking in the UK than elsewhere in Europe and therefore to form a key part of the 'policy community' (Kendall, 2005). The third sector, moreover, has been noted to play an increasing role in Scottish policy-making post-devolution (Keating, 2005). In the case of families affected by imprisonment, most of the practical expertise in Scotland, like that in England and Wales (Mills & Codd, 2007), is to be found in third sector organisations, creating clear opportunities for them to contribute to the process of policymaking through their activities.

One example of how the opportunity to take part in policymaking was taken up occurred when a range of third sector organisations and public service practitioners who offer support to families came together, commencing in 2009, in a Parliamentary cross-party group on families affected by imprisonment. Family members were encouraged to attend the group and to contribute their lived experience to the discussions.[19] As a result of the group's work, its chair proposed an amendment to the *Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill* that was debated in the Scottish Parliament in 2015. Attracting cross-party support, the amendment was passed and the resulting *Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016* now provides that, in future, the children (below 18 years) of anyone sentenced to custody will be formally recognised so that their 'Named Person'[20] (essentially a professional who should assume a coordinating and oversight function for children and young people who may need support or services) is informed of the circumstances.

By acknowledging the role of practitioners in policymaking, it is possible to recognise that policymaking is not entirely top-down, but is instead 'messy,' and, further, that practitioners also generate the 'artefacts' of policy:

> Practices generate artefacts, which in turn structure practices. The artefact serves as an embodiment of practice which makes that practice knowable by others, repeatable over time (Freeman, Griggs, & Boaz, 2011, p. 130).

Examples of the artefacts of policy-making considered in the thesis include Guidance on working with families affected by imprisonment, produced by a coalition of third sector agencies (CJFSN, 2015), and a Framework for working with families affected by imprisonment, produced by criminal justice agencies such as the courts, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Community Justice Authorities working together with the third sector (Community Justice Authorities, 2015). These documents draw on the practical expertise of their authors to state principles of working with families, and to draw attention to the kind of services that ought to be provided in support:

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[19] Minutes of the cross-party group meetings can be found here -
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/97769.aspx Accessed on 18th April 2016.
[20] During 2016, the Named Person service was challenged in court, and some of the information sharing functions of the Named Person were found to breach the ECHR. The revision of the Named Person service is ongoing at the time of writing. The judgment can be found here
http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKSC/2016/51.html Accessed on 22nd August 2016.

> In any situation of stress, having access to accurate information can assist someone to make sense of what is happening and to feel more in control (CJFSN, 2015, p. 3).

> Contact with an accused or offender should always be the right of their family members where this is in their best interests. Agencies should work to support physical contact through visits and additional alternative contact (Community Justice Authorities, 2015, p. 23).

However, as Chapter Five goes on to discuss, the discursive practices involved in such policy artefacts can vary, which then has a bearing on how families are more widely construed.

4.3 Policy selection

Having decided that my interpretation of what constitutes policy should not be a narrow one, I looked across the policy landscape first of all in search of policy documents with direct relevance to families affected by imprisonment. I looked for government documents, for national legislation, for policies issued by agencies such as the Scottish Prison Service, and for policies issued by third sector organisations. I also took into account the role of the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, and of the Parliamentary cross-party group on families affected by imprisonment. Further, I sought out Scottish Ministerial statements and Parliamentary debates that were relevant to families affected by imprisonment.

I have been observing the criminal justice landscape for many years in various personal capacities.[21] This meant I was already familiar with key developments of criminal justice policy and legislation, certainly throughout the twenty-first century. I used this existing knowledge as the starting point for my search. I also subscribe to a number of newsletters, such as Together (the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), and regularly visit Twitter and other social media sites to keep in touch with legal and other developments that are promoted on an almost daily basis by organisations such as Families Outside and the National Prison Visitors Centre

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[21] I have practiced as a solicitor and have been Secretary to the Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice, and the Howard League for Penal Reform in Scotland.

Steering Group. I used these resources in addition to searching various websites including those of the Scottish Prison Service and Scottish Government.

However, just as I noted in Chapter Three that there is very little literature about young people who have a family member in prison, I was also aware that there are really no policies that are explicitly relevant to such young people, even within policies that affect children or families more generally. This stood in contrast to other vulnerable groups, such as young carers or young people who have been looked after by their local authority, and so I also looked at policy materials for those groups, in order to gain a point of contrast.

Table 1 lists the key policy artefacts that were consulted in the course of my research. While I cannot claim that this list is exhaustive, and there may be other documents it would have been helpful to consult, these are the policies, reports and statements that appeared to be most relevant, as well as being most readily publicly available, and they therefore had the potential to be most influential.

Title of policy artefact	Description	Author	Date
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	International statement on the human rights of children worldwide	United Nations	1989
Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)	National Policy framework and principles	SG[23]	2005
Scotland's Choice	National report on the use of imprisonment commissioned by the Scottish Government	Scotland's Commission on Prisons	2008
Protecting Scotland's Communities	Response to the above by the Scottish Government	SG	2008

[23] SG=Scottish Government

Preventing Offending by Young People	National policy framework	COSLA, ACPOS, Children's Reporter, SG, COPFS[24]	2008
Not Seen, Not Heard, Not Guilty	National Inquiry into the rights and status of children of prisoners in Scotland	SCCYP[25]	2008
Reducing Reoffending Programme	Rolling programme of government, including multiple policy approaches	SG	2009
National Outcomes and Standards for Social Work Services in the CJ[22] system	Practice guidance for CJ social workers – court reports and court-based services	SG	2010
Getting it Right for Young Carers	National strategy for young carers	SG	2010
Report of the Public Services Commission	National report on reform of public services commissioned by the Scottish Government	Christie Commission	2011
National Performance Framework	Web-based tool (dashboard) for monitoring delivery of services	SG	2011
Diversion from prosecution Toolkit	Guidance for diversion from prosecution of 16 & 17 year olds	SG	2011
Whole System Approach	National programme addressing needs of young people involved in offending	SG and partners including police, COPFS etc.	2011
Not Seen, Not Heard, Not Guilty	Progress report in relation to report of same name in 2008	SCCYP	2011

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[22] CJ=Criminal Justice

[24] COSLA=Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, ACPOS= Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland, COPFS= Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

[25] SCCYP= Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People

Strategy for Justice	Strategic approach to delivery of civil and criminal justice	SG	2012
Post-16 transition policy and practice framework	National post-16 transition planning model	SG	2012
National Parenting Strategy	National strategy for 'making a positive difference to children and young people through parenting'	SG	2012
Supporting Young People's Health and Wellbeing	Summary of SG policies to support young people's health and wellbeing	SG	2013
Unlocking potential, transforming lives	Service delivery review	Scottish Prison Service (SPS)	2013
Standards for encouraging family contact	Statement of principles	SPS	2013
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014	Legislation	Scottish Parliament	2014
Pathways to improvement: rethinking our perception of 'the offender'	Lecture to the International Futures Forum	CEO of the SPS	2014
Guidance on working with families affected by imprisonment	Recommendations for practice	Community Justice Authorities and partner agencies	2015
Framework for working with families affected by imprisonment	Recommendations for practice	Community Justice Family Support Network	2015
Preventing Offending. Getting it Right for Children and Young People	National strategy for prevention of offending	SG	2015

Preventing Homelessness and Reducing Reoffending	Report. Insights from service users of the Supporting Prisoners; Advice Network, Scotland	Shelter Scotland	2015
Fairer Justice: A vision for Scotland	Lecture presented at Apex Scotland	Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice	2015
£1.8 million support for prisoners' families	Press release and Ministerial statement	SG	2015
Carers (Scotland) Act 2016	Legislation	Scottish Parliament	2016
Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016	Legislation	Scottish Parliament	2016
Age is Arbitrary, Setting Minimum Ages	Web-based discussion paper	Child Rights International Network (CRIN)	Undated
A Guide to Early Years Scotland's Services	Guide to third sector services for children from birth to age 5	Early Years Scotland	Undated
Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland	Various resources and training courses, including website	CELCIS	Undated

Table 1: Summary of policy documents etc. consulted

Although I took a broad sweep, there are no wholly independent voices among these policymakers. Almost all of the entries above either emanate directly from the Scottish Government, or from executive agencies of government (e.g. COPFS or SPS). Alternatively, they have been produced by an 'independent' body such as CELCIS, which is funded by the Scottish Government, or by third sector organisations which also receive funding from the Scottish Government to provide services. The exception is CRIN, which is an international advocacy group in receipt of funding from the Norwegian and Swedish governments. On this view, policymaking is almost entirely an activity of government in Scotland, and the extent

to which practitioners can shape that activity, as suggested above, remained an open question as I proceeded with the data gathering and analysis. It is a question I return to in Chapter Five.

4.4 Policy analysis

In addition to a straightforward reading of the relevant documents and web resources, I also wanted to read 'against the grain,' (Tonkiss, 2004). That is, I wanted to consider not just the words used, but also to think about why those words were chosen and, importantly for this research because of an absence of direct policymaking, to think about what was left unsaid. In taking this approach, I adopted the techniques of critical discourse analysis. As well as encouraging the researcher to be aware of what is left unsaid, critical discourse analysis is a method that does not restrict itself to a semantic analysis of language, but also considers how language is used to produce inequalities and how discourse interacts with power relations (Fairclough, 2013). Exploring the use of language in this way can show how certain structural inequalities are made 'opaque,' which in turn leads to their becoming accepted as the natural order of things. Using critical discourse analysis can help to peel back the layers and expose how power is truly being exercised (Fairclough, 2001).

It is thus through the use of a critical discourse analysis approach that words such as 'support' can be questioned (as I have done at p125 in Chapter Five) and issues of power and control can be read into the actual words used. It was this approach that I applied to the documents, resources and policymaking activities that I identified as the research progressed, and is the method that underpins the discussion in the following chapter. In that chapter I talk about policy discourses, and in order to do so, I also had to consider what I would define as a discourse.

Foucault defined discourse as a 'group of statements that belong to a single system of formation…clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history…' (Foucault, 1969/2002). In Foucault's definition, it is the common object of

the statements that tie them together as a discourse, and this can occur even though the statements are made at different times and in different forms. Although by no means the only version of what can be termed as 'discourse,' this is a useful starting point for my analysis because it sanctions the broad-brush approach that I have described above. It has been suggested that theorists who take a so-called policy-as-discourse approach do so not in order to identify 'problems,' but rather to identify 'problematisations' (Bacchi, 2000). Even if this suggestion is intended as a criticism, it still seems important to be alert to the problematising of vulnerable populations, and of young people in particular. For example, in the discussion of the National Parenting Strategy, which occurs in Chapter Five (p1), it can be seen how young people, who could potentially be vulnerable and at risk, are instead characterised as being part of the problem – they need to be deterred from 'offending behaviour.' This characterisation was evident in other policy documents and pronouncements, and thus I argue there is a clear policy discourse, which seeks to shift the problem of parental imprisonment onto allegedly problematic children and young people.

Discursive anlaysis also has the potential to attend to the 'non-innocence' of the way that policy proposals conceptualise and offer up for discussion specific problems (Bacchi, 2000). Defining the policymaking activities set out in Table 1 above as a policy discourse also offered up the opportunity to question whether the absence of policy was merely neglectful, or whether it had a more deliberate cast.

This understanding of the nature of discourse, and its potential in an analytic context, informed my use, in Chapter Five, of the phrase 'dominant discourse' in relation to the reduction of reoffending, the individualised nature of offending and rehabilitation, and the construction of young people as 'risky' and the potential offenders of the future. In addition, I considered that as much as I should pay attention to the statements, the discourse, on families affected by imprisonment, I should also be prepared to discuss their exclusion from the discourse, and consider other forms of statement that could have been adopted but were not. To illustrate the latter point, I chose to exemplify the National Strategy for Young Carers (The Scottish Government, 2010), because young carers typified another group of young

people whose childhood was potentially compromised by external circumstances, and it was interesting to note the positive policymaking on their behalf, as opposed to the absence of policymaking on behalf of young people with a family member in prison. In other words, I wanted to find a point of comparison, despite the lack of an identifiable discourse.

In her work in 1998, Levitas undertook a review of the policy discourse of 'social inclusion' and showed that this phrase could be adopted flexibly by different authors to signify different political concepts. Levitas categorised these concepts as RED, MUD and SID: a retributionist discourse, a moral underclass discourse, and a social integrationist discourse. However, Levitas also argued that the effect of adopting a discourse of social inclusion was to establish a boundary between inclusion and exclusion. Ultimately the discourse of social inclusion enabled the policymakers of the day to narrow the debate to the respective merits of those in work and those not in work while simultaneously drawing attention away from issues of inequality, poverty and disadvantage (Levitas, 1998). In a similar way, Hastings (1998) reviewed the discourse adopted within the then current policy for urban generation in Scotland, and argued that the adoption of a narrative of urban decline in Glasgow was presented in such a way as to encourage the reader to infer that population growth was its root cause. At the same time, the policy ignored the potential agency of local communities and therefore 'it problematises and pathologises these people thus helping to legitimate the dependency culture thesis underpinning policy at that time' (Hastings, 1998, p. 209).

In my analysis of policy, in Chapter Five, I undertake a similar examination of the 'grammar, lexis and narrative' (Hastings, 1998, p. 209) of numerous policy artefacts in order to identify the dominant discourses surrounding the families of prisoners, and to question how those discourses have characterised the families. I was also able to consider whether the dominant discourse of government served to distract attention from deeper, structural, issues (Levitas, 1998; Mackie & Tett, 2013). This analytic approach helps to underpin my conclusion in Chapter Nine, where I argue that the discourses that relate to the reduction of reoffending, and the role of families

in this, enables the Scottish Government to distance itself from more vexing and deeper rooted questions about the nature of punishment itself.

4.5 Choosing to interview

When it came to obtaining data from young people to place at the heart of my thesis it was important for me to consider the best method to adopt in order to be successful in securing sufficient participation, which meant I had to address the associated question of whether interviews would be appropriate. There are many reasons to suppose that interviews would be well-suited to the type of research envisaged here. They have been characterised as 'youth-friendly' because they permit young people to voice their experience using words of their own choosing (Hopkins, 2010). However, the age of potential interviewees is a vital factor to take into account.

With younger children it seems clear that interviews may not be the best method of conducting research, and more creative approaches have been taken, using props such as games or puppets (Cree, Kay, & Tisdall, 2002). Undertaking task-based research with 12 -16 year olds using activities such as drawing timelines, family trees, and taking photographs has been key to securing rich data (Connolly, 2008). However, with older children it should be possible to rely less on communication aids, because the ability to construct a coherent life story begins in adolescence and older teenagers and young adults have the cognitive skills to talk about their lived experience from around age 16, when 'narrative meaning-making increases significantly' (Chen, McAnally, Wang, & Reese, 2012, p. 668). This makes the option of undertaking interviews with over-16s, my intended age group, at least feasible, even if unlikely to be wholly unproblematic. It also linked the method back to one of the key theoretical concerns of the thesis, that of the development of narrative identity.

4.6 Fieldwork: interviews

I interviewed a total of 14 young people, four of whom I was able to re-interview, gathering a total of 18 interviews from young people. Four of the young people were male, and ten were female. Two of the young men and two young women were themselves parents. Table 2 below shows their biographical details, and wider family circumstances:

Name (Pseudonym) (Gender)	Age	Principal Relative in prison (and other relatives in prison)^	Wider family circumstances
Frances (F)	17	Mother	Mother and father live together along with two sisters.
Becky (F)	19	Mother (uncle)	Lives with mother and half-brother. Father re-entered life before mother imprisoned and absent from soon after.
Aaron* (M)	16	Father	Lives with mother and 4 younger siblings. Parents separated. Aaron's child lives with girlfriend and her family.
Jane*(F)	19	Partner	Own tenancy but sometimes stays with mother and brothers. Father died a few years ago.
Paul (M)	20	Father	Lives with mother. Parents divorced. Older step-sisters from father's previous marriage. Relationship with father terminated.
Lewis* (M)	21	Father	Father appeared recently. Relationship with stepfather terminated, relationship with mother poor, no contact. Twin brother and another brother. Also two stepsisters, who he has not yet met. Lives with girlfriend, child, and family.
Carly (F)	16	Brother	Parents separated. Numerous siblings. Homeless at time of interview.
Karen (F)	26	(Half) Brother	Parents together. Younger sister. Brother has a different father. Brother died some years ago.

Beth* (F)	21	Partner (cousins, stepfather)	Own tenancy with child and partner. Ongoing relationship with mother and stepfather.
Liam (M)	17	Father (mother)	Lives with foster family. 4 younger siblings in a variety of care arrangements, two of whom live with parents. Parents still together.
Lynne (F)	16	Father (uncle, step-brother)	Own supported tenancy. Mother absent and not in contact. Sister lives with aunt.
Rosie (F)	20	Brother	Parents together.
Megan* (F)	18	Partner (brother, cousin)	Own tenancy. Mother lives with Megan and child. Brother, no/little contact. Sister. No father mentioned.
Tricia (F)	19	Father	Parents together. No siblings.
^ Other relatives were mentioned as having been in prison, usually in the past, but Megan's cousin was in prison at the time of interview * These interviewees are parents, each having a child aged below 5 years.			

Table 2: Interviewees and summary of family relationships

In addition, I interviewed 18 professionals, who described themselves as project workers, family support workers or family support co-ordinators. They worked in three separate voluntary organisations serving north, central, and the west of Scotland. I selected this sample of professionals firstly by approaching the organisations that had helped me to find young people to interview, because by then I had a good relationship with those organisations, and I knew they were supportive of the research. Thereafter, I spoke again to some of the organisations, which, although they had not been able to find any young participants, had otherwise been helpful and interested in the study. In each organisation a manager put out a request to staff to take part in the research, and the interviews were arranged with those who were willing.

Two of the organisations were directly involved with prisons, operating either within the prison as a service that prisoners could access for help with their family situation, or in the prison visitor centre as a service that family members could access for help with issues to do with their relative's imprisonment. Eleven of the interviewees worked for one organisation but were spread across three distinct services, one of which worked with young women at risk of imprisonment, one worked in the local community to support young people in a partnership with parents, and one provided

a residential service to young people. The professionals and the relevant
organisations are shown in table 3, below.

Organisation	Type of service	Professional (Pseudonym)
Voluntary Organisation A	Support to the families of prisoners either by responding to prisoner requests to make contact with her/his family, or by engaging with the family directly in prison visitor centres	Elaine Bridget Julia
Voluntary Organisation B	Support to families from a base of working within the prisons. Establishes contact first of all with the prisoner and then reaches out to also work in the community with the prisoner's family	Sally Kate Marie Shona
Voluntary Organisation C	1. Non-custodial residential support to vulnerable children and young people	Alison Vicky Phil
	2. Working in partnership with parents to support vulnerable young people living at home	Mike Joan Deborah
	3. Working directly with young women involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the criminal justice system	Helen Petra Carol Emma Keith

Table 3 Professionals interviewed in the research

4.7 Sampling decisions and the reality of sampling

The evidence described in the literature review informed my understanding of some
of the practical considerations that I would have to take into account in order to find
a research sample of young people. On this basis, I made three key assumptions:
firstly, the families of prisoners do not often come together as a group, except
perhaps in prison visitor centres, and there is evidence that few young people in the
16+ age group are regular visitors at prison. It would therefore be practically difficult
to find young people clustered together in order to make a direct approach to them.
Secondly, the topic of family imprisonment is a sensitive one, about which people
are often reluctant to speak. There would need to be a relationship of trust between

the interviewee and the researcher in order to give the participants confidence to share their experience. Thirdly, because the issue is sensitive and may be distressing to talk about, the participants should be part of a support network in order to minimise the potential of harm.

Based on these assumptions, I decided to approach a number of agencies in the voluntary sector that I knew to be working either directly with prisoners' families, or with families who were likely to be affected by imprisonment. I believed that if I could engage successfully with managers and frontline workers, and persuade them of the value of the research, they would be able to identify, and in turn persuade, young people to take part. I also believed that the young people would be better protected from any potential for harm to occur through speaking about their experience because their support worker would be aware of the timing of the interview and would be on hand to provide support, if that were needed.

I drew up information that could be passed on to young people so that they could consider whether they would like to take part (Appendix Two). At an early stage in my preparation for the research I met with one team (from Organisation B) who gave the research a positive initial reaction. However, once I had ethical approval and returned to the team to follow through with identifying young people to take part, it became much more difficult. Two of the workers said that they had asked a young person but they did not want to take part. The team manager followed up with the workers and told me:

> I have phoned three staff and got them to 'phone current or former service users. It appears that families just seem to hate raking up the past and taking themselves back to these dark times (email recorded in fieldwork diary on 8th January 2014).

This email message confirmed the manager's commitment to the research itself, but also highlighted the difficulties. Despite the apparent reluctance of families to become involved, I was eventually able to interview four clients of Organisation B. Organisation D was able to immediately think of one young person, who agreed to take part, and Organisation E identified two young people, who it thought could be approached to participate. However, as these young people were themselves in

prison, I had to apply to the ethics committee of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) for permission to go into the prison to interview. SPS refused permission on the basis that there were already many interviewers in prison researching this issue and it was therefore a 'topical, but crowded market' (quoted from the correspondence).

Organisation A helped me to find seven more participants. There are two possible reasons why I was more successful in finding participants through Organisation A. One is that, because I had volunteered with them and had previously worked with one of their support workers in another organisation, there was a more established relationship upon which to build faith in the value of the research and my trustworthiness as a researcher. The other reason became apparent after the second phase of the research when I interviewed professionals from a number of organisations. As Chapter Eight observes, many professionals seem reluctant to talk to young people about the subject of family imprisonment, but Organisation A has a specific remit to support prisoners' families, so there is no sense for them that the topic is taboo and it appeared to be much easier for workers in Organisation A to ask their clients if they would take part in the research.

In all, I contacted approximately twenty-seven organisations to ask for help in recruiting young people to my study. Although I generally received an encouraging first response, and I was methodical and persistent in following up, the numbers of participants did not increase. As it was apparent that I needed to try other methods of recruitment, I put out a call for participants in the newsletter of Organisation F, which supports ex-offenders. A mother contacted me and we met to discuss the potential involvement of her son. The mother gave me her version of her own imprisonment and was keen for her son to have the chance to meet me. After she discussed it with him, we made an arrangement, but at the very last minute the son decided he could not go through with it, and his mother came to the arranged meeting place to let me know that her son was nearby waiting in the car, but did not want to meet me. I later reflected that this showed how difficult it could be for a young person to take the plunge into talking with an unknown researcher, even if, as in this case, they have the encouragement of the person who was in prison.

I recruited two further participants by other means. In one case, a student whose father was in prison approached a PhD colleague after a criminology tutorial. My colleague asked her student if she would be willing to speak to me about my research, and this contact led to an interview. In another case, a social worker contact was aware that one young person in her area fitted my profile of participant, and was able to arrange for him to take part.

At times during this whole period (which took 14 months in all) I was given contact details for other young people who either did not respond to my direct approaches, or who responded but made and cancelled so many arrangements to meet that it became apparent that they did not in fact want to take part. Some got as far as arranging to meet but then failed to turn up. The evidence (outlined in Chapter Three) that young people with a family member in prison form a hard to reach group proved to be true and, indeed this experience informed my eventual understanding of just how dislocated from one another, and potentially isolated, young people in this situation can be.

In the second phase of the project, I set out to interview professionals from the organisations that support young people. Because I had an ongoing relationship with Organisations A, B, C, D and E, I anticipated that this would be more straightforward because I had made assumptions about the professionals' familiarity with research and researchers, and I knew that there was at least one person in each of these organisations who was supportive of the research. However, it became clear through this process that even if research is regarded as valuable, it still has the potential to impact on workloads, be burdensome, and be a low priority when it seeks to intrude into busy work schedules.

I had some success with Organisations A and B, and also Organisation C, which had been unable to find any young people I could talk to during the first phase, but was supportive of the research, and did enable me to interview their staff. In all, I was able to interview 18 professionals from all over Scotland during a two-month period.

As well as being willing to be interviewed, many of the professionals also had a role as gatekeepers, which became an important feature that helped to shape the research.

4.8 The role of gatekeepers

The term 'gatekeeper' in research refers to 'those who are in a position to 'permit' access to others for the purpose of interviewing' (Miller & Bell, 2012, p. 62). It is inherently a position of power. I encountered gatekeepers at several points during the data-gathering phase of my research. As described above, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) imposed a barrier to the research. Encountering such institutional gatekeeping is not at all unusual, particularly for prison researchers (Cohen & Taylor, 1972; Abrams, 2010), and may be linked to a desire on the part of the institution to manage a perceived risk to its reputation (Watson, 2015). Having made an assessment that there were already too many researchers undertaking similar research to mine in the prisons, SPS put themselves in control over the volume of academic work that could be undertaken on this subject, thereby making themselves arbiters of which aspects of knowledge about family imprisonment could be advanced (i.e. the subject could only be broached with serving prisoners if SPS agreed). That is not to ignore the fact that allowing researchers into prisons adds to the work of the staff, brings additional security concerns, and has the potential to upset the balance of prison life. However, it is to observe that prisons are closed institutions, and the prison service, itself an executive agency of government, is in the ultimate position of power in relation to the type of research that can be conducted among prisoners.

Gatekeeping was not confined to institutions, and more commonly occurred at an individual level. Although Organisation B helped me to find participants, I noted that, after meeting with the team of family support workers 'one worker said she had a young person who was angry and fed up with talking about it and just wanted to move on' (Fieldwork diary note on 4th March 2013). The worker said that, because of that assessment, she did not think it appropriate to discuss taking part in the research with the young person. The workers in all of the organisations made choices

about which of their clients to approach, in some cases asking young people who had already done media work about family imprisonment. Issues of assessment and selection link with the wider ethical concerns of qualitative research, namely power and consent:

> in situations where those in more powerful positions, for example line managers, are asked to act as gate-keepers to potential respondents, how feasible is it for them subsequently to resist taking part? Similarly, when powerful gate-keepers are used notions around access, coercion and, more importantly, consent can become very difficult for the researcher – and researched – to disentangle. Who is actually giving consent and to what? (Miller & Bell, 2012, p. 69).

To come up against gatekeeping in a research project is frustrating for the researcher, even where the gatekeepers quite reasonably have concerns about involving their clients in a potentially distressing encounter. However, there is another aspect to this problem: likely participants are disempowered if they are 'protected' and are not asked if they would like to take part in the research. In my experience, the organisations often avoided giving the young people the opportunity to even know that there was someone taking an interest in their situation and researching it. This meant that the opportunity to take part and to have their voices heard was not opened up to those young people. It is at least an open question whether merely making the request would be harmful: one worker in Organisation B told me she had asked a young person who had 'flatly refused, stating he does not want to look back and was not willing to discuss about his thoughts/experiences' (fieldwork diary note quoting worker's email, 15th January 2014). This response showed the young person exercising his agency by making a conscious decision not to share his experience.

Some of the young people I interviewed did become noticeably upset during our discussion, so it was right to think that talking about their situation could be distressing for them, which had been one of my own concerns right from the start. At the same time, though, evidence emerged during the research to suggest that it might be a mistake to adopt too protective an approach. Tricia, for example, agreed to take part in the research because she had thought the needs of families were being ignored and it 'was just kind of really great for me to think that someone's actually looking into it and thinking what effect does this have on other people?' By the end of the

project I had formed the view that there is a valid argument to at least give young people the information, and then let them decide. If I were to tackle this type of research again, I would develop some information for gatekeepers about the benefits of research in general, and would more clearly set out to persuade that the best route is to allow young people to make a decision for themselves about participation.

The data that I went on to gather from the professionals show that a key challenge for professionals working with young people is to gain their trust. Knowing this, it is plausible to think that one further reason why professionals may decide not to ask their clients if they would like to take part in research is that the trust is too hard won, and the professionals could be concerned that it would be jeopardised if they try to introduce the unknown quantity of a researcher into the relationship.

The organisations where I was able to find participants were the ones where I had a strong pre-existing connection with at least one staff member, who was willing to actively promote the research. The seniority or otherwise of the staff member was not important, but a relationship of trust was. My experience provides clear support for the observation that 'researchers must take time to build relationships with gatekeepers who provide access to a given population of interest' (Abrams, 2010).

4.9 Payment and motivation

I made a decision at the outset not to pay the young people for taking part, beyond out of pocket expenses such as bus fares. I did so after reviewing the experiences of other researchers (see for example discussions in McKegney, 2001; Hollway & Jefferson, 2002; Curtis, Roberts, Copperman, Downie, & Liabo, 2004) and deciding that although payment can be seen as a tangible way of valuing people's time, it could complicate the process of finding a suitable sample, and had the potential to skew the outcome if it became the motivation for taking part. Although at no point did anyone ask me if there would be any form of payment, there were times during the interviews themselves when I felt concerned about my decision not to pay the young people for their participation. Aaron was a parent but was also attending

college and he disclosed that his only source of income was Education Maintenance Allowance (set at a rate of £30 per week at the time of interview). Despite my concern about not paying him for his time, Aaron said 'it's helping you, isn't it?' when I thanked him for taking part. Another parent, Beth, spoke directly about the cost of maintaining her partner while he was in prison. Although Beth agreed in principle to undertake a second interview with me, she did not reply to any messages I sent her in order to arrange a second meeting, and I felt that the lack of payment for her time might well have been a deterrent. On the other hand, Jane was also a parent with a partner in prison who made me aware she was struggling financially. I asked her at the end of the interview what it had been like to talk about her experience, and Jane said it was a 'release' to talk about it, and she felt she had 'got everything off my chest.' And, as noted above, Tricia felt relieved to know that someone was taking an interest in her situation.

There was evidence that the young people became involved in the research because of the relationship of trust they had with the voluntary organisations I had approached as facilitators. One young person had spoken in public about her experience at the request of the organisation supporting her and said that the more she spoke, the easier it got. Another had also done some media appearances as a favour to the organisation that supported her family, and she felt it was better to talk in order to 'raise awareness' of the services on offer and 'be proactive rather than sit feeling sorry for myself.' After our second interview, Becky said that it was 'good to talk to a stranger' about her experience.

Together these data helped to confirm that my decision regarding non-payment was reasonable, and they coincide with other findings that altruism and the recognition paid to participants can also play their part in motivating participation (Fry & Dwyer, 2001; Seymour, 2012).

4.10 Ethical issues: power relations in interviews

Although, as noted above, I satisfied myself that it would be appropriate to undertake interviews, I was aware that they have been critiqued due to their potential to conceal a power-imbalance that is potentially harmful to the interviewee. It has been argued, for example, that interviews only truly suit the purpose of the interviewer, and that the power imbalance (in favour of the researcher) is so significant that there is a risk that the interview is nothing more than manipulative or abusive (Kvale, 2006).

One of Kvale's concerns about interviewing is that an interview is not a dialogue, because the parties to the conversation are not equal. He notes that the interviewer 'rules the interview' by setting the topic, defining and asking the questions, treating the conversation as a means to an end (securing the required information for subsequent interpretation), having a monopoly on interpretation, and perhaps even having a 'hidden agenda' and thus being devious. However, Kvale also notes that the interview is not entirely one-sided and points out that a form of 'counter control' may be exercised if the interviewee refuses to answer questions, deflects the conversation, or merely gives answers that they think the interviewer wants to hear (Kvale, 2006). Thus, 'interviewees are not passive subjects; they are active participants in the Interaction. In fact, they often use the interviewer as much as the interviewer is using them' (Sheuerlich, 1995, p. 247). I found evidence of this in Jane's interviews: when I asked her if she could speak openly to her family about her worries for the future she said no, explaining why she had to keep her feelings to herself:

> I feel as if maybe like they're all believing in him but if I start saying my worries and that then they might start no believing in him as much when he's out.

As already noted, Jane found talking to me to be very helpful, saying, 'it felt good to be able to talk to somebody about it.' I also found that the young people did not feel daunted about saying when they wanted to stop or take a break. At one point when she became upset, Karen said, 'Can we just pause it?' and she left the room, but

came back and said she wanted to continue. My interview with Carly was the shortest of all, and ended when I asked her if her brother's situation affected how she felt about herself. First Carly said 'What do you mean?' and when I asked her the question in a slightly different way she said 'I dinnae really want to talk about it any more,' which ended the interview.

Not wanting to rely on my interviewees to take the initiative to address any power imbalance, though, I felt there were a number of other measures I should take. For example, I decided to adopt the practice of one researcher who worked with young people in a residential care setting (Emond, 2003) by always making sure I showed the young people how the digital recorder operated, and by ensuring they knew they could take the machine and turn it off at any time. I also decided to give as much control as possible to the young people over the choice of when and where the interviews would take place, so that they felt physically comfortable in the interview setting. Some interviews therefore took place in the young peoples' homes, some in the facilitating organisation's offices and some in cafés. Interviewing in a café had the benefit of being in a safe public space, but it was difficult to ensure confidentiality, although I made sure to check more than once during the interviews that the young person was happy to keep talking. The background noise of the café also impinged on the audio recording and made transcribing more difficult: my interviews with Lewis were especially hard to transcribe for this reason, and some of the data was simply lost.

There was a further aspect to the concept of power that I took into account before embarking on the data gathering, and that was to do with the degree of the articulacy of the young people. Given their social situation, which was likely (but not inevitably) to mean that they came from areas of deprivation and from families that met the criteria for voluntary sector support it was possible that the young people who might be included in the research would not have much awareness of the nature of academic research, far less be experienced in talking one-to-one with a researcher. There was a risk that it would be difficult to engage some of the participants in the type of free-flowing conversation I hoped for. Also, teenagers may become

monosyllabic in response to questions, particularly if the question can be met with a yes/no response (Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Slijepcevic, & Chapman, 2008).

Young people from disadvantaged families may be all too experienced in speaking to professionals and my project had to take account of how exposing them to further scrutiny might impact on the young people involved. For example, young people in a residential setting have been found to be distrustful of research and the researchers (Vander Laenen, 2009). Whereas others in a similar setting 'tend to have more experience of speaking in a one-to-one situation with an unfamiliar adult…Consequently they seemed to be more confident and used to talking about themselves and their life experiences with someone they did not know very well' (Punch, 2000, p. 49).

I felt that because their involvement in the research would be entirely voluntary, which would suggest a willingness to talk about their experience, the young people I hoped to interview would be unlikely to prove reluctant to talk to me. I did anticipate, however, that because at least some of the young people I would encounter would not previously have spoken about their experience of family imprisonment, there might be instances where I would need to take a more active role in the interview. For example, I felt that I might need to re-frame or expand on questions, or might need to reflect back to the interviewee a statement or a sentiment to encourage the flow of the discussion.

I took all of these thoughts and decisions forward into the actual conduct of the interviews.

4.11 Conducting the interviews: the young people

The interviews with the young people consisted of a series of stages, beginning with contact with organisations and then with workers, moving on to contact with young people, arranging meetings and eventually meeting up. At every one of these stages there was the possibility for non-engagement to occur, and this did happen,

including, as already mentioned, occasions where young people made specific arrangements to meet me but simply did not turn up. The fact that the path to interviews was a bumpy one pointed to the fact that these were negotiated interchanges, and that the interview participants had quite considerable control over whether the interview would take place, even after notionally agreeing to go ahead.

Before each interview I let the relevant worker know I was going to meet the young person, and I notified the worker again after the interview had taken place. My intention was to ensure the worker could respond to any anxiety or distress on the young person's part that might arise from discussing a sensitive subject.

I decided that my efforts should be focused on making any questions as open-ended as possible, but in any event my primary aim would be to make the interview as unstructured as it could be so the participants were free to tell their story in their own way. This type of interview can be very empowering because it frees the interviewee up from a structure imposed by the researcher (Reeves, 2007; Gaskell, 2008). I envisaged that interviewing over more than one meeting, and having an information-sharing pre-meeting, would also help to foster the trust that would make the interviewing more likely to succeed (Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Slijepcevic, & Chapman, 2008). However, because of the many difficulties of finding a willing sample of young people and securing a meeting, pre-meetings were clearly impractical; in addition, only four young people followed through on the agreement (which almost all gave in principle) to meet up twice.

Once an interview was agreed to, there were several opportunities for the interviewee to control the flow of information. For example, when I explained consent and offered a consent form for signature (see Appendix Three) there was another opportunity to withdraw or circumscribe the scope of the research. Then, during the interview the shift in the balance of control could occur in a number of ways: as explained above in relation to Carly, the young person might say they did not understand the question, or might just refuse to answer. Aaron often answered questions, especially if I asked about how something made him feel, by saying 'it's

hard to explain,' and then offering no further explanation, which meant I had to change tack in the interview. And Lewis often answered questions about his situation with a 'yes' or a 'no,' in which case I had to ask another question, and the interview was much more staccato than the more free-flowing conversation I had envisaged. These instances provided examples of the counter control that it is possible for interviewees to exert (Kvale, 2006).

One interviewee, Tricia, overtly set out to manage the interview from the beginning. To open the conversation, I began by asking her age and what she was studying, because I knew in advance that she was a student and we met in a University venue, and I thought this question would help to begin the conversation on neutral ground. Tricia answered this question very briefly and then immediately said ' I think it's kind of important to mention that…I've been at boarding school my whole life.' Tricia had a clear view of how her story should be told, and made it plain that I could not understand her experience unless I understood her family situation as a whole. In this way, she directed the interview and made sure her narrative was set in the context that she felt was most important.

Issues of power had been in my mind for all sorts of reasons, including the fact that I knew that some of the young people had never spoken about their experience before (although others were quite used to this). I was anxious not to cause distress, and also anxious that the research was not exploitative, but could be a good encounter that the young person would feel to be positive. I did initially feel as if the researcher role brought more power with it, but as the interviews progressed, I began to feel the situation was less unequal than I had feared because, in the end, the degree of engagement with the questions was not something I could engineer, however much I focused on being empathetic, being a good listener, and asking what I thought to be appropriate questions.

4.12 Conducting the interviews: the professionals

The professional interviews were all generally longer than those of the young people,

lasting at least an hour and sometimes more. I gave the professionals the choice of where to meet and, with only one exception, the interviews were conducted in their workplaces. I recognised that this was potentially intrusive, using up common space as well as valuable time, and I made sure I arrived on time and left promptly when given a cue to do so. I provided a consent form to each professional at the start of the interview (Appendix Four).

Some of the interview encounters were emotional at a personal level, which I had not anticipated because we were talking about young people and work practices, not the professionals themselves. One professional said 'it can be quite a lonely job at times and sometimes you're dealing with all the issues and all the crises and trying to manage that on your own and it can be quite tough at times, but it's definitely good, it's a great job.' Another meanwhile said 'other challenges are when they're (*clients*) getting it wrong and you have a relationship with them which inadvertently means you give a shit when they upset you or hurt you.' The confidential nature of the interviews meant that, although such comments made me worried that the professionals were finding their work to be stressful, I could not pass those concerns on, and in any event, each professional was part of a team structure that included personal supervision, so I had to trust that there was a workplace forum for the professionals to speak about their feelings and to receive any support they needed. Nevertheless, these revelations did remind me that interviewing always has the potential to be an emotive experience.

As with the young people, some of the professionals found the interview process itself to be positive. One said that:

> It was actually quite easy to talk about. Sometimes when people ask you your job and what you do it's actually quite difficult to explain to people what it is but the way you're giving your feedback to me…I found it quite easy to talk to you about it.

And another also said 'I enjoy my work so you know I quite like talking about it.'

I did not ask to carry out second interviews, hence the use of a semi-structured format, which I believed would be the most efficient way to collect sufficient

relevant data in a single meeting. I had a schedule of questions (Appendix Five), which I used as the basis of all the interviews, but I used this flexibly. So, after I had interviewed two professionals from the same project I discontinued using questions about the age parameters of their clients, or issues to do with funding, because I had sufficient information on those subjects and it was not a good use of the interview time to gather this information again. I was also able to build from interview to interview: if one professional talked about the lack of mental health services for young people, I could investigate this in subsequent discussions, for example. These semi-structured interviews flowed more easily than those with the young people, and produced data that was more similar, which I found to be more easily analysed. By reading the interview transcripts repeatedly to identify themes within and across them, I was able to see quite quickly that there were emergent themes within the professional interviews, such as the challenge of building a trusting relationship with young people.

4.13 Transcription

It is generally said that transcripts come to represent the interview, but, as static pieces, they are different in nature from the interactive interview itself (Kvale, 1996). I found this to be true, and a transformative moment in the research occurred when the audio of the interview was converted into a typed up transcript.

There are choices to be made about whether to transcribe verbatim, whether to include hesitations and pauses, or whether to summarise the interviews. Setting out the method of transcription adopted helps to make the interpretative process transparent and aids the credibility of the research (Hammersley, 2010). There is no absolutely right or wrong way to transcribe an interview, and the key decision is to choose the method that best suits the purposes of the research (Kvale, 1996).

Because I had decided I did not want to use a form of discourse analysis or grounded analysis when analysing the interviews, I anticipated that I would not transcribe in a very formal way, marking the exact length of pauses or breaking the text down into

coded segments. I did intend to use the exact words, however colloquial, that the interviewees themselves used because I thought it would be helpful to the analysis to know if there was a common language that was used in relation to family imprisonment, and I wanted to leave the voices as unchanged as possible. As I would be doing my own transcription, I felt that I could be flexible, and could include commentary on the transcript that would help with later interpretation, such as putting a strong emphasis on a word if it was evident from the audio recording that this made a difference to the meaning, or signifying laughter or tears. This would help to avoid any misunderstanding that might be caused by not paying attention to 'emphasis and tone' (Barbour, 2008).

I transcribed the interviews as soon as possible after each one, and this turned out to be good practice because if a passage was hard to hear on the recording, I could often remember the exchange itself, which aided transcription. The movement I made between listening at a later time to the interview recording, and recalling the actual interaction itself underlined the fact that the oral and the written version of the interview transaction are different, and an interpretative process intervened between the two (Kvale, 1996). Before undertaking the interviewing, I had not appreciated the extent to which this step in the process had the potential to change the nature of the interaction, and it continued to feel important to make as faithful a transcription of the audio as possible in order to stay close to the ideal of giving voice to the interviewees. Acknowledging the role of interpretation in the process helped to confirm that thematic analysis was a good fit with the research as a whole.

Although I did include the colloquialisms, when quoting from the transcripts I had to make some adjustments. For example, some young people used the Scottish term 'dae' to mean 'do,' whereas others used 'dae' as a contracted form of 'dinnae,' which means 'don't.' I had to change the verbatim transcription to the anglicised version so that it would make sense and not risk completely changing the meaning of the sentence. It was common for the young people to say 'like' frequently, and in the space of an hour one young woman said it more than 420 times, all of which I faithfully typed. However, I had to edit some of those 'likes' out of the quotes I used

in Chapters Six and Seven because, out of context, they made the quotes very difficult to read, and did not add to the understanding of what she was trying to convey. The alteration of the quotes made me think about the dilemmas of 'giving voice,' which I explore in the following section of the chapter.

The approach I took to transcription is essentially one that has been described as 'denaturalised' (as opposed to naturalised) (Davidson, 2009), in which full-stops, commas and the like are inserted and 'ehs,' 'ums,' and 'likes' are removed. If left in its naturalised state, transcriptions can be very difficult to read, and the choice of a denaturalised transcription method better suited my analytic approach.

Although laborious, the transcription was an enriching part of the research process. It took me back to the moment of personal interaction, and gave me a chance to reflect on the potential meanings of what had been said. Inevitably, it also drew my attention to points in the interview where I had missed an opportunity to probe more deeply into a comment. In the cases where I was able to interview twice there was an opportunity to remedy this, but when there was only one chance to interview some gaps remained. In hindsight it seemed that those missed opportunities arose due to being in the moment of managing the whole process and they highlighted the problem of trying to establish some meaningful rapport in one relatively short meeting.

4.14 The issue of giving voice

By providing a platform for the young people to voice their concerns, I hoped to challenge at least one aspect of the social exclusion of families that results from imprisonment, namely their absence from research reports (Murray J. , 2007). The notion of 'giving voice' through research is complex, however, and the idea that by directly quoting from interview data the researcher has allowed the subject's voice to be heard is naïve. If research is designed to give voice it can give rise to a struggle with 'the problems of faithful representation of the experiences of the participants' and, because entirely collaborative research as a means of giving voice is virtually

impossible to attain, the researcher must be honest and reflexive and ultimately take 'full responsibility for what is written' (Josselson, 2007, p. 549). Recognition has to be given to the fact that the interview results from all of the conscious decisions made by the researcher (who to interview and how, for example), and by the interaction between the researcher and the participant. In fact, therefore, every interview is co-constructed (Riessman, 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2002). Once the interview itself is concluded the researcher takes up the task of interpreting the data, and even where researchers set out to involve their participants on an equal, collaborative, footing in the design and conduct of the research it is rarely anyone other than the researcher who makes the decisions about the final research report and takes responsibility for it. I therefore embarked on the project on the understanding that the young people would be given a voice, but within the limitations that a thematic and interpretative approach would convey.

4.15 An ethical transaction

As noted in the introduction, the research had ethical approval from the University at the outset. At the start of each interview encounter with the young people and with the professionals, I provided written information (Appendix Two), and I explained all of the information verbally, giving an opportunity to ask questions. I provided a written consent form (Appendix Three), which I also explained. At times in the interviews with the young people I either stopped recording to check on welfare and consent, or I pointed out that there was a choice about whether or not to answer questions. For example, in answer to a question about how his father's imprisonment had affected him Lewis alluded to 'something else as well,' to which I said it was up to him if he wanted to say more about that or not. His response was 'It's a personal issue, I'm still dealing with it.' This was my cue to move the interview on with a different question.

There is an argument that 'faking friendship' and 'doing rapport' during interviews is unethical because it creates a feeling of trust that is ultimately betrayed by the interviewer, who is not truly focused on friendship, but rather on 'the instrumental

purpose of persuading interviewees to provide us with data for our research' (Duncombe & Jessop, 2012, p. 108). While my inability to build a more robust relationship with the young people as interviewees was a disadvantage in that it did not match my initial concept of how the research would go, it did mean that my interviewees were not under any illusions about my role. Because there was only limited time to build rapport, the young people really only interacted with me as an academic researcher, and there was no risk of confusion about my role or my intent. I felt that, ultimately, this was an important contribution to undertaking the research in an ethical and non-exploitative way. This was a less obvious worry with the professional interviewees, who were more accustomed to research, who were closer to my age, and who had their own established professional status.

I believe that using open-structured interviews with the young people also helped to give them more control over the interview. To this end, I did not use an interview schedule, and I adapted each interview encounter to what felt most comfortable. I tried asking Carly where she would like to start in telling me her story, and she replied 'I don't understand the question,' so I changed tack and asked her a more direct question about when she first realized her brother was in trouble. In other situations, I asked general first questions to enable the young person to relax and get used to talking to me, and waited until there came a point when it felt appropriate to broach the topic of imprisonment more directly.

There were advantages and disadvantages to this approach. It did enable the young person to set the direction of the conversation so if, for example, they wanted to talk about the arrest and court procedures, we could talk about that. Or if the most significant thing was how the school dealt with their situation we could spend time discussing that and how that felt. However, if the conversation was more stilted, it could be difficult to work out how to move forward in the absence of set questions and prompts.

The fact that the interviews with the young people were dissimilar in content and structure also made it difficult to build from one interview to the next. For example,

the second interviewee told her story in a highly logical way beginning with the police arriving at her home to arrest her mother, and progressing through the court processes to eventual imprisonment. In contrast, the third interviewee, Aaron, said his father was 'just always daein stupit things,' and although he agreed this meant that the police sometimes came to the house, he could neither describe these events nor say what this felt like. It was only by chance during our second interview that Aaron disclosed that he had actually been in court with his father when he got a custodial sentence and disappeared from view, leaving Aaron to make his own way home. The fourth interviewee, Jane, began her story right back at the start of her relationship with her partner, before he was in trouble with the police. The different approaches taken by the young people in response to the open structured interviews meant that there was little leeway for me as interviewer to use the prior interviews to inform or guide the subsequent ones. This was disadvantageous and it made each interview all the more challenging. However, it also meant that the interviews were as authentic as they could be, and each young person had the opportunity to make as much or as little of the interview opportunity as they wanted to, or felt able to do. I felt strongly that this style of interviewing helped me to arrive at a situation where the disparity of power in the interview, although maybe not eliminated, was at least diminished (Riessman, 2008).

4.16 Thematic analysis

I did not settle on thematic analysis straight away, but instead considered several possible approaches such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) or grounded theory. However, I decided that thematic analysis would be the best fit for this research project. Thematic analysis has been variously described as: 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6), 'analyses (that) move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data,' (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 10), or a 'general organisation of qualitative data into themes' (Coolican, 2009, p. 246). These definitions combine to show that thematic analysis is concerned with the organisation of the data according

to patterns that emerge from the *ideas* that are detected in the data. This distinguishes thematic analysis from other methods such as discourse analysis, where meaning derives from studying the way in which language is used. Thematic analysis goes beyond the study of the speech itself in order to arrive at an understanding of the individual's underlying experience. Braun and Clarke note that, although thematic analysis is extremely flexible, it is also 'poorly demarcated' (2006, p. 4), in that it is a less well 'branded' form of analysis that frequently goes un-named in studies in which it is employed. In order for thematic analysis to hold up as the appropriate method for the research in hand, it is necessary to ensure that it matches the research questions as well as the underlying research assumptions, and that it is made explicit that the analytic method used is thematic, as I seek to do here.

Thematic analysis works well with experiential research in part because of its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and it can work well with the type of naturalistic research that I hoped to achieve particularly with the interviews with young people, while at the same time, the professional interviews could also be interpreted using the techniques of thematic analysis. In addition, thematic research requires an inductive approach. The difference between inductive and deductive research is that '…inductive processes involve using evidence as the genesis of a conclusion; deductive processes use evidence in support of a conclusion' (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 14). There were two reasons to think that my research should be inductive. Firstly, because of a dearth of data from young people on this topic, there was no established theory to test out in a deductive manner. Secondly, an inductive approach is more conducive to enabling the voice of those interviewed to be heard, and to be privileged over the voice of the interviewer, as I was hoping to do. In the absence of a body of theory, inductive research has the potential to produce results that may form the basis of a theoretical stance, and which may open up new questions to which future research should be directed.

Although thematic analysis demands that the data is analysed in a way that calls for a sort of coding in order to detect patterns or identify underlying ideas within the interview, it does not require that the interview be broken into small portions (as with grounded theory or discourse analysis). I found this useful, partly because I did not

feel that I could give the young people a voice if I took a purely linguistic approach, and also because it enabled me to use some longer passages from the transcripts, for example when I wanted to explore issues that the young people had raised to do with their home (in Chapter Six). I also found that thematic analysis allowed me to identify manifest themes (such as when it was clear that young people found visiting prison to be 'scary') as well as themes that occurred at a latent level (such as the issue of identity, which emerged as an undercurrent to much of what was said in the interviews), a defining characteristic of this form of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Thematic analysis therefore appeared to be a method well suited to the type of research question I wished to explore.

4.17 Limitations

Although I set out in this study to conduct research with a hard-to-reach population, I acknowledge that the young people I was able to interview were all in receipt of services from third sector agencies. Several of the professionals mentioned young people who were in very disadvantaged situations, and who they thought it would be useful for me to interview, but the professionals were never able to secure the agreement of those young people. To an extent therefore, the young people who participated were not the most marginalised young people, who continue to remain hidden from view. In addition, while there were gendered outcomes to my findings, the gender balance within the sample was not equal, and the inclusion of a larger sample of young men would have helped to produce a more detailed picture of the role that gender may play in the way that young people respond to having a family member in prison.

4.18 Conclusion

Undertaking the research for the thesis was a learning process during which I had to be reflexive and responsive to its evolving nature. In the end I found that an adaptable approach to both the field work and the analysis was required. Although

thematic analysis is a flexible analytical approach, it is demanding, and I had to develop a deep understanding of my data, which took some considerable time to achieve, in order to offer what I believe to be a credible reading of it. In addition, I had to broaden the scope of the enquiry to include a critical review of policy, without which several of the questions that the data opened up would have been left unanswered. This would ultimately have been unsatisfactory for the thesis, but would also have done a disservice to the young people and the professionals who were good enough to take part in the study.

The research also points to some of the difficulties of researching with a group that is known to be 'hard to reach.' Ultimately, it is extremely valuable to undertake such research, but locating a suitable sample and gaining their trust, or the trust of people who will be gatekeepers of access to them, is a time-consuming and intricate process. A preparedness to revise assumptions made in advance of the empirical phase of the project is vital to keeping the research on track.

CHAPTER 5   Policy on imprisonment, families and young people

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I undertake to explore the Scottish policy landscape and to identify the place of families affected by imprisonment within it. The chapter also takes forward the contention of the preceding chapter that the term policy includes a broad range of activity by a variety of actors and organisations. By critically examining the language of various policy documents and statements, the chapter argues that families and young people affected by imprisonment are subject to a discourse that positions them as adjuncts to the wider criminal justice agenda. That is, offenders are said by policymakers to be responsible for their own rehabilitation, and families are assigned a role in which they are expected to make a positive contribution to reducing reoffending. In addition, young people are positioned as risky subjects. The function of third sector organisations is noted to be key, and some of the problems encountered by third sector organisations when participating in policymaking are considered, especially in relation to how these might impact on the discourse affecting young people and families with an imprisoned family member.

The chapter starts by noting the relative absence from policy of families affected by imprisonment before broadening out to consider how young people generally are encompassed by policymaking, acknowledging the complexities that arise when policies are linked to specific age limits, especially when these interact with young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Set against that broad background, it is argued that when the issue of family imprisonment is foregrounded, there is little evidence of policymaking. Such that there is portrays families and young people in narrow ways that are problematic. In addition, the absence of young people from policymaking, especially in comparison to other groups of vulnerable young people, raises questions about whether this is more deliberate than merely neglectful.

Finally, the chapter considers the implications of the complexity of the policymaking landscape both for young people in transition to adulthood who might need to access support services, and for the professionals who provide these.

To achieve the aims of the chapter I have, as Chapter Four sets out, used the techniques of critical discourse analysis to look critically at the words that are used and explore potential underlying meanings, as well as paying attention to the wider context in which policy is produced. The policy documents and statements that are examined here were selected through the process described in the previous chapter. I have also adopted the terminology 'third sector organisation' (or sometimes 'third sector agency'), following Maguire (2012), to describe charitable or voluntary organisations that provide social welfare services.[26]

5.2 The omission of families from policy

It is argued here that policies relating to families affected by imprisonment are scant, despite the evidence, reviewed in Chapter Three, of a growing awareness of the existence of such families, some knowledge of their approximate number, and a fair degree of consensus about the harms they are likely to suffer as a direct result of the sentence of imprisonment imposed on their relative. As Chapter One set out, there is a move away from 'top-down' policy-making in Scotland, in line with the recommendations of the Christie Commission, and there is no single department in the Scottish Government that is responsible for families affected by imprisonment. The place that families occupy within the policymaking environment is therefore hard to define. There has, however, been some policymaking activity in recent years.

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[26] Maguire gives the following explanation:

> Terminology and definitions in this area are often vague and inconsistent. Commonly used labels include 'voluntary agencies', 'the voluntary and community sector', 'not for profit organizations' and 'civil society organizations'. 'Third sector organizations' (TSOs) is used here as a general term of convenience to include a wide variety of formally constituted organizations outside the public sector, ranging from registered charities to mutuals and social enterprises, whose main distinguishing feature is that they do not make profits for shareholders. They may use volunteers or paid staff, or a mixture of the two (Maguire, 2012, p.492 n1).

In 2008, the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP)[27] conducted an inquiry into the effects of parental imprisonment. The legal duty of the Commissioner is to lay such inquiries before the Scottish Parliament, which was duly done. A review was carried out three years later, and this was also laid before the Parliament (SCCYP, 2008; SCCYP, 2011).

In a 2009 report, Families Outside, in its role as the only Scottish third sector organisation that is wholly dedicated to supporting families of prisoners, advocated child and family impact statements as an appropriate way to ensure that courts would consider the individual case involving children prior to sentence (Loureiro, 2009). The matter was taken up in the Scottish Parliament when an amendment was proposed at the Bill stage to the *Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010*. If successful, the amendment would have introduced child impact statements into the criminal court process, but the amendment was defeated, for reasons that I explore in more detail in Chapter Nine. The Scottish Parliament subsequently debated the issue in 2010[28], and there was cross-party recognition of the plight of the children of prisoners and support for the proposition that the rights of those children should be 'respected in the legal system' (Motion S3M-6377). A cross-party group on families affected by imprisonment was set up in 2011 with the stated purpose: 'To bring focus to the needs of families affected by a relative's imprisonment and to help the understanding that these families are innocent'.[29] The issue of parental imprisonment was debated again by the Parliament in 2015, when an opposition MSP noted that: 'The essence of the problem is that we do not have enough information and statistics on the issue, and we do not have co-ordination and planning on it.'[30]

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[27] Although previously known by the acronym SCCYP, in 2015 the Commissioner changed the order of his title so as to place children and young people first. The office is now known as that of the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (CYPCS). Because the reports of 2008 and 2011 discussed here were produced under the earlier version of the title, SCCYP, the previous version is used here.

[28] http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=5608&i=50166&c =0&s=impact%20statement Accessed on 12th December 2013.

[29] http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/44488.aspx Accessed on 12th December 2013.

[30] On 26th February 2015. report of the debate available at https://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?id=2015-02-26.16.0 accessed on 25th July 2016.

The narrow focus of the debate on each of these occasions was upon the impact of parental imprisonment on children below the age of 18. The wider needs of families, the needs of older teenagers and young adults, or the needs of other relatives were not the focus of the debates. In addition, only the most recent debate in 2015 resulted in any form of legislative recognition of children with an imprisoned parent.

One way to investigate why the more formal policymaking machinery of government appears to be so limited in relation to young people affected by family imprisonment is to stand those young people in comparison to other groups, for whom there is a similar body of evidence of vulnerability.

There is a strategy for young carers, for example, and looked after young people (i.e. young people subject to compulsory supervision by a local authority) have extensive legal rights. The portrayal of a looked after child is of someone who is vulnerable, and subject to a kind of victimhood, dictated by his or her circumstances. Looked after children are described by the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS)[31] as:

> among the most disadvantaged children in society…in every case children will have been through a traumatic or difficult life experience which can result in instability, distress, poor emotional and physical health, or lack of social and educational development. Overall, looked after children do not enjoy the same positive advantages, experiences and outcomes as other children. These are children in need of society's most conscientious support and understanding.[32]

The outcomes that CELCIS indicates as likely to attach to looked after children are also frequently found in the evidence of the impact on children of parental imprisonment, yet the construction of young people who are looked after contains none of the language of suspicion or risk to be found in the references to young people with a relative in prison, as I go on to explore in more detail in this chapter.

The national Young Carers Strategy (The Scottish Government, 2010) lists a number

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[31] CELCIS is principally funded by the Scottish Government and is governed by a steering group supported by the University of Strathclyde.
[32] https://www.celcis.org/our-work/looked-after-children/ accessed on 28th March 2016. The Scottish Government principally funds CELCIS.

of situations that would result in a caring obligation, but it does not include the imprisonment of a parent or other family member in spite of the fact that the SCCYP report in 2008 specified that one of the impacts upon children of prisoners was:

> The loss of a carefree childhood, affected by the stress of the remaining adult. Older siblings may take on caring responsibilities (SCCYP, 2008, p. 16).

As previously noted, the SCCYP report was laid before the Scottish Parliament in 2008. Yet, this policy finding was either lost or ignored when the young carers strategy was drawn up. In terms of a theory of the language of justice, such silence is significant (Coyle, 2013). As I will go on to observe, policymakers will seek to manipulate how we construct certain actors by a deliberate use of language, but equally meaningful is the 'space between knowledge and action,' (Morrison & Sparks, 2016) wherein the exclusion of evidence from policy is also a political act. In the case of families affected by imprisonment, the picture is politically messy. It is argued here that for certain vulnerable groups, policies and strategies abound (e.g. children, parents, families). However, because of their link to costly political problems (imprisonment, recidivism) and their morally ambiguous role as both separate from yet connected to 'offenders' the evidence that suggests young people affected by family imprisonment are themselves vulnerable has not been adopted into a coherent strand of policy. Instead, the government deals with the problem by adopting a rhetoric of individual responsibility, and a process of distancing itself from the direct responsibility for the families of prisoners. There is a resultant policy gap, which third sector agencies are left to fill, but their policymaking activities are problematic in some respects, as the chapter now goes on to explore.

5.3 The role of the third sector in the production of policy discourse

Third sector organisations form the majority of the cross-party group on families affected by imprisonment. The chair of the group, a Labour MSP, was successful in securing a legislative change that should be of benefit to children and young people with a parent in prison (the amendment to the *Criminal Justice Scotland Act 2016*, discussed in Chapter Four). It appears that this achievement was aided by the fact

that the third sector organisations advocating for the legislation had acquired a positive reputation as being expert in the needs of families affected by imprisonment, and, in the absence of a national policy or commitment to service provision, the Scottish Government (and local authorities) turn to such organisations for their expertise and provision of services to the families.

There are certain advantages that voluntary sector providers can offer in developing services for those affected by offending, such as flexible and innovative ways of working. At a personal level, voluntary sector agencies can often build more trusting relationships than their public sector counterparts because, having freedom from delivery of statutory duties, they are more able to focus solely on the needs of their client group (The Robertson Trust, 2012). The 'moral' values underpinning third sector organisations, and the fact that they have an identity separate to state institutions such as prisons, aid the establishment of such relationships (Tomczak & Albertson, 2016). However, issues of funding, and an unequal relationship with public services have the potential to 'cause the third sector to lose the very attributes that distinguish it from the public and private sector' (The Robertson Trust, 2012, p. 11).

The 26 third sector organisations that together form the Criminal Justice Family Support Network all receive national or local government funding to provide care and support services in the criminal justice sector. For example, in 2012-13, the Scottish Prison Service contracted £2.3m services to Phoenix Futures (who work in the field of substance misuse), £130,000 to Barnardo's Scotland and £30,000 to Families Outside (Garside, Silvestri, & Mills, 2014). In addition, the Scottish Government paid a substantial amount, via the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund, for third sector services: 'Apex Scotland, Sacro and Families Outside receive around £1m annually, also via non-contractual funding arrangements, to cover their 'head office operations' (Garside, Silvestri, & Mills, 2014, p. 21). A further £1.8m allocated for the expansion of Prison Visitor Centres was assigned to Families

Outside in 2015 as managers of the budget and the project.[33]

The situation in Scotland is very different from that in England, where there have been much more extensive moves to privatize the prison system and probation services, including the commissioning of criminal justice services from voluntary sector agencies (Benson & Hedge, 2009). Nevertheless, the risk that agencies that would otherwise be independent become compromised when they begin to seek, and compete for, government funding for provision of services does exist in Scotland, too (Helminem, 2015).

The contention of this chapter is that the impetus to measure results within a policy framework dominated by the National Performance Framework empowers the reducing reoffending agenda to dominate the policy discourse surrounding imprisonment and its effects, to the detriment of arguments about the needs of families in their own right. Furthermore, gaining the confidence of, and funding from, government makes it necessary for third sector agencies to adopt a pragmatic approach that includes demonstrating their worth to the government's target-driven agenda.

Against this backdrop of limited policymaking activity and the potentially compromised role of third sector agencies, the chapter now goes on to discuss how young people are portrayed in Scottish policy.

5.4 Young people in Scottish policy, and a systematic, holistic approach

To try to better locate young people with a family member in prison in the policy landscape, this section of the chapter will describe some key aspects of policymaking including the holistic and systematic approach to young people. Subsequent sections will explore the problems that can arise from age-defined policies, and the way in

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[33] http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/-1-8-million-support-for-prisoners-families-1f81.aspx accessed on 26th January 2016.

which transitions are dealt with in policy.

All of current Scottish Government policy relating to children and young people is underpinned by a set of principles established by a policy widely known by its acronym, GIRFEC[34]. *Getting It Right for Every Child* was first introduced as a policy framework in 2005 by the then Scottish Executive. GIRFEC is intended to 'support, promote and safeguard children and young people's wellbeing' (The Scottish Government, 2015, p. 8), and centres on the role of universal services such as health and education. For example, the legislation that now ensures GIRFEC'S national implementation provides that the key professional for each child, the Named Person, will be the Health Visitor in the pre-school years and thereafter will be the Head Teacher or someone in a senior role within the school.

The GIRFEC approach to young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, offending has been adopted by the Scottish Government in order to divert as many young people as possible away from the criminal justice system. The Whole System Approach (WSA) is described thus:

> Underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child, this ensures that anyone providing support puts the child or young person – and their family – at the centre. Practitioners need to work together to support families, and take early action at the first signs of any difficulty – rather than only getting involved when a situation has already reached crisis point.[35]

In addition, GIRFEC links directly to the pre-school and school education policy in Scotland, introduced in 2010 as the *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE). The vision common to GIRFEC and CfE is for all children to have 'four capacities' so that every child is a: 'successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor, and responsible citizen.'[36] These four capacities also form one of the strategic objectives in the National Performance Framework (NPF). The NPF is a key locus of some of

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[34] For full information on GIRFEC, see the Scottish Government website at
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright
[35] http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/policies/young-offending/whole-system-approach accessed on 17th March 2016
[36] A full description of the four capacities is available at
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcelle nce/thepurposeofthecurriculum/index.asp accessed on 21st April 2016.

the policy aims relating to children and young people. In addition to the four capacities in GIRFEC and the CfE, the NPF also foregrounds:

"National Outcomes
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk

National Indicators
- Improve levels of educational attainment
- Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work
- Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations
- Improve children's services
- Reduce children's deprivation"

The list above is not exhaustive - the needs of younger children are also highlighted and, of course, the needs of young people are threaded through other national indicators, such as 'Reduce crime victimisation rates.'

Thus, in key areas of childhood, in schooling and in youth justice, a holistic approach emphasising well-being, and the importance of family and community to children, underpins the policy work of local and national government as well as external agencies. At the same time, policies relating to children and young people tie into the overarching strategic objectives of government and, as such are liable to be monitored in order to show positive outcomes under the national indicators within the NPF.

In general, the GIRFEC approach has the support of all parties in the Scottish Parliament (Tisdall & Hill, 2011). GIRFEC is not without its critics, however, and areas of contention include that it signals a move away from the legally well-known principle of the 'welfare' of children and young people to the less well-charted waters of their 'well-being'. [37] There is no real consensus about the definition of well-being, nor of how it can best be measured or put into practice (Tisdall, 2015). As Tisdall points out, if the unit of measurement is unclear, this has implications for the monitoring of performance (*ibid* p 824). Any lack of clarity is likely to reduce the

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[37] See, for example, the consultation responses of Professor Elaine Sutherland and Cl@n Childlaw at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/10/5874/downloads Accessed 29th October 2012.

usefulness of measurement as an instrument of government.

Further, the distinction between welfare and well-being is significant because it shifts the focus from a rights-based approach to one that is aspirational, losing the 'hard edged' aspects of children's rights, and leaving local authorities to fulfill their duties amid the 'conceptual ambiguity' inherent in the model of well-being (Davis, Hill, Tisdall, Cairns, & McAusland, 2014). Some policymakers, including third sector organisations, wish to advocate for a rights based approach: SCCYP, for example, focused the problem of family imprisonment around the rights of the child, enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), emphasising:

> Rights to family life (article 16)…the child's right: to benefit from the guidance of a parent (articles 5 and 14); to know and be cared for by parents (articles 7 and 8); and to be separated from parents only where that is in the child's interests (article 9) (2008, p. 9).

SCCYP used this emphasis upon the UNCRC as the basis to argue that children's rights should be taken into account when a custodial sentence is being considered. But if the provision of services to children and young people is focused on a different, more aspirational concept, this makes it harder to ensure that a rights-based approach underpins the way that services are actually being designed and delivered.

Despite the criticisms, there are clear links and synergies between different policy areas in respect of children and young people, which would suggest that there is a well-woven safety net and that few young people should find their needs are overlooked. However, there are some difficulties that emerge particularly in relation to older teenagers and young people on the brink of adulthood, who may no longer be accessing universal services such as education. At this point, a 'lacuna' is created, whereby:

> The young person who is still in a process of transition, or who has ongoing commitments to parents and siblings who need looking after or looking out for, is missing from the literature. (Bancroft & Wilson, 2007, p. 316).

In other words, once they stop being the responsibility of universal services, there is a risk that young people, and their lived experiences, become lost from view. In

addition, age is seen to be a key determinant of which policies and services are available to young people in general, and it is young people over the age of 18 who are particularly likely to go missing in this way.

5.5 Age defined policies

The UNCRC defines anyone under the age of 18 as a child (United Nations, 1989)[38] and, accordingly, the terminology 'children and young people' is commonly used in Scottish policy and legislation to describe all children up to the age of 18. The term 'young people' is most usually applied to older children, who are perceived as having more capacity and agency, and who may no longer self-identify as a child, but who are not considered in all respects to have fully attained adulthood. However, the terminology is not evenly applied, and the use of different age limits for different legislative and policy purposes creates a confusing picture.

The age of legal capacity is 16 in Scotland, but in certain circumstances (such as instructing a solicitor to act) younger children may be deemed to have capacity. Sixteen year olds can marry or join the army. Children have a right to education but only until age 16 in spite of the fact that the education system is geared towards Highers being taken at age 17 or 18. Young people aged 16 to 18 who have previously been identified as having need of state support and intervention because of social circumstances or offending behaviour, may be subject to ongoing supervision by the Children's Hearings system.

The situation for vulnerable young people is even more opaque. The Scottish Government has a duty to pay due regard to the UNCRC for all children up to age 18, or 21 if they have been looked after: the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* provides for young people who have been looked after to receive ongoing support until age 26, and offers the option for them to remain in residential or foster care until age 21 (formerly age 16). In some regards, therefore, children and young

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[38] The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991 but the Scottish Parliament is not obliged to ensure the legislation it passes is compliant.

people who have been looked after have a different childhood status than other young people.

There is also a variable application of age limits in the youth justice system. Under the criminal law, the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is set at an international low, at age eight, although the age for a criminal prosecution (in a criminal court) has been raised to 12. In practice, between the ages of eight and 16 criminal cases will almost always be considered for diversion from prosecution and directed towards the Children's Hearing system. From age 16 prosecutions will usually take place in an adult court. Since 2015 the anonymity of 16 and 17 year olds charged with a criminal offence has been protected in law.[39] Children below the age of 16 for whom it is deemed necessary can be held in secure accommodation and anyone between the ages of 16 and 21 given a custodial sentence will serve this in a Young Offenders Institution (YOI). At age 21 young people will normally go to an adult prison, although they may continue to be held in a YOI until the age of 23 in certain cases.

The Scottish Government has produced a strategy for preventing offending, in which a child is defined as someone up to the age of 18 (The Scottish Government, 2015). Although the strategy acknowledges that some local authorities have extended their youth justice services to age 21, the Scottish Government confirmed the Whole System Approach was 'not being formally extended to age 21.' Nevertheless, 'local partners should consider the most suitable arrangements for young people' (The Scottish Government, 2015, p. 5). In that example, within a single document relating specifically to a national policy approach to young people, the government has issued a confused message about the provision of services. This puts those young people up to age 18 in a position where they are entitled to expect a service from their local authority, but those between the ages of 18 and 21 may find there is a service, but not of right, and depending on their postcode. Simultaneously, it is stated that young people over age 18 will not be treated as 'youth' in terms of justice services, but will fall to be treated as adults (The Scottish Government, 2015).

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[39] Under amending legislation brought in by the *Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014* and brought into force in July 2015.

While policies that discriminate among children and young people according to their age do guide service providers on the extent of their statutory duties, at the same time there is a risk that they may delimit services in an arbitrary way that links with numerical age when something more nuanced would be more appropriate. For example, although a 16 or 17 year old who is charged with an offence will be prosecuted in the adult criminal court in most cases, if s/he is subject to an order made by the Children's Hearing System, the offence may be dealt with by a Hearing rather than by the court. But this provision can be over-ridden by the Procurator Fiscal if it is 'in the public interest' that the offence should be prosecuted in court – a judgment made according to what the young person has done, not on the basis of their age (The Scottish Government, 2011)**.**

The *Toolkit* that outlines the procedures for dealing with 16 and 17 year olds who may be diverted from prosecution in the courts includes a note to say that:

> This does not mean that those over 18 should be excluded from youth justice diversion programmes as consideration should always be given to maturity and needs (The Scottish Government, 2011, p. 2).

So, those over the age of 18 may be considered for similar treatment as those who are younger, depending on a subjective assessment of 'maturity and needs.' Arguably, having a policy that can be applied flexibly is advantageous but, equally, discretion may mask unfairness – regional differences in implementing the Whole System Approach diversion from prosecution for 16 and 17 year olds is a case in point. On a detailed examination of how several local authority areas implement the diversion scheme, it was noted that in different local authorities there were 'varying levels of diversion,' which proved 'difficult to explain.' The underlying reasons for variation could range from 'churn' of prosecutorial staff to the fact that geographical factors resulted in a 'limited third sector service' offering fewer opportunities for diversion (Murray, McGuiness, Burman, & McVie, 2015). Consequently, the evaluation of the diversion from prosecution for 16 and 17 year olds recommended that diversion should be a default, rather than a discretionary, position (Murray, McGuiness, Burman, & McVie, 2015).

The converse to working with flexible age limits is to set strict age parameters, but this risks ignoring the possibility that children and young people already have the capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Child Rights International Network (CRIN) recommends dispensing with minimum age limits, except where these are required for child protection, such as conscription into armed forces, or minimum age of criminal responsibility. It is increasingly being recognised that 'considering a range of factors, such as experience, ability and context is a more sensitive indicator of capacity than a person's age' (CRIN, n.d.). While both sides of the argument have merit, the propensity for age limits to result in unequal or exclusionary treatments of young people presents a strong basis to argue that policies should refer far less often to age-limits, and should instead be more focused on the capacity and circumstances of the individual.

One key aspect of age-related policy where fewer age delimitations would arguably be preferable is during the process of transition from childhood to adulthood. This is an issue of particular concern and interest to this thesis, whose research participants ranged in age between 16 and 26 years, and who were themselves at varying stages of transition. In addition, this phase of transition is a key stage in the formation of a secure identity, as discussed in Chapter Two.

5.6 Policy relating to young adulthood and transitions

There is some evidence that the issue of transitions is recognised within the policymaking arena in Scotland. The Scottish Prisons Commission noted that 'age and stage of development' is a relevant consideration, going on to argue that 16 and 17 year olds should be dealt with outwith the adult criminal court system, in specialist Youth Hearings (The Scottish Prisons Commission, 2008). The transition between childhood and adulthood was framed in terms of describing the margin where capacity shades into responsibility for one's own behaviour:

> Young people judged not fit to decide what films they can watch or what
> drinks they can buy are nonetheless held fully accountable for their actions in

adult court (The Scottish Prisons Commission, 2008, p. 29).

The complex nature of transitions was also noted by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), which recognised that a prison system, which had as its original purpose the containment of adult men, was not a suitable place for young men, even those over the age of 21. SPS observed that 'Many organisations providing services to young people in the community recognise youth or young adulthood as extending to age 24' (Scottish Prison Service, 2013, p. 96).

The challenging and sensitive nature of transition has also been identified in the debate about health inequalities when the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland noted:

> Youth is typically defined as a transitional and risky stage between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of experimentation…and one which spans key transitions. It is a period of considerable change and we must support young people to negotiate their way through… (Scottish Government, 2013, p. 2)

However, despite the fact that transition is occasionally overtly recognised by policymakers, services tend to be tied to age-related targets as discussed above, and do not accommodate transitions that are non-linear. For example, the movement from school into education, training or work has traditionally been seen as a key transition. In one study, commissioned by the then Scottish Executive, that investigated the transition paths of 23-28 year olds in the West of Scotland, a key predictor for facing unemployment at age 28 was having experienced unemployment at age 23 (Furlong, Cartmel, Biggart, Sweeting, & West, 2003). Despite this evidence, the *Post-16 Transitions. Policy and Practice Framework* that was subsequently produced by the government was restricted to 16-19-year-olds, with direct links to performance measurement:

> The success of post-16 transition planning will be measured on the basis of the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in learning, training or work…the National Indicator on positive post school destinations has been amended accordingly (The Scottish Government, 2012, p. 34).

By restricting the requirement for local authorities to target post-school support to those below the age of 20, it could be argued that Scottish policy fails to sufficiently accommodate the complexity of transitions. It appears that the policy imperatives of

economy and measurable outcomes superseded the evidence that some young people would need prolonged access to services in order to make a successful transition.

Therefore, although there is evidence that policymakers from across the spectrum are willing to signal an awareness and understanding of transition as an issue for young people, at the same time it does not appear to be a priority area for policymaking. This was clearly demonstrated in the strategy for young carers in Scotland, where it was acknowledged that, having reached the age of 18, young carers would not be eligible for ongoing support provided by young carers groups, despite the fact that they 'also don't feel that they fit in to the services provided…for adult carers' (The Scottish Government, 2010, p. 24). The report recommended that a strategy specifically for young adult carers should be developed. However, ultimately the young adult strategy was not considered to be sufficiently significant in relation to other government priorities and was never produced.[40] Nonetheless, in making the original recommendation, there was an overt recognition of young adults as a distinct group with needs that set them apart both from children and from adults. This is the liminal role of young people that is alluded to in other policies, but is rarely made explicit and is rarely supported by practical policymaking.

The argument advanced here is that young people in the throes of transition are sporadically visible in policy discourses, but tend not to be served by specific policymaking activity. Bearing these issues in mind, and to return the focus to young people affected by family imprisonment, the chapter will now consider in further detail how and where families affected by imprisonment appear in policy discourses in Scotland.

5.7 The policy discourse on families affected by imprisonment

In accordance with the broad definition of 'discourse' set out in the previous chapter, I have drawn from a variety of sources in order to identify the key policy discourses

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[40]In a monitoring report of 2014, it was confirmed that due to competing government priorities the strategy was not pursued http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00472469.pdf accessed on 8th February 2016.

surrounding families affected by imprisonment, and the young people within those families.

As noted in the Introduction to the thesis, recidivism and repeat imprisonment are important political issues in Scotland. There is a very strong desire to reduce the prison population, which has resulted in some key initiatives including the establishment of a Scottish Prisons Commission, which reported in 2008, and an ongoing Reducing Reoffending programme, linked to the National Performance Framework. The report of the Commission was unequivocal in stating that imprisonment 'should be reserved for people whose offences are so serious that no other form of punishment will do and for those who pose a threat of serious harm to the public' (The Scottish Prisons Commission, 2008, pp. 3,26). The Commission urged a reduced use of imprisonment, and a maximum prison population of 5,000 (p. 6).

In response to the Prisons Commission report, the Scottish Government published a paper, *Protecting Scotland's Communities. Fair, Fast And Flexible Justice*, in which it set out the ways in which the criminal justice system was already moving towards the vision outlined by the Prisons Commission (Scottish Government, 2008). The Government stated in the paper its willingness to create a justice system which would work towards 'helping offenders turn their lives around,' and would take the debate and the focus to wider social issues, stating:

> Underpinning our vision is this Government's commitment to transforming Scotland's approach to early years and early intervention. There is a critical part for the justice system to play in breaking the generational cycle of offending and poor outcomes (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 1).

Although this rhetoric affords the government, in its function of the justice system, a central role in breaking the cycle of criminality and deprivation, when it is linked to the notion of offenders 'turning their lives around' the government appears to abrogate that role in favour of making offenders responsible for their own desistance.

Using a similar rhetoric, the Reducing Reoffending Programme, in place since 2009, has the stated purpose of providing appropriate services so that 'prolific offenders can address their reoffending and its causes.'[41]

More recently, the Scottish Prison Service added to this discourse in an organisational review published in 2013 under the title *Unlocking potential, transforming lives* (Scottish Prison Service, 2013). The review was focused on the National Outcomes relative to justice within the National Performance Framework, and on the national Strategy for Justice (The Scottish Government, 2012). It also followed the recommendations for reform of public services contained in the Christie Commission report. The clearest summary of the aims of the report can be taken from the Chief Executive's introduction where he states:

> By taking an individualised asset-based approach we will continue to address risks and needs but also build on an individual's strengths and potential. By doing this, we will empower those in our care to unlock their potential and transform their lives (p 3).

In this way the organisational review was presented by the SPS as an opportunity for the service to facilitate change within individuals: not that the SPS would itself transform the individuals in its care, but that the individuals would be equipped to transform themselves. Thus, the discourse espoused by the prison service echoed that of the government and contributed to creating a dominant public discourse that offenders are individually responsible for their own rehabilitation. In this scenario, any failure of rehabilitation would not rebound as a failure of the institution, but would be a failure by the individual to reform her/himself. Thus, the close examination, or 'excavation' of policy rhetoric can reveal how policy statements can appear to serve one purpose while in fact achieving another. As Mackie and Tett (2013) observe:

> This makes the interrogation of policy essential in understanding how social justice is framed and how those in power seek to achieve their ends (Mackie & Tett, 2013, p. 390).

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[41] http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/policies/reducing-reoffending accessed on 15th April 2016

By extension a failure to reform arguably becomes a failure of the family, too. This arises because the policy discourse, as I go on to discuss below, also says that families can support offenders to desist from crime. A failure to reform, therefore would reflect back not just upon the offender but also upon her/his family. The national guidance for Criminal Justice Social Workers assessing offender circumstances for pre-sentencing reports states:

> The absence of positive influence and support in an individual's life could be a risk factor in terms of further offending. Conversely, the presence of supportive, anti-criminal family members can be a strength or protective factor in the individual's life. (CJSW, 2010, p. 30)

In this way, the ideal family is identified – they must be 'supportive' and 'anti-criminal.' This is just the situation theorised by Codd (2007) in her critique of the role of families in resettlement of prisoners in England and Wales: this rhetoric has the effect of 'deflecting issues of recidivism away from discussions of the failures of negative, disintegrative punitive practices' (Codd H. , 2007, p. 259) and instead makes families bear the burden of rehabilitation. Levitas, too, found the policy rhetoric that applied to 'Troubled Families' was liable to misinterpret the evidence with the result that families who were in fact multiply disadvantaged were conflated with, 'families that cause trouble' and as such were held to be responsible for their own misfortune (Levitas, 2012).

The discourse surrounding prisoners' families is linked to that which says that offenders are responsible for their own rehabilitation. Families are positioned as agents of change, who can be utilised to support and motivate prisoners to reform. This can be seen throughout the official discourse relating to prisons and imprisonment. For example, in 2013 the SPS produced a framework for encouraging family contact with prisoners that opened with the following statement:

> SPS recognises that children and families are hugely motivating factors that can influence behaviour change and is committed to working with families, community and voluntary sector partners in order to maintain meaningful family contact throughout a period of imprisonment.[42]

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[42] http://www.sps.gov.uk/Families/KeepinginContact/Keeping-in-Contact.aspx accessed on 25th January 2016.

The use of the dehumanising term 'factors' sits awkwardly in this sentence but it serves a clear purpose: it casts families as inanimate, as mere circumstances that have an instrumental bearing on an end result. It is the language of measurement and outcomes, which positions families as adjuncts to the criminal justice system. In this way, although the SPS appeared to commit itself to supporting the family as well as the prisoner, the support is predicated upon the potential for the family to influence the prisoner to change her/his behaviour.

A similar approach is evident in the criminal justice social work guidance. Here, it is noted that it would be 'helpful' to include details of family members in court reports (CJSW, 2010). As part of the same process, however, the guidance requires that the impact of a custodial sentence on the family 'must' be considered (p. 19). The reasons for interviewing families are not restricted to an assessment of impact, and a central focus of the interview is upon 'the potential for engaging the family in supporting and helping the individual to change' (p. 23). Alternating between what would be 'helpful,' what 'must' be done and who 'may' be included, the effect of employing inconsistent terminology is that the role of family members in the process is rendered uncertain. What the guidance does suggest is that criminal justice social workers who do take families into account ought to be assessing them in three ways – firstly to see whether the family is affected by the offending behaviour, then whether the family can provide support to help the offender change, and finally how the family might be affected by a custodial sentence. This directive casts the family into several roles, which they could conceivably occupy simultaneously: as potential victims, as agents for change, and as potential service users in respect of their own needs.

The rhetoric of families as agents of change has become normative. That is, it very often accompanies statements or guidance issued in relation to families affected by imprisonment, and it is restated in an authoritative way, as if it could not be open to question. For example, the Criminal Justice Family Support Network (CJFSN), a coalition of voluntary agencies that provide services to families affected by imprisonment, frames the issues around the needs of the prisoner and wider criminal justice agendas:

> The importance of the maintenance of family ties in reducing reoffending rates is largely recognised…Strengthened and supported, the outcomes for the family (and thus the prisoner) are improved (CJFSN, 2015, p. 3).

Although this use of language is constructed so as to be supportive of families, at the same time it co-mingles the issue of family support with the perceived benefits to the prisoner and with the reduction of reoffending, and it can thus be argued that this signifies that the CJFSN has adopted the government's criminal justice agenda. Similarly, despite presenting her arguments from a strongly child's-rights perspective, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) concluded that:

> Our system tends to view children as aids to the rehabilitation of their parents rather than as persons in their own right. It is wrong to see children *only* in that light, but it is nevertheless true that contact with their children and hopes for their future can be a powerful incentive to changing an offender's behaviour (SCCYP, 2008, p. 51) (original emphasis).

The Commissioner went on to state that: 'It is, potentially, a 'win–win' situation. If we respect the rights of these children we will also advance the rights of everyone to peaceful and respectful communities' (*ibid*). Although in the passage above the Commissioner criticised the fact that children as 'persons in their own right' were placed second to children as an aid to rehabilitation, the subsequent statement puts the rights of children into a conditional relationship with wider society (through the use of 'if'), linking the need for their rights to be respected with the 'gain' for society through successful prisoner rehabilitation.

SCCYP also discussed the issue of family bonding visits[43] when reviewing progress in the second report in 2011, noting that family bonding visits should be widely available, but also saying 'There is a compelling view that this is also in the 'operational interest of prisons' and a positive factor in promoting desistance from offending' (SCCYP, 2011, p. 26).

Thus, despite their roles outside the centre of government as advocates for vulnerable families, and for children, both the CJFSN and SCCYP endorsed, or made at best a qualified challenge to, the view that a key role of families is to aid the rehabilitation

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[43] That is, visits to prison under special circumstances that are more child-friendly, and where certain visiting rules are relaxed, enabling more physical contact, for example.

of the prisoner.

It is not to deny that there is a body of evidence in support of the contention that family contact appears to help prisoners to reduce reoffending, but arguably the failure to challenge this 'truth' is a missed opportunity to counter the narrative that families matter only in as much as they contribute to prisoner transformation and to the measurable objective of reducing reoffending. This exemplifies a situation where claims to truth are linked to issues of power: 'once a discourse becomes available culturally it is then possible for it to become appropriated in the interests of the relatively powerful' (Burr, 2015, p. 90). In this case, it does not matter to the various political actors why or how it is that offenders who have contact with family members appear to be more successful in their desistance from crime, it only matters that this is a discourse that can be called upon to support a claim that families of prisoners are deserving of support, even if the effect of operationalizing this 'truth' in this way is to diminish the personal rights of the individuals in the family and make their rights conditional upon successful rehabilitation. In a report dated 2014, an alliance of children's rights organisations in Scotland (Together) made just this point:

> Children's organisations report that the focus given to how families can help to prevent reoffending can sometimes be at the expense of a focus on the impact of offending on children and their families. There needs to be a wider acknowledgment that families affected by imprisonment, and especially children, are rights holding individuals. They should not be viewed merely as vehicles to reduce parental reoffending, rather they should be seen as individuals in their own right and receive support which is child-centred and focused on their individual wellbeing needs, in line with GIRFEC principles (Together, 2014, p. 54).

This problematic discourse also exemplifies what has been described as the 'co-operation or collaboration question' (Scott & Codd, 2010, p. 159), facing third sector organisations. Namely, the risk that the real needs of families in their own right are made secondary to the political agenda of government. As already noted, third sector organisations may find their position compromised if they are paid by government to provide direct services, and this may make it difficult for them to maintain the strongest of voices on behalf of the groups for whom they are advocating.

5.8 The place of families and young people affected by imprisonment in Scottish policymaking

Having noted that there is a complex policymaking landscape, populated by government, government agencies and third sector organisations, and having noted a paucity of policies relating to families affected by imprisonment, I now go on to consider instances where such families are actually visible in policy. This leads to a discussion of the way that families and young people are constructed and shaped by specific policy discourses.

As previously observed, families affected by imprisonment are not the responsibility of any one department of national or local government. Thus, the Robertson Trust (as the most prominent independent funder of voluntary sector agencies in Scotland) noted that, despite 'significant developments' in relation to supporting families, there was more to be done, and in particular public sector agencies should overtly recognise that the issues for families, 'cross over multiple departments including justice, social work, early years, health, education and employment' (The Robertson Trust, 2013). That is to say that, rather than being the responsibility of no-one, families are actually the responsibility of the many.

At the same time, the Robertson Trust urged public services to carry out a mapping exercise 'to identify gaps and potential duplication' (2013, p. 7). Since the Robertson Trust report, there has not been any mapping exercise carried out and although the issue of parental imprisonment was legislated for to a limited extent in 2016, other references to family imprisonment are more scattered. That said, the National Parenting Strategy does include reference to the impact of parental imprisonment (The Scottish Government, 2012), but it does so by making support to parents in prison conditional upon them reforming, and upon them preventing their children from becoming offenders, while at the same time problematising their children. In the section on parents in prison the strategy states:

> Together, the Scottish Prison Service and Scottish Government will consider ways of supporting families affected by imprisonment, looking at:

- Encouraging involvement between parents in custody and their children
- Providing targeted support for parents in prison to aid their reintegration and help them to deter their own children from offending behaviour (pp. 40-41).

The commitment is to 'support' families affected by imprisonment, firstly by increasing contact between children and the parent in custody. Although it recognises the importance of ongoing relationships, a critical reading of this commitment finds that it takes a narrow view of support, locating it entirely around the prison. It says nothing about ensuring the parent in prison is involved in schooling or health matters relating to their child, and offers a very restricted role for the imprisoned parent.

Secondly, support will be targeted towards the reintegration of the prisoner at the end of their sentence, and helping the prisoner to 'deter their own children from offending behaviour.' As previously observed, families affected by imprisonment are often cast into the role of agents for change, assumed to have the capacity to help offenders to desist from further offending. Here, that coin is flipped and it is suggested that prisoners as parents can be schooled as agents of prevention so that a future cohort of offenders can be diverted from criminal behaviour. This policy aim implies that intergenerational offending within families is a known risk. Furthermore, it places the children of offenders into both a 'risky' and an 'at risk' category. The policy spells out the risk that such children pose, that of becoming the criminals of the future. It also suggests that the children of prisoners are at risk of contamination by the criminality of their parent. In making these assumptions, the policy directs resources away from the individual needs of the children towards the needs of the criminal justice system. It is the 'justice family', (a phrase employed by the SPS in its organisational review (Scottish Prison Service, 2013)) not the actual family that will be supported.

As was noted in Chapter 3, the literature that finds there is an association between young people having a parent in prison and ending up in prison themselves does not claim to prove that it is the parental imprisonment itself that is the underlying cause of an apparent intergenerational effect of imprisonment. Therefore, policy

pronouncements that suggest there is a known causal connection are a misrepresentation of the evidence, similar to that found in the 'Troubled Families' research (Levitas, 2012; Shildrick, MacDonald, & Furlong, 2016).

Ultimately, the offer of support contained in the National Parenting Strategy disempowers parents who are in prison by limiting their role as parents, and by tying them and their children down to a prison and criminal justice locus. This contrasts to the stated aims of the National Parenting Strategy as a whole to be, 'all about valuing and supporting Scotland's parents as one of the single biggest ways of giving children the best start in life.' For imprisoned parents, there is no sense of being valued, rather that they pose a threat to their children's future. And while the National Parenting Strategy 'isn't about dictating to parents how to bring up their own children,' it is clearly directive towards imprisoned parents, whose primary duty should be to 'deter their own children from offending behaviour.'

Elsewhere, some local authorities, such as North Ayrshire, have written policies that include specific reference to children affected by parental imprisonment (Children's Services Strategic Partnership, 2014). It is an interesting point of contrast that the North Ayrshire example does not follow the same path as the National Parenting Strategy in that it avoids any use of language linking children of prisoners with the rehabilitation of their parents. There is also reference to family imprisonment among early years providers, but, as I go on to discuss below, the way that they frame the issue is problematic.

Notably, too, such polices as do exist are focused on the issue of parent-child relationships, omitting other key relationships such as siblings, partners and more distant relationships, despite the fact these may be significant within the individual family.

As observed by the Robertson Trust, imprisonment crosses over many departmental boundaries, and housing is one area of policy that is of vital importance to the resettlement of prisoners. Shelter Scotland provides a housing service to prisoners in Grampian, Perth and Dundee, called SPAN. When it recently evaluated the SPAN

service, Shelter Scotland noted that 'Relatives were often found to be a source of practical help and could be instrumental in saving tenancies' (Shelter Scotland, 2015, p. 18). It accordingly recommended that:

> Where possible, community justice practitioners should investigate whether relatives could help to prevent the end of tenancy e.g. through payment of rent, collection of mail, paying bills, checking security of property etc. (*ibid*).

In section 5.7 above it was noted that 'families' of offenders tend to be portrayed as being useful in supporting desistance and the Shelter report extends this by detailing the kind of practical support that relatives of prisoners could be asked to provide. In this role, families would have an instrumental function, which would serve the requirements of the prisoner. This represents a burden to relatives of prisoners, which they may or may not be able to manage. While third sector organisations do their best to support families who are willing to take up such a responsibility, the situation is ad hoc and there is no concomitant right of families to support, due to the lack of a national policy or of relevant legislation.

If the dominant discourse about family members is that they can be expected to be useful in such practical ways, it does suggest that they have the resources to enable them to fulfil such expectations. However, families are often also portrayed as being harmed by the process of imprisonment. The literature review in Chapter Three highlights the evidence that has emerged to show that prisoners' families suffer numerous pains of imprisonment. The Scottish Government in a recent announcement of funding for Prison Visitor Centres appeared to recognise such harms, noting that families face 'social and economic inequalities.' Although the funding commitment was said to be for the benefit of families, it was also made clear that the reason families were worthy of this investment was because they would help to drive down recidivism:

> Evidence shows that offering prisoners meaningful contact with their families can have a direct impact on reducing the risk of reoffending by up to six times.[44]

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[44] http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/-1-8-million-support-for-prisoners-families-1f81.aspx accessed on 26th January 2016.

Young people are almost never mentioned in their own right, but are instead subsumed into the general term, 'families.' However, in the same announcement on Prison Visitor Centres, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice made a rare direct reference to young people, beginning his statement with the following words:

> Working closely with families and young people in this way reduces inequality, promoting social justice and helps to break the cycle of offending in young people (*ibid*).

These words adhere to the principles of the Christie Commission, to reduce inequality and deliver social justice. However, the inclusion of young people in terms of the cycle of offending also served to make the point that, in the government's view, young people who have a parent in prison present a risk of becoming the offenders of the future. Such an overstatement of the risk, without a proper evidential basis, echoes Shildrick et al's (2016) observation that certain social policies over-emphasise the 'inevitability' that families will 'repeat the cycle of troubles down the generations' even in the face of evidence that such families are striving to achieve the very opposite for themselves (p. 832). Furthermore, the characterization of young people as the likely offenders of the future is a 'misrecognition' of young people, which obscures the personal difficulties and disadvantages they face and instead holds them responsible for their own 'failure.' Misrecognition of this kind occurs when:

> The individualised focus of contemporary policy leads to a variety of terms being used to describe young people who fall outside what are considered ideal subject positions established for 'mainstream' youth (Mackie & Tett, 2013, p. 396).

I argue here, that it is the application of terms such as 'offending,' 'reoffending' and 'cycle of offending' when describing young people in relation to a parent in prison, which leads to them being misrecognized as risky and liable to become the offenders of the future.

The construction of young people as risky is pervasive. Even early years providers make this link as the statement of the website of Early Years Scotland (a third sector organisation that receives more than 80% of its funding from national and local government) makes plain:

We recognise that the breakdown of family relationships when a parent is in prison can lead to a higher risk of re-offending and of children growing up to become offenders themselves.[45]

And, in a Parliamentary debate on the impact on babies and infants with a parent in prison, the Justice Secretary noted:

Almost half of the children of women in (*the national women's prison*) will go on to be prisoners [46]

Thus, there are two contrasting constructions of families affected by imprisonment. In research, and especially in reports produced by the third sector, families are seen to be harmed by imprisonment and to suffer socially, emotionally and financially. This evidence appears to be accepted by policymakers, but it is reflected back through policies that situate families as worthy of assistance only in so far as they can support offenders to reform. At the same time, young people, from the very earliest stages of their lives, are subjects of suspicion, being portrayed as risky and liable to become the offenders of the future.

It is notable that these policy statements have been made at a time when the rhetoric towards imprisonment and prisoners has begun to shift, as Chapter One alludes to. In respect of imprisonment, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice said in November 2015 that he wanted to introduce a 'new tone of the debate,' and 'a new approach,' with the aim that:

Prison, in particular short-term imprisonment, is used less frequently as a disposal: and where there is a stronger emphasis on robust community sentences focused on addressing the underlying causes of offending (Matheson, 2015).

The Chief Executive of the prison service also offered a new tone of debate, when he gave a speech in 2014, in which he criticised the tendency to 'label' offenders, and stated:

I believe if we are to break the cycle of re-offending, we need to challenge this perception; we need to convey that these people are individuals with their own hopes and aspirations; we need to argue for the transformational

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[45] https://earlyyearsscotland.org/about-us/services/working-with-children-and-families/young-children-affected-by-imprisonment Accessed on 24th June 2016.
[46] http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=9798 Accessed on 19th April 2016.

capacity of forgiveness and redemption.[47]

Such statements, emphasizing issues of social inequality and redemption, represent important public recognition that offenders are not 'the other,' and that there is a wider societal responsibility for their reform. However, the rhetoric in relation to prisoners' families has not benefitted from a similar change in tone.

That being the case, it is open to question whether the young people from families affected by imprisonment can identify and access suitable support services. The potential difficulties in relation to accessing and providing services are considered in the final part of this chapter. These issues are then revisited in Chapter Nine, in the light of the empirical evidence gathered from young people and professionals.

5.9 Providing services for young people

The Scottish policy environment should be conducive to the provision of comprehensive services to young people due to the consistent emphasis upon systematic and holistic approaches and early intervention. However, as discussed, there are obstacles, such as a confused approach to age-related service provision and a politically driven ambiguity about the interplay between the needs of young people and other perceived characteristics such as riskiness. In this final section of the chapter, the support needs of, and provision of services to, young people with a family member in prison are considered in the light of these issues.

5.9.1 Young people and barriers to accessing services

For a young person to seek out services, s/he would need to recognise that the service existed for her/his benefit. At the outset, the young person may self-identify with the generic term 'family.' But firm policies for families, or reports such as those published by SCCYP, tend to focus on parents and parenting. Legislation is similarly focused: the notification process envisaged by the recently enacted *Criminal Justice*

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[47] Speech on 5th June 2014.
http://www.sps.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?fileName=IFF+Speech+(05+06+14)+(2)2183_1311.pdf accessed on 23rd April 2016.

(Scotland) Act 2016 is only triggered if a parent is imprisoned, and if their child is below the age of 18. The primary, in the sense of being the only legally-defined, option for self-identification for young people affected by family imprisonment is therefore to be under 18 and have a parent in prison. In such cases young people only have an option to reflect on their own experience vis-à-vis their parent's behaviour, and the legislation places a duty upon the adults around the child to identify the child's existence to their Named Person: it does not bring any rights to the child.

As SCCYP observed (p107 above), imprisonment often casts young people into the role of carer. Young carers can find a positive identity in the policy documentation. The Scottish national young carers strategy acknowledges the positive role of the young carer:

> Some children and young people like being young carers. You have a good role within the home, which allows you to show your commitment and love to a family member. It can help you to gain skills and to become more grown-up and independent (The Scottish Government, 2010, p. 4).

To be a young carer is represented as being a virtue, and legislation has recently strengthened the position of all carers in Scotland, with the passage of the *Carers (Scotland) Act 2016*. There is a chapter of the Act devoted to young carers, setting out their entitlement to a young carer statement, which should contain identified outcomes, identified needs and the support owed to the young carer by their health board or local authority.

Unlike young people affected by family imprisonment, young carers are not described in terms that suggest that they should be taking on the role in order to achieve some other aim, such as relieving the health board or other local services of their duties. They are not considered as agents of change, so there is no suggestion that they have a role to play in shifting the dependency of their family member back onto the individual, even if the dependency is caused by, for example drugs misuse, which is cited in the strategy as one factor that may place the young person in the role of carer.

In practice, there may well be risks for young carers, but the language of the 'risk gradient,' a process whereby as they move through developmental stages young

people shift from being considered to be vulnerable and at risk to exhibiting 'problem' behaviour and becoming characterised as risky (Bancroft & Wilson, 2007), is absent from the policy document. Young carers are thus established in an entitled role, free from attribution of risk, and this sets them apart from young people with a family member in prison. Similarly, looked after young people are constructed as vulnerable victims of circumstances, as the CELCIS definition (p106 above) shows. If a young person has a family member in prison and is also a young carer, or has been looked after, they must have the ability to identify with the virtuous, vulnerable and rights-endowed status that is available to young carers and looked after young people more generally, rather than the risky, agent of change, identity that is more usually ascribed to the children of prisoners.

The literature review in Chapter Three notes that the stigma that attaches to families affected by imprisonment often acts as a barrier to them accessing help. It is possible, then, to suggest that if young people are aware that they are viewed negatively, it will act as a further deterrent, and will strengthen the need for service-providers themselves to reach out to young people.

5.9.2 The role of professionals in service provision

Professionals who offer services have to meet a number of policy imperatives. In the public sector all statutory duties must be fulfilled, services for children and young people must adhere to the principles of GIRFEC, and all services must contribute to targets set by the National Performance Framework. As public services draw on third sector organisations to supplement their service delivery, these factors also influence how professionals in the third sector offer and deliver their services, an issue explored in more depth in the empirical research for this thesis, especially Chapter Eight.

In principle, third sector agencies ought to be well placed to provide support in situations where it is important to develop a trusting relationship (The Robertson Trust, 2012). There is evidence to suggest that trust is an extremely important issue for young people: research carried out at Childline Scotland found that young callers

(aged 11-15), who were concerned about their parents' well-being, said that they did not seek formal help for reasons that included concerns about confidentiality and 'adults taking over control' (Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2012). Issues of trust were identified in a meta-analysis of the literature on young people leaving care, which found that a number of studies identified the importance of 'entering into a trusting relationship with those offering support,' yet becoming trusting was extremely difficult for the young people, 'since it requires them, once again, to make themselves vulnerable to being hurt. Young people may feel it is safest to trust only themselves' (Hiles et al, 2013, p. 2063):

However, a trusting relationship is not a given, and some young people make it clear that the sometimes fleeting support provided by a professional is no real substitute for the support of family and friends (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). A small study of young people leaving care found that 'professionals do not always know the truth as to how young people are feeling or how they are living' (Adley & Jupp Kina, 2014, p. 8), and in consequence this leaves the young people feeling 'isolated and without emotional support' (*ibid*).

Accordingly, there are real practical challenges for professionals who offer services to support young people. Some services are funded to work with strictly age-limited groups, for example. And, in respect of young people with a family member in prison, it could be difficult for professionals to identify who is affected, due to the absence to date of those young people from formal identification processes. There may also be difficulties in how to understand their needs and what support to offer, especially if the young people affected are usually only portrayed as having a key role to play in rehabilitating their relative, or as being at risk of becoming an offender themselves.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the techniques of discourse analysis to consider the language of numerous policy artefacts. Rather than taking policy pronouncements about families affected by imprisonment at face value, I have 'excavated' the terms

used, and considered their wider context. This exposes underlying themes, or discourses, whereby the Scottish Government appears to conform to its own imperative of social justice, but in fact leaves families affected by imprisonment in a vulnerable position and implicitly held to be responsible for their own misfortune. As a result, it is apparent that families of prisoners occupy a vexed place in policymaking in Scotland, representing something of an inconvenient truth for central government. This effectively means that while apparently listening to, and sympathizing with, those who point out the suffering that a term of imprisonment imposes onto the relatives of prisoners, the Scottish Government only offers conditional support that always links back to its own criminal justice agenda. The failure to engage unconditionally with the evident impact of imprisonment on families suggests that the underlying principles of government – efficiency, a commitment to social justice, and performance monitoring – enable the government to engage in rhetoric that gives the appearance of action, but is in fact designed to meet much more entrenched and costly problems such as high rates of imprisonment and recidivism.

The policymaking activity that relates to families affected by imprisonment is messy. In the absence of a top-down approach by government, third sector organisations step in to what is effectively a policy gap, not just to advocate for families, but also to compete to provide frontline services. Although third sector organisations undoubtedly offer invaluable support and a campaigning voice for families, their role is compromised by their practical concern with securing government funding. This dilemma enables the Scottish Government to give the appearance of supporting prisoners' families, while at the same time maintaining a political distance from them. The discourse that dominates policymaking, which third sector organisations themselves contribute to, is one in which offenders are individually responsible for their own rehabilitation and families are useful to the reducing reoffending agenda. If, as is argued here, the state demarcates the experience of families affected by imprisonment as an issue for which the state itself has no direct responsibility, then by stepping in to provide services the voluntary sector becomes complicit in this distancing exercise, whether willingly or by default.

The lack of a national strategy for families affected by imprisonment, and the adoption of flexible and discretionary approaches may accord with the principles of the Christie Commission, but in the case of families affected by imprisonment these approaches to policymaking are disempowering. If the focus is turned upon how young people are treated in policy terms, the apparent coherence of the GIRFEC agenda is seen to lose pace as young people move out of childhood into adulthood. A strong rights-based approach has arguably become diluted by a focus upon a less well-defined concept of well-being. Furthermore, age delimitation of policies creates a muddled middle ground in which young people, especially those who may not follow a linear path into adulthood, may well experience a deficiency of legal rights or services. Certain groups who are acknowledged to be vulnerable benefit from legislation, a nationally strategic approach, and bespoke agencies whereas young people affected by imprisonment are largely ignored. At the same time, when young people from families affected by imprisonment merit political attention this seems to be only because they are believed to present a risk of becoming offenders in the future. Therefore, although young people are likely to have multiple identities, the one that links them to a relative in prison is shown to be the least desirable.

In the following chapters, young people describe how having a family member in prison affected them, and professionals explain how they work with young people. These viewpoints offer an opportunity to consider the implications and adequacy of the policy stance towards the problem of family imprisonment. In turn, the analysis of the empirical data permits the policymaking activity to be looked at afresh, while the final chapter of the thesis provides an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the arguments framed here about policymaking are substantiated when considered alongside the lived experiences of people who are directly affected by relevant policies and policy discourses.

CHAPTER 6   Analysis of interviews with young people (1): how maintaining contact with a prisoner impacts upon feelings about the self and upon key relationships

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the 18 interviews I conducted with 14 teenagers and young adults. The young people and their family relationships under discussion are set out in Table 2 in Chapter Four.

The chapter begins with analysis of how the young people went about maintaining contact with their imprisoned relative. From this it becomes clear that there is a substantial amount of emotional work involved for families. There were several aspects of visiting the prison that raised questions of powerlessness: in particular, the absence of physical contact was concerning, and intrusion and contamination affected normal family relations, no matter how maintaining contact was attempted.

These observations are followed by an analysis of the relational impacts caused by the imprisonment, showing that the relationships of the young people with the prisoner, with wider family and in other contexts, such as the relationship with home (both as a physical place and as a conceptual space), were all significantly affected. In addition, the roles of the young people in relation to their family members, their friends and wider society, were disturbed by the imprisonment.

The chapter continues by considering the ways in which young people were harmed by the imprisonment, and in doing so, shows that the experiences of the young people bear some striking resemblances to the experience of prisoners. To illuminate the data, I draw from the sociology of imprisonment literature, especially that of Sykes and Goffman, the relevance of which has been discussed in Chapter Two. In conclusion the chapter draws together the ideas of identity and security, of loss and of trauma.

6.2 Maintaining contact with a prisoner: Visits

Although some families feel a sense of relief when their family member goes into prison, as noted in the literature review, many do still wish to maintain some form of contact. The issue of whether, and how, to maintain contact was of concern to the young people, and in this part of the chapter their discussion of visiting, writing and phoning their family members is explored.

Maintaining a relationship with an imprisoned family member is challenging for families, as discussed in Chapter Three. The interviews with the young people disclosed a variety of ways in which imprisonment intervened in normal family relations. But first, the young people reflected on the practical aspects of keeping in contact. Becky found it difficult to even access the prison, saying 'it was the worker that took us up to the visits and see if we didn't have that transport off them we wouldn't have got to see mum.' While, for Aaron, the lack of independent means to get to the prison meant he could not visit at all during his father's second sentence:

> Naw, I didnae get in, I couldnae get in there was nae way, naebody to take me up or get in.

For those young people who could make the journey to the prison, there were other obstacles. A word that cropped up repeatedly, and in the majority of the interviews undertaken, in relation to what young people generally felt about visiting prison was 'scary.' This meant that maintaining a relationship across the prison wall was something the young people achieved despite feeling afraid. Frances said that, in order to visit her mother, 'I kind of put myself through that to actually see her and it was the right choice I think, even though it was quite scary.' In Karen's experience, her parents 'made that decision' not to visit her brother 'the second time he went into prison.' Karen herself did want to 'get the train and go,' but she was 'shot down,' and was 'a little bit too scared to go.' The inability to visit her brother independently of her brother was disempowering. In addition, for Karen's family as a whole, visiting prison threw up questions about whether it was even a good idea to visit, as Karen explained. Karen's family discussion showed the interplay of concerns, not just for their own feelings of upset, but of how that would impact on their son and

brother, and whether visiting would actually make it harder for him to manage his sentence. The family members were thus aware that their own emotional state would have to be carefully managed:

> I remember the first one because my parents went up the first time and they came back really upset and then I went and was <u>really</u> (*Karen's emphasis*) upset, it was that kind of whole discussion 'oh well should, should we be going if we're all upset and he's just a kid in a big boys' prison?'…It wasn't the case at all cos it was the young offenders but you know there is that kind of, 'are we going to do more harm than good by being upset when he's trying to be a man?' which is really just crazy if you think about it.

Frances and Karen's thoughts about the effort required and the impact of visiting suggest that families who visit prison have to undertake considerable emotional work before and after visiting, as well as during the visit itself.

Once inside the prison, the rules that were enforced during visits meant there were limits on physical contact, which also impacted upon relationships. Tricia observed how 'impossible' it was for maintaining familial contact and she worried about how her parents could keep their relationship going without being allowed to have physical interaction, saying 'I do feel sorry for my mum and stuff cos you can't sit next to them, you can't hold hands or anything and I don't know how my parents have done it, how they've managed to…maintain a relationship because there isn't one.' Rosie also said that maintaining a relationship was 'impossible' and was critical of the way the prison regime limited physical contact:

> Obviously you could design it in a way that you're able to actually physically touch them maybe, like, or sit beside them or whatever, just the physical layout.

Physical contact among family members is part of normal family life, and any restriction on such contact will impact upon family relationships, as the young people observed. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that 'In the absence of any established security risk, a special regime that denies any physical contact between a prisoner and their visitors cannot be justified' (Scharff-Smith & Gampbell, 2011, p. 128). Touch has been identified as a way in which humans communicate a range of emotions (Hertenstein, Keltner, App, Bulleit, & Jaskolka,

2006), and the absence of physical intimacy has been identified as a potential cause of aggression in adolescents (Field, 2002). The lack of physical contact during visits should therefore be acknowledged as a significant issue for family members. Yet, although it is noted in the literature, its impact on children and young people is not discussed (Hairston, 2007; Brown, 2001).

Family visits in prison (also known as bonding visits), if available, were appreciated by the young people because they do allow more physical contact. Lynne noted that:

> With the family visits he's allowed to get up and walk around with us…And then in the normal visits we're not allowed to like hug him and that.

The young people thus showed that beyond the physical discomfort of the visiting arrangements they could see that the very act of visiting had potentially negative implications for maintaining family relationships. It was extremely difficult for the young people to feel comfortable in the visiting areas not just because bodily touch was restricted, but also due to the lack of privacy and the surveillance:

> When I first went up I just, och I didn't like it and it was just, it was horrible like, just people, just obviously you had the prison officers like staring at you and watching the room (Becky)

> No, I wasn't comfortable it's like as if someone's watching you…Even on a closed visit it's like someone's watching you still (Lewis)

> I mean there's loads of times that I went and would just burst out crying and it's really embarrassing obviously and then my family would be annoyed cos, you know like some girls' crying and everyone's looking and stuff (Rosie).

Goffman notes that the inmates of total institutions are subject to forms of 'contaminative exposure' (Goffman, 1961), which he said was an aspect of the 'mortification of the self' that inmates of a prison undergo. Specifically, Goffman suggested that such contamination occurred when, for example, personal information was gathered together in a patient record that would then be made visible to members of staff. In this way, intimate and private aspects of the self became exposed. The young people showed that they, too, felt their family contact to be contaminated by the prison regime, when they complained about their interaction with their relative,

which would otherwise be an intimate moment, being opened out to scrutiny by staff and others visiting the prison.

In addition, such feelings of surveillance are likely to be problematic for adolescents for whom instances that might be described as 'social evaluative situations' are prone to make them feel self-consciousness and to 'engage stress systems of the body' (Somerville, 2013, p. 124). A study of children and young people between the ages of eight and twenty-three showed that just thinking someone was looking at them was enough to heighten feelings of embarrassment, a response which reduced towards adulthood (Somerville, Jones, Ruberry, Dyke, Glover, & Casey, 2013). Thus, the visits had the potential to add stress and embarrassment to family interactions.

There was a further complication for the young people when they visited prison. The risk of becoming inured to the regime and environment of the prison was evident in many of the interviews:

> There was times we were just like oh, because it was the same people sort of thing so we were like, it's fine, it's OK (Frances).

> After a while I think you get used to it, you do get used to it (Becky).

> That's what I'm used tae, not that, all's that I love him otherwise I wouldnae be daein' it (Beth).

> At the time it's so like normalised and you go and you just accept, ok this is what happens (Rosie).

> It's a wee bit better now that I know the staff and that, they all talk away to me and that (Jane).

It is notable that, although there was agreement that visiting was something you could get used to, the young people were clear that it was still horrible, sad and not something you should get used to:

> But you shouldn't have to get used to that sort of thing (Frances).

> You're like, how could people live their life like this, like, honestly. I don't think I, I don't think I could ever be in a prison, me personally (Becky).

But I think it's quite sad that that's what I'm used tae daein' (Beth).

You think like 'oh well it shouldn't be any nicer than this' but really no family member should have to go through that visit (Rosie).

It's still horrible going up (Jane).

Because they retained their awareness that prison was not 'OK,' it was apparent that normalisation was in fact resisted. Prisoners are at risk of taking on the mores of the prison to such an extent that they become 'prisonised' (Crewe, 2007). Comfort has also argued that the process of prisonisation affects women who are regular visitors to prison, so that they become victim to 'secondary prisonisation' (Comfort, 2007). Here, the young people showed that, although there was a risk to them of a degree of prisonisation, they were nevertheless able to hold out against the reach of the prison, in this respect at least, and thereby 'resist the pull' (Goffman, 1961).

It might be assumed that contact undertaken at a distance, such as letters and phone calls, would be free from the complications of surveillance and contamination but, as the following discussions show, this cannot be assumed and the prison regime can reach into family relationships in a myriad of ways.

6.3 Maintaining contact with a prisoner: Phone calls

A small number of American studies have investigated the best ways for family members to stay in touch. These studies find that contact by mail is more common than by visiting (Poehlman, Dallaire, Loper, & Shear, 2010). However, such studies are most often conducted from the standpoint of the prisoner, and with a view to measuring the effect of contact upon reentry and recidivism (for example; La Vigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2005). Few studies approach the problem from the perspective of the family member. Perhaps that is why the evidence provided by the young people interviewed for this thesis suggests that remote contact with prisoners is more of a mixed blessing.

For Jane's daughter, who 'was only 4 or 5 months when he got the jail,' the phone was an important way for her to build up a relationship with her father, Jane's partner:

> He phones and that and she'll go away into the room, she'll talk to him on the phone and that. She knows who he is…so just trying to keep her acknowledging as much as possible, you know, just, don't want her to be forgetting, obviously.

In other situations, telephone contact was valued. Aaron recalled that his father 'used to phone me all the time fi there.' Megan also had a lot of phone contact with her partner:

> I'm on the phone to him a' the time…He phones me like well most of the time. He phones me like at night time, in the daytime…

However, telephone contact also had the potential to be distressing:

> There was phonecalls as well but em, you earn something like a prison wage or something so it's you have to pay phonecalls and obviously it's not going to be cheap so you can't speak for long and if you want to speak to them (*crying*) there's only a limited amount of time (Frances).

> I can't ring him, I can't, like, he has to call me and even then I might be in lessons or especially when…the signal was really bad and when you miss a call it's… literally devastating…I speak to him for two minutes maybe once every two weeks, it's really difficult (Tricia).

The short length of the phone calls was a clear source of upset and frustration for Frances and Tricia, and also for Beth, who said that, at ten minutes per call, 'It's dead restricted.' Paul, meanwhile, refused to accept phone calls from his father: 'He phoned and it says 'this is a call from her majesty's prison' or something, 'do you want to accept this call?' and that was it, I just hung up, I never spoke to him.' The forewarning that the call comes from a prison was something that Liam also highlighted:

> When I was maybe six, seven year old and we were meant to go on holiday and then say two weeks later my dad was in prison, my mum used to always tell me he was away working, away working down south and then eh, one day we actually got a phone call from my dad and I've answered the phone and it says "HMP (*prison*)" and it's like right, so… I realized then and then that's when everything just kind of went downhill.

In Liam's family, the impact of the prison notification preceding the call was significant as it removed from the adults in the family the option of keeping Liam's father's true whereabouts a secret. It also brought the fact of his father's imprisonment to Liam's attention in a sudden way, for which he was unprepared.

Taken together, these comments present an entirely mixed picture of telephone calls. Whereas for some young people the call would be unwelcome, for others a call was valued. In reality, the young people showed that normal interaction by telephone just was not possible because of the immediate reminder that the call came from prison, restrictions of time and money, and the one-way nature of telephone calls from prison. Ultimately the phone calls, even if they were welcome, seemed to underline how far the young people lacked control over when and how to maintain contact with their family member. Loss of control is a recurring issue in the data, and it bears echoes with the deprivation of autonomy identified by Sykes, who noted that 'the restricted ability to make choices' had to be included as one of the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958). The implications of loss of autonomy for young people are discussed further below at section 6.5.2.

6.4 Maintaining contact with a prisoner: Letters

In a study where it was suggested that letters provide a means of communication that is positive, and which also asserted that no study found mail contact to be negative, it was stated that:

> Letters and phone calls may remove some of the potentially negative aspects of visitation settings. Parents have control over the content of letters and can plan and anticipate what their children may need to hear in ways that are not available to them in a noisy or unpredictable visitation environment (Poehlman, Dallaire, Loper, & Shear, 2010, p. 590).

While that may be true of studies undertaken amongst prisoners, it is again a less settled picture that emerges when young people themselves speak about this. In some respects, letters were felt to be positive: Beth 'looked forward' to letters as much as to phonecalls, and Karen mentioned that her brother would write sometimes during a period when she was not able to visit him. Tricia's father was an active

correspondent with Tricia's boyfriend with letters taking the place of normal family interaction. Tricia observed that:

> You know your dad usually gives like the scary talk, like 'if you harm my daughter…' but obviously he can't do that,

and, therefore, the chance for her father and her boyfriend to communicate through writing letters was welcomed, as she said her boyfriend was 'great about it' and had himself taken the decision to 'write to my dad.'

In these instances, letters helped to bridge the gaps in family communication that imprisonment opened up. However, there were also occasions where letters made a poor impression, or caused distress, for a number of reasons that seemed to go to the heart of family relationships. For example, Frances said:

> We wrote letters to each other but writing letters obviously the person has to read it before your mum gets it to make sure there's no 'items' inside or anything…but it was kind of like, there's a middle man always to even speak to your own mum…It was good to keep in touch but it just didn't seem the same knowing that someone else has read your letter.

Frances here described a situation where her communication with her mother was open to the scrutiny of a stranger, and was thereby subject to Goffman's 'contaminative exposure' noted above (Goffman, 1961): even though Frances was outside the prison, the sense that she had of intrusion and contamination was similarly felt.

For other young people, the invasion of privacy was not the key issue; but rather, the letters gave the prisoners an opportunity to create a narrative that the young people did not find credible:

> I started getting letters from my dad from a young age telling me that he'd done wrong. And basically he didn't tell me what he had done but then he told me that he had done wrong and he was in prison and then he said he'd be out in like two weeks and in fact it could be like two years. So I used to wait and say '…my dad's coming home in two weeks' and it used to take a couple of years and then one day he'd just turn up at the door. Expecting everything would be all right (Liam).

> I got a couple of letters and that was it. Just birthday cards, Christmas cards, things like that…he didnae sound bothered about it, do you know? It was just a small piece of paper, no bigger than that, with just a couple of sentences on

it really…he thought everything would be fine and we would still all be speaking to him, do you know what I mean? We'd still go and visit him and things like that but he didn't want to deal with it. He was in denial about everything (Paul).

Liam's father admitted some wrongdoing, whereas Paul's father was 'in denial', but the effect on both young men was the same in that the letters did not improve relations between father and son. Instead they had the opposite effect of making the young men feel that their fathers could not be relied upon, nor did their fathers appear to appreciate the impact of their behaviour, including its impact on their sons. Ultimately, the effect of the letters was to reinforce the decision taken by each of these young men not to visit his father in prison.

6.5 Relational impacts of imprisonment

The foregoing analysis shows that whatever steps were taken to maintain contact, imprisonment affected familial relationships. In this section of the chapter those relational impacts are explored in more depth. The impact of the imprisonment played out among the young people in some complex ways that linked to their feelings about their self-identity, as well as their identity in wider society. The data show how the sentence had implications for the relationships between the young people and their relatives, for wider family relationships, and for relationships outside the family. The extent to which young people could assert control over their various relationships was significantly impacted and in addition, settled roles became uncertain and had to be revised.

6.5.1 Relationships between the young people and the prisoners

The young people discussed how they had to reconcile the fact that they were seeing their family member in an alien environment. Lewis talked about visiting his father as being something he wanted to do: 'I had to have the choice to go to see my dad.' However, once he was with his father in the prison, the relationship was impacted:

I just wouldn't talk…I think it's just seeing him in there, it's something to do with that…I didnae think he would go in there at all.

Frances also found encountering her mother in the prison to be alienating. She said the visits involved being in a room with 'murderers' and 'rough people,' and felt this had changed her mother, saying that when her mother came home 'it was as if she was like another person because (*crying*)…the people in there.' Tricia's father appeared to be aware of how his daughter might feel on her first sight of him as a prisoner and he made a joke of his prison 'bib' at their first meeting in the prison:

> My dad, like my dad's a joker and he had this, so they have to wear, it depends on the prison and what day it is as well, but they have to wear these bib things. And I walk in and he's like 'I finally made the netball team,' cos he had this bib on. And I was like, 'God, he's such an idiot' but I was really worried because I didn't want to cry in front of my dad.

However much prisoners have to adapt to the prison environment, the young people showed that there was also an important adaptation for them to make when they saw their relative in the prison, and Tricia's was the only account that referred to how the prisoner might try to manage the situation. How prisoners manage their identification as a prisoner in their family interactions is a complex issue, which some prisoners resolve by refusing visits. Dixey & Woodall (2012), for example, found it was 'fairly common,' among the prisoners in their study not to allow their children to visit. Some of those prisoners took the approach, like Jane in the present study, not to disclose the truth to young children: 'it's no as if anybody's ever told her where she's going, it's just work, daddy's work, that's what she thinks she's going to' (Jane).

At the same time as they had to reassess their relative's identity as a prisoner in the context of visits, outside the prison the young people had to deal with jibes that reduced a mother, a brother or a father to the essence of the offence that had been committed:

> I just remember the names you used to get called, like, you used to get told your mum's a junky (Becky).

> I've still got a recording on my phone, like, someone sent me a voice message saying your brother's a beast (Carly).

> There was this group of girls and then they'd be, like, your dad's a murderer, why did your dad kill the boy? (Lynne).

Each young person was therefore not only visiting their relative, but was contending

with their relative as a prisoner and as an offender of a quite specific type, such as 'junky' or 'beast'. As discussed below, there was a significant difference between those young people who accepted the offender labelling and those who resisted it, but in either case, the immediate impact of such labelling was to add another layer of complexity to the intimate family relationships.

6.5.2 Relationships outside the prison, and loss of control

Having a relative in prison not only impacted on the relationship the young person had with the prisoner, but it also affected other relationships. If the young people tried to mitigate the situation by concealing the imprisonment, it had implications for how they felt about themselves and their relationships with others. Concealment involved performance, or 'impression management' of the kind envisaged by Goffman (1959), whereby actors will endeavor to create a 'favourable' image of themselves in the minds of others. To achieve this, the young people found that they had to present some sort of front, and their true self was hidden:

> I was walking round like trying to act normal sort of thing but something's eating away at side of me (Frances).

> I know how I felt, I used to put on this front do you know, like 'everything's fine I'm dealing with it all right, everything's Ok' when you're not, you're crumbling inside (Paul).

> It used to be this really big deal when I had friends or anything because I felt like they didn't fully know me until I did tell them but at the same time I couldn't just say that on the first meeting (Rosie).

Although the young people were presenting an appearance of normality, they were conscious that this was inauthentic, and their true feelings were not knowable unless or until the secret was revealed. Goffman's theory of performance highlights the effort required to maintain such a front, as well as its fragility:

> We must be prepared to see that the impression of reality fostered by a performance is a delicate, fragile thing that can be shattered by very minor mishaps (Goffman, 1959, p. 63).

The young people could not, in fact, keep the imprisonment of their relative a secret. Carly felt totally exposed, saying that 'the whole wide UK' knew about her brother's

case. Frances felt that, although some people knew about it, knowledge of her mother's imprisonment was 'kinda kept within the range that we wanted to know,' although she also said her sister's 'toerag friends' were speaking about it, so it was apparent that, in reality, the sentence was more widely known than she would have liked. Liam found that 'my dad would be in the papers so would my mum being at court, going to jail and stuff and then people were kind of starting knowing my business.' Their efforts at concealment, or at managing the flow of information, appeared to be hopeless, and once again the young people suffered a loss of control as a result.

These instances of powerlessness arose at a time when ordinarily young people would be striving to become more autonomous, as part of their development towards adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Powerlessness is generally defined as 'the subjective sense of being unable to achieve goals since outcomes are determined by forces external to one's self, such as powerful others, fate, luck or chance' (Ross & Mirowsky, 1987, p. 257). Prevention of such powerlessness and having control is crucial in militating against levels of distress (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003). In a study examining substance misuse in teenagers, it was observed that 'life events that are undesirable and uncontrollable create a sense of loss of personal control in the teenager,' which in turn can lead to a sense that life is meaningless (Newcomb & Harlow, 1986, p. 574). From the interview data under analysis here, it can be seen that the young people experienced a loss of control on a number of fronts, and they were therefore exposed to a sense of powerlessness and its attendant risks.

It appeared that lack of control meant that there was no way of the young people compartmentalizing their lives so that the imprisonment could be contained and kept separate. This is similar to the kind of 'desegregation' of life that Goffman identified for those in psychiatric hospitals, where forms of communication that would normally be kept separate, such as letters or other interactions in 'civic society', are, as noted above, gathered together against the patient's will, and are read as one file to create a commentary on the patient (Goffman, 1961). The awareness that life has become desegregated would, according to Goffman, mean that the patient would require to 'constantly look over his shoulder' to avoid further criticism or sanction

(Goffman, 1961, p. 43).

In a similar way, and despite their efforts to exert control over the situation, the prison sentence imbued all of the relationships that the young people had. Relations with other family members were among those most significantly affected, and often this was manifested in the way that the young people tried to support and protect other family members. Tricia, for example, felt a duty to protect her mother:

> I almost, like, adopted my dad's role, if that makes sense? Cos I knew that my mum would be suffering more than I would be.

Lynne protected her younger sister, even at a cost to herself: 'my sister would get upset and then I kept getting into fights.' And for Frances, the family at home found that, in her mother's absence, 'it was very different but I think that everyone kind of took their role sort of thing, like everyone knew what to do sort of thing/ slash had no idea.' Frances seemed to be saying that there was both adjustment and confusion going on within the family as they all tried to function without her mother being there.

In some families, the effect of the prison sentence was to bring them closer together. For Rosie, the sentence revealed to her the family strength:

> I feel like definitely now with my mum and dad certainly, and other members of my family, my extended family that helped so much that, like, the type of relationship we have now is so strong because of what happened, because we know what we've been through.

Paul also felt his family was strengthened, even although their collective decision was to cut off contact with Paul's father: 'we kind of came together after everything happened…and we're closer together.' However, not all families bonded in the face of adversity and the prison sentence could raise expectations that the young people would receive support among the wider family, creating disappointment or disillusion if those expectations were not fulfilled:

> Basically I wasn't supposed to have (*younger brother*) at the weekends. Basically, this house was supposed to be shut down at the weekend and I was either supposed to be at my gran's or stay at my best friends so I wasn't supposed to be here but none of that happened. He wasn't, he was here near enough every weekend…and even at that when he went to see my gran, no when he went to stay with my gran after the 10 months basically my gran told

my (*organisation*) worker that she didn't want me in her house (Becky).

The failure of the family to behave as expected, and to provide support to the young people had a longer-term impact on family relations. Becky noted that her grandmother's failure to help her look after her brother had implications that lasted after her mother was released, saying 'some of that still comes up so it's more issues within the family.'

Lynne also experienced a failure of her family to cohere in the face of the prison sentence:

> No-one's made the effort with him (*Lynne's dad*) since he's been in. Like he's been in for 6 years and my uncle got the jail last year and he gets visits like twice a month but my dad doesn't get for every couple of months and he's been in longer…and then (*aunty*) only goes up if there's a visit for (*uncle*) as well, so if it's just a visit for my dad she's like 'there's no point going up.' But if it's just for (*uncle*) she'll go up.

As a result, Lynne felt that her family would fragment after her father was released: 'I think when my dad gets out he'll separate hisself from the family.' Therefore, the ramifications of the prison sentence rippled out, not just widely into family relationships, but also temporally, in that the way the family would function in the future, even beyond the term of the sentence itself, was liable to be affected and changed. For Lynne, this introduced a greater degree of uncertainty about the future. In addition, relying on 'wider kin' for support is often a way for young people to get by in difficult situations (Bancroft, Wilson, Cunningham-Burley, Backett-Milburn, & Masters, 2004) and if family relations are strained, this reduces the range of supports available to young people.

6.5.3 Role revision

Even where families did not fragment, the young people experienced a form of role revision within the family, and in relation to their friends or wider society. Frances is quoted above as saying that the absence of her mother caused confusion within the family, and she also said that when her mother went to prison, 'my older sister she

was kind of like the motherly role so we were all like, oh what do we do, we ask (*sister*).'

The young people also found they had to take on adult responsibilities:

> My parents they were always taking drugs and abusing it and never looking after us really, so, and I was always looking after my little brothers and sisters at the time, so I kind of got annoyed a bit cos I was you're only wanting to go out with my mates and stuff and I couldn't cos I was looking after my little brothers and sisters, feeding them and bringing them to their beds and stuff. So I just kind of had enough (Liam).

> If they've thought that I'm the oldest so they're going to look up at me aren't they? So I'll need tae, well, try and influence them an' all (Aaron).

> Then it was just me and (*brother*) and I was still at school as well so it was quite difficult trying to look after a child, run a house and go to school being only 16 (Becky).

> When I stayed with (*aunt*) it was, I was the oldest so I had to do most of the like cleaning and that (Lynne).

These examples show the young people being given practical tasks such as putting children to bed or running a house as well as trying to offer a positive role model to younger siblings even when, as Liam said, he would have preferred to go out. Backett-Milburn et al describe this kind of 'parentifying' of children as something 'borne of necessity and not necessarily welcomed,' which disabled children from making choices about how to enact their own childhood (Backett-Milburn, Wilson, Bancroft, & Cunningham-Burley, 2008, p. 467).

In other instances, young people took on emotional responsibility for the adults around them. Sometimes this was the adult in prison, but at other times it was for an adult at home. Tricia took on responsibility for both. In the case of her father in prison she said:

> I didn't want him to think that it was because of him. I've never wanted him to think that because I know that I don't blame him for anything. Like, it's not his fault at all and I just, I really, really don't blame him and I'd never want him to think that I've suffered because of it. I never want him to think that.

In respect of her mother at home, Tricia said, 'I knew that she would be suffering more, em, so I sort of wanted, didn't want her to think that I was really upset cos I knew that would upset her more.' Tricia therefore felt responsible for the emotional well being of both of her parents. The consequence of this was that Tricia 'literally just felt like I couldn't talk to anyone about it,' a loss of voice that is discussed below (p158-160).

The requirement to visit prison on a regular basis interrupted some of the rite of passage pursuits that teenagers would otherwise enjoy. For Karen this meant losing her weekend job:

> We used to go on a Sunday, cos I remember that I had started a job at the weekend and then I had to give it up if I wanted to see him because they wanted, well, that was the only days you could work as a kid.

Jane, meanwhile, wanted to join 'all my pals' by going 'on holiday to Magaluf,' but she could not: 'because of his insecurities in there and that and because of the way he feels I'm missing out on that, you know?' She also felt that she missed out on socialising with her friends:

> It's horrible as well when you're hearing people just 'aw, we're going out the night' but you cannae go cos, you know, you've got a visit, and it's every Friday night so…'

For both Karen and Jane a sense of obligation meant they had to forego something other young people would be able to do as a matter of course. Their roles as ordinary teenagers were affected, the routines of the prison entered their personal lives, and they were subjected to the kind of secondary prisonisation observed by Comfort when she studied the lives of women visiting San Quentin prison (Comfort, 2007).

6.6 Trauma, stigma, and loss

The foregoing data analysis shows that the impact of imprisonment upon the young people was to affect their self-identity and their relationship to the prisoner and others. However, it also appeared to impact upon them by causing them emotional harm, which could be described as traumatic, as well as occasioning them to lose

their liberty, to lose control and to lose their voice. The next part of the chapter explores these issues more closely.

6.6.1 Voicing trauma

The interviewees as a whole often described the feelings evoked as being "horrible", and both their personal situations and the prison environment were described by many of them as "weird". In many cases the young people used language that usually signifies something breaking. These include Becky's use of the term "cracking up", Paul used the words "crumbling" and "broken", and Jane said when she heard what her partner had done it was "shattering". Frances said that when her mother returned home on a tag she was "like a glass", signifying how brittle and breakable her mother had become.

Paul's reaction to learning about his father's crime was "the worst pain possible", and it was "stomach hurting pain." Jane, Karen and Paul all used the term "raw" to describe how they felt. For Frances, the feelings were also "eating away" inside her. The use of words that convey an image of something corrosive and deep within creates a strong sense of the intensity of the pain being experienced.

At one point of the interview, Jane's inner turmoil became evident:

> I would have been raging if I'd have gave up on him and then waited the two year and he got out and he was great. I'd have been raging you know for if at the start I just says 'oh, I don't want tae,' cos I do love him you know. Seeing it's the wean's dad and that, I'd rather be with him than anybody else, you know, I'd rather be wi' the wean's dad. So I would have been raging…But I just tellt myself 'come on'…I just kept telling myself 'he gets out in two years time' and if I didnae gi' things a go wi' him I would be gutted, you know because if he was all right when he got out.

These words express a mix of anger, love and hope, but also show how contingent and uncertain Jane felt her situation to be. When he revisited Sykes' pains of imprisonment, Crewe added the pains of uncertainty and indeterminacy, noting that these create feelings of 'anxiety and tension' in prisoners, and threaten their sense of identity and security (Crewe, 2011), chiming with Jane's experience.

The stories that the young people told through interview are not just stories of emotional hurt, but I contend they are more than that: they are stories of trauma. The young people experienced the sorts of emotions that Condry identified when she examined the reactions of families of serious offenders to the discovery of their relative's offence, and which one of her interviewees likened to the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (Condry, 2007).

6.6.2 The enduring nature of trauma

Some of the young people were living not just with the past or present, but also with anxiety about what the future might hold. Their reasons for fearing the future were extremely varied. For Jane, it was an abiding concern that her partner might make a mistake once out on licence, and might end up back in jail: 'that's another worry, that he's going to be out on licence you know cos he'll no be able to dae nothing, it's just going to be a worry.'

For some, there was uncertainty about having to deal with imprisonment and all of its implications again in future. Beth's partner was involved in fairly frequent offending, by her account, and she could not see when it all might end, saying 'I cannae really pin when it might end or when it might no end or whatever.' And Paul had been contacted about a possible further prosecution and this was hanging over the family:

> So it's like you're trying to brace yourself for it - 'oh what if it's in the paper, how am I going to deal with it? If somebody says this to me, how am I going to deal with that,' do you know what I mean? It's trying to get yourself ready again, like if it happens again.

For others, it was not that they thought the offending would recur, but that they envisaged their reputation would never recover. Becky said:

> To most people around here I'm always going to be the girl that her mum was in prison, I'm always going to be that girl.

Furthermore, the trauma suffered was not merely occasional, only arising at the point of visiting prison, for example. Throughout the absence of the imprisoned family

member, the young people were likely to be filled with a sense of loss, which could be likened to bereavement. Becky said that it felt 'as if someone had died.' This feeling put her into a state of grief: 'you still went through all those grieving processes.' A complicating factor for Becky was that her grief was not acknowledged because:

> Some people used to turn round and say to me, 'I don't understand why you get so worked up about it because there's people out there that actually they're not going to see their mum or dad again.'

Rosie also described her brother's absence from the home as like a bereavement:

> Obviously the first thing that comes to mind is obviously just the loss of someone you love, because it is like a loss. I mean, it's funny cos I remember when I was younger my mum used to say things like, 'well it's not as if your brother's died or anything' but it feels like that a lot of the time.

Although Rosie elsewhere described her family as being close, this quote shows that her mother, who may have been trying to make things better, failed to acknowledge Rosie's grief when she pointed out that Rosie's brother was not actually dead.

Both Becky and Rosie described the experience of disenfranchised grief, and of ambiguous loss, which are discussed in Chapter Three. In ambiguous loss theory, the enduring nature of the emotional suffering is concerning. Because of its long-term nature, 'those who experience it…become physically and emotionally exhausted from the relentless uncertainty' (Boss, 1999). Boss categorises incarceration as one of the 'catastrophic events' that contributes to ambiguous loss. She indicates that families who are subjected to this in the long term are liable to severe stress that 'will make vulnerable even the strongest of families', and children subject to such long term stress may carry its effects into adulthood (Boss, 2002).

The routine of prison visiting ensures that the sense of loss is felt repeatedly, and thus prison visitors are traumatised over and over. This was observed by several of the young people:

It's OK, obviously you're happy when you see your boyfriend but you just want to go hame and like just take him hame wi you and nae get him back there. No joking (Megan).

Q: And what do you think was the thing that you all found so upsetting when you saw him there?
Karen: Em, probably just the fact that you had to leave.

I think it's just when you're only getting to see somebody for an hour and then you've got to leave them, it's, it doesnae get any easier at the time you're leaving (Beth).

The young people expressed happiness at being able to see their family member, yet there was no choice but to leave them, an emotional process that recurred at every visit. Arditti identifies 'repeated interactions' with prisons through the regime of visiting as one of several factors that perpetuate and deepen trauma (Arditti, 2012b).

6.6.3 Stigma

The evidence of stigma, shame, and a feeling of being judged by others about their situation were apparent in the interviews. Jane felt 'kind of embarrassed about, kind of… You know as if they were kind of talking about me.' And Liam said he was 'slated' for the way his parents had acted but he wanted people to 'realise nowadays as well still, that I'm nothing like them at all.' Paul had similar thoughts, saying, 'people associated you with, like, his prison sentence, his crime that he's done cos he's like that you must be the same being his son. And it's not even close to the truth.'

Two of the young men, Liam and Paul, had plans to leave Scotland in order to escape the 'stigma by association' (Goffman, 1968) that they felt was dogging them:

Move away from Scotland, you know just have a completely different life where I can start afresh and nobody's really bothering me cos wherever I go something like I'm a new person there so they'll not know anything that's happened or stuff like that, I can just be a complete new person (Liam)

Just get out of here, Scotland, do you know what I mean just get away from everything, kind of like starting again pretty much. (Paul).

Whereas none of the female interviewees spoke about wanting to leave Scotland to start afresh, they did talk openly about the effects of stigma. Karen explained her parents' reason for not alerting the school to her situation:

> I can see why my parents wouldn't have told the school for one it's probably always that kind of the fear of judgment because it's a young person that's in prison, you know there's always that kind of 'well you done something wrong,' so you're not going to tell the school about it.

For similar reasons, Frances did not feel able to talk to anyone about how she was feeling:

> You want people to know so you can speak about it but you don't want to have them thinking all these questions, be like 'oh, your mum's done such and such.'

Thus, stigma clearly operated to prevent both Karen and Frances from seeking support that may have been available to them. As has previously been observed, stigmatisation also prevents families from feeling that their loss is legitimate, thereby enhancing their ambiguous loss (Arditti, 2012a). Thus, stigma has both practical and emotional consequences, and can contribute to the traumatization of those affected by it.

6.6.4 Loss of liberty

Sykes of course articulated loss of liberty as one of the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958). The following analysis shows that young people enacted their response to their situation by undertaking a form of self-imposed confinement. Indeed, one of the strongest unifying themes across all of the interviews was in the way that the young people responded to the immediate impact of imprisonment itself by confinement. Carly withdrew from school and simply 'slept,' and Becky also 'stopped going to school' and would 'just lie on the couch.' Other interviewees took similar avoidance action:

> I shut myself away and kept myself to myself and just…cried a lot (Frances).

> I just kind of disappeared, I just kind of kept myself to myself, I didn't speak to anybody, I didn't really leave the house like at my mum's. I stopped going to college, I just kind of shut down, I just shut off the world pretty much (Paul).

> People were kind of starting knowing my business so then I just kind of, kind of left it for a bit and only went to school and then just kind of go home and sit in my room play on the computer where nobody could get to me (Liam).

Liam said he responded in this way so that 'nobody could get to me' and Paul said a similar thing: 'I think that's why I spent a lot of time in the house because that was an area where I felt I was safe, it was like a comfort zone'.

It seems then, that at a time in their development when, as noted in Chapter Two, young people should be reaching out and making new connections as part of their emerging identity (Erikson, 1968), the imprisonment of a family member had the opposite effect, and made the young people feel less free, less safe in their interactions with others, and more inhibited.

6.6.5 Loss of voice

In Chapter Three I suggest the links between loss of voice and self-silencing. In the interviews I conducted there was evidence that the young people's voices had become lost at an individual level, for a variety of reasons, as the data below show. The invalidation and dismissal of feelings by others that is inherent in loss of voice chimes with Sykes, when he noted that one of the most painful aspects of imprisonment is the moral rejection of the prisoner by wider society (Sykes, 1958).

As noted above, Tricia chose not to let either of her parents know of her distress in order to avoid them getting upset or blaming themselves for her suffering and she kept quiet among her peers when she moved school: 'He kind of like had just gone to prison when I went to that school and that was something that was really difficult for me to deal with and I couldn't talk to anyone about it.' Other young people also kept quiet. Frances chose not to tell her guidance teacher at school because she did not want to 'open a big can of beans and then start it all again,' suggesting that she felt that she could control the situation better by not talking.

Aaron showed distrust for speaking to authority figures at school:

> I wouldnae have said nothing to them…I couldnae trust any school teachers
> you know…they never keep their word on it (Aaron).

Karen, the oldest interviewee, offered a possible explanation as to why young people might not want to talk to adults in authority about their situation, reflecting that, 'I think the difficulty with speaking to someone at that age is because you kind of don't think they'll just listen, you think they'll…look to solve the problem.' Karen thought that what young people wanted was some measure of understanding but they did not want the adults to 'change anything' or give you 'extra attention,' such as being kept back at school to do your homework. These findings resonate with research carried out at Childline Scotland, where it was found that young callers (aged 11-15), who were concerned about their parents' well-being, said that they did not seek formal help for reasons that included concerns about confidentiality and 'adults taking over control' (Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2012).

Lewis said of his friends, 'I choose not to tell them, I only speak to so many…Otherwise I'm just used to my ain self the now,' while others made similar comments:

> It's pointless talking to someone else (Carly).
>
> appendto the point where I couldn't actually talk about it because I would just break down and start crying or something (Liam).
>
> I dinnae really like speaking aboot naething. I like keeping everything inside sometimes, but, or most of the time (Megan).

These quotes reveal a variety of motivations for keeping quiet, including fear of making the situation 'worse,' being overwhelmed emotionally, or a feeling that the problem was not one that anyone was interested in sharing. In Megan's story, it was a question of trust: she said that she held things back because 'I don't trust naebody.'

Only Beth said that she had no problem speaking about her situation. Morris (1965) discovered that wives affected by their husband's second sentence were less ashamed than they had been on the first occasion, and it may be that Beth had arrived at that point too, as she said 'I don't talk about it all the time but if they ask I dae tell them…don't see the point in hiding it.'

A further consequence of a tendency to silence the self in connection with family imprisonment is that these families do not have a public voice, and are not recognizable as a collective group (Dugan & Reger, 2006). Some of the young people were aware of this:

> It wasn't until I got in touch with (*organisation*) that I met another young person who'd been through what I did. Like, I literally hadn't spoken to any other person in that situation, so. That definitely would have helped (Rosie).

> There must be hundreds of thousands of kids out there that were in exactly the same situation as me. And they don't have the support, and they don't have anybody to talk to, they're just forgotten about (Becky).

Karen and Tricia also said that they had not met anyone else in the same situation, which was 'very isolating' according to Tricia. Because they were silent, however, there was no community within which they could interact and mitigate the pain of the imprisonment. The young people were thus denied access to a potentially important source of support. In this regard, their pain was arguably worse than that of prisoners, who, according to Sykes (1958), have an identifiable community where they could potentially find support.

The analysis carried out to this point has shown how the imprisonment affected young people at a personal level and in all of their personal relationships, both inside and outside the family. However, the data also show that the relationship that the young people had with their home itself was also affected, as the following discussion shows.

6.7 The impact of imprisonment on the relationship with 'home'

The literature review in Chapter Three acknowledged the fact that one of the common experiences for prisoners' family members is that they may have to move home. Sometimes this occurs because the local community responds to the family in a way that makes it uncomfortable to remain in the locality. Sometimes it occurs because it is the prisoner who is the householder and the remaining family loses entitlement to stay on in the house when s/he goes away. In their interviews, the

young people discussed the ways in which the imprisonment of their relative was directly linked to the home as a physical space. They also described how the notion of home, either as it currently stood, or as they might imagine home to be in the future, was compromised by the imprisonment.

Home is not a straightforward concept in part because it is not restricted to a physical space, but it is 'also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings – a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived' (Mallett, 2004). Therefore, although home is often in a specific physical place, it is only when such spaces 'become inscribed with meaning' that they become home (Easthope, 2004). Easthope expands upon this by explaining that it is how the individual interacts with the home at a psychological level that infuses it with meaning. She also makes the link between having a secure identity and home, citing Dupuis and Thorns' (1998) four criteria for achieving ontological security in the home. Ontological security is defined as 'a sense of confidence and security in the world as it appears to be. It is the security of being' (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998, p. 27). Asserting that the home is the 'key locale' where ontological security can be sought, Depuis and Thorns define its four key characteristics, summarised by Easthope as: security through constancy, security in the performance of day to day routines, security through being in control (including freedom from surveillance), and having a secure base in which to construct identity (Easthope, 2004).

The link between ontological security and home has been explored in empirical research with young people who experienced out-of-home care. One study argued that ''Home' is a potentially important site for creating and buttressing—and undermining—ontological security' (Natalier & Johnson, 2015). Focusing on a 'subjective interpretation of home,' the research showed that in the absence of stability, caring relationships and routines associated with 'home', the young people became anxious and lacked ontological security. The implication of this for those young people was that they also lacked a secure identity, not least because they felt themselves to be different from their peers. Using a similar taxonomy to that set out by Dupuis and Thorns, the authors identified the following key aspects of ontological security and the home: 'shelter, emotional well-being, control, routine, caring

relationships and stability' (Natalier & Johnson, 2015, p. 128).

In the current research, the young people described interruptions and intrusions into their experience of home that posed a threat to their identity, and undermined their feeling of security. Lynne's story showed how a young person can lose the space they call home when their main carer is imprisoned, and this can lead to an unsettled period in life. Lynne lived with her sister and father until the age of 10, but when her father was taken into custody, 'I had to go stay with my aunty, for a couple of nights and then on my birthday I went to stay with my grandma.' That situation lasted for three years but then her grandmother 'had a stroke.' Next, Lynne stayed with an aunt until 'my aunty chucked me out,' and by the time we met, Lynne's worker had helped her to get 'a flat' (supported accommodation). Lynne's housing situation had therefore been unstable for a number of years as a direct result of her father's imprisonment.

The security of home came under threat for the young people in other ways, too, even where it was not necessary for them to move from place to place. Paul described how the character of his home changed, so that, 'I wouldn't say it was a happy place, my house, at the time but it was somewhere where I felt safe.'

In the following analysis, I describe in some detail three different accounts, namely those of Becky, Tricia and Jane, to show the complex variety of ways in which the security of home became destabilised. The disturbance to the home could happen quite overtly in cases where it became the locus of the criminal investigation. Becky described the first time there was a 'bust' at her house:

> The next minute people started appearing from everywhere…There was so many and I remember they had brought us back into the house and that was when they started talking and obviously they were talking in front of me…and that's when I got the gist of it.

There was a second raid a few weeks later:

> As we walked further down the street we noticed the police cars. And we were like, 'you've got to be joking,' so we've like ran down the street and we've walked in and the place is a mess…It was absolutely a mess but what

scunnered us the most was the fact that they had the cheek to turn the TV on and put the Rangers game on while they were doing it.

Easthope (2004) points out that one aspect of 'home' rests in the concept of privacy and freedom from surveillance, concepts which could be shown to be illusory by the kind of police operation that Becky's family experienced: 'it was quite incredible to notice that you could never see that people were watching, you were quite oblivious to that.' The intimate act by the police of putting on the television to watch football while searching their home intruded into the family's private space. This left Becky feeling 'scunnered,' a Scots term for disgusted.

Although Becky's family made a deliberate plan for her to be able to take on the tenancy before her mother was eventually sentenced, home quickly became a place where Becky found it hard to function in her mother's absence. The routines of keeping house were too much:

> After a while I just, I don't know and suddenly it was like 'this isn't what I want' and em it got to the stage where I would have takeaways most nights, I wouldn't do the dishes, I wouldn't do the washings.

Becky's observation that she arrived at a stage where 'this isn't what I want' showed how home shifted from being the place that would anchor the family together in her mother's absence to being a burden to Becky instead. When Becky's mother was released, Becky said it took them 'three weeks' to tidy the house because she had 'let it go.' The house also became a site of vulnerability for Becky when she was living there alone:

> I went through a stage where I had to have people in every weekend and my house, my house got wrecked. And I'd never learn from it, cos I'd do it again the next weekend because everybody, I know now like looking back on it now I didn't know why everybody was in my house was because we were all young and I was the only one in my own house…And I was getting used for it, but I liked the popularity. Cos I had never had that growing up because I was always fat, or ugly, or speccy, the usual ones, and now looking back on it I can sit and say look I made that mistake but I'll never make that mistake again. I got it out my system so now when I do leave home I know what to expect and know what I'm going to do.

Having sole control of her home did not equate to security for Becky. Instead, it became the place where she tried to achieve a new more popular identity, which

ended in failure. Although Becky adopted a positive approach in the end, her story of loss and loneliness, and of being out of her depth, was all centred round the family home, which did not serve its intended function as a secure base for the family when her mother was absent due to imprisonment.

It was not necessary for the young people to be present when the police came into their home for them to feel that their privacy had been breached. Tricia had a clear sense of 'home' despite the fact that she was at boarding school from the age of eight. As noted above, Dupuis and Thorns (1998) itemized constancy as a key element of 'home,' but Tricia found home was altered by her father's absence – instead of 'happy times' with her father at home, in his absence it was now 'horrible'. Meanwhile, Tricia's mother 'slept in the guest room for a year' because she 'couldn't cope with it.' Thus the settled norms of Tricia's home life were upset. She also gave a detailed account of the intrusion of the police and others into her home:

> It's intrusive enough I feel, like, I remember when I was like 14…we were on holiday in America…And we came back and I could tell that my room had been searched. I walked into my room and I was like 'I didn't put that, I didn't leave that there' and I was like 'mum, why has someone been in my room?' My mum was like, 'oh, nothing, oh, just like the police came for this thing' and I was like 'OK.' I didn't really think anything of it em, and then…we've taken the sign off the house as well cos they've put our address and stuff in the newspaper articles and we didn't want people coming round like press or anything cos it was in the newspaper so we took the sign off the house, which is a pain for deliveries (*laughs*) which sounds ridiculous but it's so annoying when you order something online. But em there are just so many things that I think it's already intrusive enough…they're just very intrusive and very judgmental.

This passage shows how in Tricia's case the key aspects of home that go hand in hand with ontological security were tainted by the initial investigation. Privacy and freedom from surveillance were compromised by the activities of the police and the media, and even something as mundane as getting online shopping delivered became problematic. Thus, everything about Tricia's home was changed and different from before.

In the third example, Jane's case, it was the concept of home as a safe place for her and her family in the future that was put in jeopardy. While Jane's partner was in

prison, Jane and their child sometimes stayed with Jane's mother, but Jane also had her own tenancy nearby. However, she was extremely anxious about whether this could ever provide a suitable home after her partner was released from prison on licence:

> There's a lot of worries still, how we're going to get our own house and that and where we're gonnae stay because we obviously, wi his previous and that we, he disnae really want to come back out to this place cos this is where all the trouble and that happened, so he's kind of wanting to get away but then, cos I've got a house but it's in (*neighbouring area*) and it's at the worst part of it so there's, you know, the worry of getting a private let to get him out of here. Cos I mean if it was just me and the wean I could happily stay up there. It is a wee bit wild at the summer but nae problems or hassle really, so I could've stayed there just, but wi' him, he's wanting a fresh start so we're just hoping to get the best start for him, possible you know what I mean? For me, him and the wean just so as he's got a better chance of staying out of trouble when he comes out.

Jane's anxiety about the suitability of her tenancy for her partner post-release ran in tandem with her anxiety about how they would be able to function as a family, and in fact the location of their home was only one aspect of Jane's wider anxiety about her partner's ability to live safely back in the community:

> And then you worry about whether you're going to get a house away fi it, know what I mean? Somewhere that's good. But then at the same time I think to myself I shouldnae really worry about that cos if he's going to change he's, if he's wanting to come here, if we get a house a wee bit away, where my maw is, say, then if he really wants to come up here it's only a short walk, he will come, know what I mean? Em, obviously it's right out his front window there but then at the same time if he's really going to change, if it has really gi'd him the biggest fright in there then he will, he will cos it's no as if he'll be drunk walking about the streets and obviously if he was walking by drunk and they says 'want to come in?' then that you could see cos you know what it's like when you're drunk, you don't think. But he's going to be sober, he's no going to be walking by them drunk so he'll be sober, sober enough to turn round and say 'I'm no coming in' so, I'm actually quite glad in a way, o' that cos I think it'll prove it sooner than later in here if like being here it'll be proved sooner what he's going to, what way it's going to go.

In these passages, Jane made it clear that her overwhelming feeling was one of worry. In her two interviews, she used the word 'worry' eighteen times. Her ideal of enacting family life with her partner and child in a way that would be consistent with the concept of a home was blocked by her concerns about the future – 'As much as

I'm looking forward to him getting out tae start a family wi him and the wean again it's still just, cannae enjoy it as much because of that, you know? It's still a worry.' Jane's imagined future home lacked the criteria of constancy, daily routines, control or a secure base - the requirements of a safe home set out by Dupuis and Thorns (1998). As a result, home could not provide Jane with ontological security, and her anxiety was escalating.

6.8 Conclusion

The analysis of the data shows that the very idea of 'maintaining contact' with an imprisoned relative is fraught with difficulty. For young people especially, getting to a prison, or entering it once there, presents major difficulties involving a deficit of autonomy, and fears that have to be conquered. If young people try other means to maintain contact, this is no less challenging because letters and phonecalls were frequently shown to be dissatisfactory or distressing and really only operated to underline that young people had very little control over a situation forced upon them. Entering the prison, and even receiving letters and calls from there, subjected the young people to what Goffman termed 'contaminative exposure.'

The effect of such contamination was significant because it made it very difficult for the young people to have a normal relationship with their family member. Indeed, the family as a whole was affected by the imprisonment, subject to shifting roles and responsibilities that had the potential to bind families together, but equally could break them apart. The young people had to make adaptations to cope with their situation, for example by withdrawing from their friends, by putting on a front, or by getting into fights. These adaptations, like the 'secondary adjustments' that Goffman identified within a psychiatric hospital, were a necessary response to the assault on the sense of their selves that the young people felt.

The loss of a relative to prison meant that almost all of the young people's relationships were affected and changed, creating a sense of insecurity and anxiety. The imprisonment also had the potential to cause traumatic suffering to the young

people. Almost all of them used the language of pain and hurt to describe their situation. Having a family member in prison is liable to cause feelings of grief and bereavement, which several of the young people clearly expressed, and which can be diagnosed as the symptoms of ambiguous loss. With the uncertainty inherent in ambiguous loss, and the failure of wider society to recognise such grief as valid, the young people were placed in a situation of chronic uncertainty, which was traumatizing.

There were many parallels between the experiences of the young people and that of prisoners: confinement, loss of autonomy, loss of physical contact, stigmatisation, subjugation to the prison regimes (such as surveillance or rules about visiting), and uncertainty about the future after the sentence was over. As a catalogue of deprivations, these call to mind Sykes' enumeration of the pains of imprisonment (1958). Sykes, however, went beyond merely listing the 'pains': he described how the deprivations of imprisonment operated at a psychological level to attack the self-identity of the prisoner. This, he said, was 'directed against the very foundations of the prisoner's being.' As I contend in the literature review, making the prisoners subject to such a psychological attack is an exercise of power upon them. I contend here, too, that the young people found themselves disempowered and threatened at a deeply psychological level by the sentence of imprisonment.

The study undertaken by Sykes goes on to explore how prisoners adjust to their situation in the face of this psychological attack. Such an exploration was possible because Sykes was given access to a maximum-security prison and could observe a group of men brought together in the jail to serve their sentence. However, the young family members of prisoners are scattered throughout society, they are not readily identifiable, and they often seek to keep their status as the relative of a prisoner a secret. The very fact of that status is likely to make young people take action that will prevent them from accessing help or support, by refusing to talk to adults in authority, or by putting on a 'front' to pretend all is well. Young people in this situation often end up feeling extremely isolated.

The evidence presented here shows that the imprisonment of a family member is experienced by young people as a psychological assault on their sense of self, which is a significant finding. As the literature review discusses, the transition from childhood to adulthood is the crucial time for making decisions about the future and for deciding the person you want to become. In other words, it is the key time in life for achieving a secure sense of self-identity. Family imprisonment has the potential to harm young people by placing them in a situation where their sense of self is constantly under attack from internal doubts and questions or from external judgments and stigmatisation. It can also mean that their sense of security including in relationship to their home, and their autonomy, are both threatened. There is therefore a risk not only of causing suffering for the duration of the sentence, but also of causing longer term problems.

Further, the imprisonment of a family member disrupts young people's transitions as adult roles are forced upon them while simultaneously autonomy is stripped away. The young people in such a situation are left to move towards adulthood across shifting sands where previously settled roles and relationships are shaken up and made unstable. This thereby makes their transition all the more risky, and increases their vulnerability.

CHAPTER 7   Analysis of interviews with young people (2): the impact of policy discourses, and the provision of support

7.1 Policy discourses

The focus of the interviews was upon the young people themselves, and how they dealt with the imprisonment of their family member. Despite this emphasis, some of the participants reflected on how their family member attempted to manage her/his sentence. Those reflections therefore allow an exploration of the extent to which the policy discourses identified in Chapter Five, namely the offender being responsible for her/his own rehabilitation, family contact helping reduce reoffending, and young people being risky and the potential offenders of the future, were present in the way that young people perceived the prison sentence.

7.1.1 Policy discourse – the offender is responsible for her/his own rehabilitation

Aaron had thought about his father's experience and, insofar as they had spoken about it, 'He says it was easy anyway.' Aaron thought that this was probably true:

> I think like he went out and done classes and got hisel' money for like wee sweeties at night and he got all his food and that for him.

Although Aaron's father had given the impression that the prison sentence was 'easy,' Aaron was 'wary' and said that his own role as a father had given him pause for thought:

> Well, usually some people with their dads and that in and out the jail has made them gone into jail but it's kind of made me think, plus obviously the wean and that…that's made me think.

Aaron's words suggest that he had considered how he could reject the risk of deviancy labelling discussed in Chapter Three, but only in relation to his own reputation. He held out no hope of rehabilitation or reform for his father, whom Aaron thought would just get on with serving his sentence. Tricia had a completely different take on her father's activities in, and relationship with, the prison, as she observed that:

> It's in their best interest to keep my dad where he is because he's very proactive. Like, he runs a radio show within the prison, he writes the newspaper, he's very, very proactive because he likes to keep himself busy. And they like people like that cos obviously it runs the prison and stuff so I think, it sounds awful but it's in their best interest to not give him Cat D.

Tricia's characterisation of her father was to suggest that he had not been bowed down by the prison sentence, but rather that the prison was lucky to have her father there because of his positive contribution to prison life. She saw no need for her father to change as a result of the prison sentence because she remained loyal to her original opinion of him, making no admission that he should reform. While both Tricia and Aaron had imagined their fathers as having quite differing approaches to passing their time in prison, either passively or proactively, they did not at any point appear to connect the activities in the prison with rehabilitation, neither did they express a view that this should be the purpose of the prison sentence.

As noted in the previous chapter, Frances felt that her mother had changed as a result of the prison sentence, but that was in connection with her being incarcerated with 'rough people.' She also felt that her mother was fragile, 'like a glass,' after her release, suggesting that imprisonment had been harmful to her mother, who was worse off than before. In addition, for some young people there was no sense that imprisonment was likely to change their relative's behaviour. Liam said of his parents 'the way they've been for the past like 17,18 years of my life you know…that's it. So I've just given up all hope what they're going to do. I know they're never going to come clean off the drugs.' Liam's primary concern was to protect himself from disappointment, which he had experienced many times before: 'If it happens, it happens. If it doesn't, I'm no letting myself down cos I'm no hoping on it happening.'

Beth described her partner as having a more routinised life in the prison than outside which made imprisonment attractive to him:

> He struggles when he's oot…he's waking up for nothing to dae, where he's waking up in here, he's got exercise, gym or he's got something to wake up for every morning, whereas out here he's no got anything. I know…he's got

the wean and everything to wake up to but he's no got anything, he's no got any kind of solid routine or anything. That's when he struggles when he's out.

She said that for her partner to change, someone would have to 'gi him a chance,' and offer him employment when he was released, perhaps in recognition that what happened in the outside world would have more potential for rehabilitating her partner than anything occurring in the prison itself. The lack of faith about the capacity of prison to provide an opportunity for reform had differing effects for Liam and Beth, but it was an important feature of their reflection of the meaning of imprisonment to their family members.

Only Jane spoke about the way in which the prison sentence might be transformational, saying that her partner's family were 'quite happy with the way he's come on in the jail and that. He's changed his attitude, changed his whole concept…he knows what's important now, basically.' Jane set this transformation against her partner's previous life:

> When the drugs started so it was, em, the valium. You know the worst drug ever so it is. It just makes, all the effect it's just terrible so it is. Em, just like a zombie, just he's in the room wi you but he's no. Just, I don't know, it's scary. Aw, that was the worst.

Accordingly, although Jane felt prison had helped her partner overcome drug problems, there was little evidence elsewhere that the young people considered that prison had any potential to rehabilitate their family member. Rehabilitation was not a word that any of them uttered, nor did they reflect on changed behaviour by their family member that might be indicative of rehabilitation.

7.1.2 Policy discourse – maintaining family contact is useful to the prisoner and helps reduce reoffending

The evidence in the literature suggests that prisoners who maintain contact with family stand a better chance of not reoffending, and it is for this reason that family contact is promoted as a government policy, as discussed in Chapter Five. However, the young people did not foreground this as a reason for their visits. In fact, there was

a reverse connection with the policy discourse in relation to families taking on the burden of supporting their relative through contact. Young people who felt that their relative was responsible for their own offending were not willing to offer support through maintaining contact. Liam said 'It's his fault that he's in there' and he also said 'so it's his problem, not mine.' Liam was not, therefore, willing to visit his father in prison. Similarly, Paul said 'He was in denial about everything,' and 'he thought everything would be fine and we would still all be speaking to him, do you know what I mean, we'd still go and visit him and things like that but he didn't want to deal with it.' But Paul (along with his mother and sisters) was not willing to visit his father, partly because of the nature of his crime – 'the crime that he done, I think it's just the worst things anybody can possibly do' – but also because of the denial of responsibility.

Those young people who were ambivalent about their relative's responsibility for their offending also gave up on visiting. In Lewis's case, he knew the nature of his father's offence, although he chose not to tell me about it. His view was, 'I think he was, what, slightly stupid? But at the same time there's other people daeing it but they've not got caught. That's about it really.' Lewis encountered practical difficulties with security arrangements when his father moved prison and decided not to apply for the correct documentation, but instead said, 'I'm waiting till he comes out on a tag.' Aaron also gave up on visiting. When his father served a second sentence, Aaron (as noted in Chapter Six) could not find anyone to take him to the prison, but he did not give any indication that he felt this was significant for his father, instead saying:

> I didnae really think about it much because I had my heid going aw things because I found out like I was going to be a dad an that so I was trying to get my heid round that, never mind what he was up to.

Like Lewis, Aaron had an ambivalent attitude to his father's offending, describing it as 'stupit,' and saying his father was 'still a wean in the heid.' Ultimately, all four of the young men interviewed either refused to visit or gave up on visiting.

The young women, by contrast, did all make the effort to keep up with visiting. They also made a range of assessments of their relative's responsibility for their offending.

In many instances, the young women ascribed the offending to external circumstances:

> I know when she went to prison why she went to prison and why she done it was to make money. And to give us a good Christmas (Becky).

> It just wasnae him. It was a totally different person but the drugs were involved that night as well he'd been taking valium for 3 nights in a row (Jane).

> He's no a bad person or anything he just get's hisel' in daft situations (Beth).

> I don't think that my brother's you know sentence necessarily started when it did because before that there were so many years of just such like turmoil in his life, like a lot of violence like a lot of exposure to that kind of lifestyle already (Rosie).

> I'm not like embarrassed about it, cos he was, he was protecting the family (Lynne).

These statements show a degree of forgiveness, or at least tolerance, in the way that the young women spoke about their relative, including a willingness to separate the actor out from the action. Further, these young women all described their relatives' lives in the round, as being affected by family, money or other societal pressures. As shown in the previous chapter, the young people experienced instances where third parties essentialised their relative by identifying them with their specific offence, but the young women in particular tended to resist any such essentialising.

If they did not offer an explanation of why their relative may have committed an offence, the young women found ways to minimise the crime. Asked if she thought her mother should have gone to prison, Frances said:

> No. It was one of they things where it was nothing… there's only a certain amount of prison cells and she was taking up one that could have been used for something a lot more terrible and a lot more life threatening.

Frances thereby sought to distance her mother from a more serious category of offender. Tricia described her father's offence as 'conspiracy fraud,' while she also said 'he didn't even steal it.' And Karen said her brother's first offence 'got reduced and I think it was just negligence or something,' while his later offences were 'not high profile.'

For the young women in this study, it appeared to be important to either explain why their family member acted in a criminal way, or to compare their actions against much more serious crime. If the policy discourse and the rationale for imprisonment centres around making offenders responsible for their own behaviour and their own rehabilitation while at the same time placing a burden on families to visit the prison as an aid to reducing reoffending, there appears to be a disconnect: when the young men attributed fault to their relative, they refused to visit. Meanwhile, the young women found ways to minimise or rationalise the offending, and to separate action from actor, and this appeared to be integral to their willingness to maintain the visits.

This issue appears to disclose a gendered response to offending and imprisonment, and the young people provided further evidence of a gender gap in respect of their commitment to visiting prison, as all of the young men either refused to visit or gave up on visiting, whereas the young women all persisted with visits as far as they could. It is well established that women are far more likely than men to shoulder the burden of caring for prisoners (Comfort, 2003; Codd, 2007; Halsey & Deegan, 2015) and the young people in this study showed that such gender differences are apparent from late adolescence or early adulthood.

7.1.3 Policy discourse – young people are risky and the potential offenders of the future

As a further aspect of the analysis, I considered the extent to which young people were aware that the policy discourse ascribes to them a risky identity, and one where they are likely to become the offenders of the future. Reputational risk appeared to be another gendered issue: three of the young men felt that they were liable to be identified as at risk of following in their fathers footsteps into offending. The problem of reputational risk for Liam and Paul has been noted in the previous chapter, where it was seen to be problematic for both young men, who felt it was important to distance themselves from their father's reputations. Aaron had a similar experience, particularly with regard to the police:

> To be honest I didn't think that they liked me because of my second name. Cos my wee brother, he's always in trouble with the polis plus my dad…he's always trouble and jail and lifted and fines here and up the court, an all that.

Aaron, too, distinguished himself from his father, although he was less concerned with reputation and more focused on achieving a different set of outcomes: 'I'm just not interested in the jail or that…I just don't bother about it at all, I'd rather just get my heid down and make money.'

In all of these excerpts, the young men showed that, although they recognised that there was a likelihood that they would be tarnished by their father's offending, and indeed viewed as potential future offenders, they felt this to be unjustified and indicated it would be resisted by them. For these young men, the reputational risk of being related to an offender placed another hurdle in the way of their transition to adulthood. It represented another twist in the road towards achieving a secure identity.

The young women did not feel exactly the same. They did not express a view that suggested they felt under threat of being tagged as offenders of the future. They were not unaffected by their relationship to convicted offenders, but the effects were different and not to do with being seen as risky. Frances thought that people knowing about her mother's offence might make them view her differently:

> They'd kind of look down on you sort of thing and I wouldn't say feel sorry, well feel sorry for you…but think of you as kind of a different person.

Karen also felt affected by her brother's reputation but in a quite dissimilar way: 'there was that kind of protective thing about it, that almost like you were protected because of that reputation.' Beth and Jane both felt they were judged as 'daft' (Beth) or mistaken for staying with their partner despite their imprisonment: 'what's she daein still wi him after all this?' (Jane). So, for the young women, there were reputational consequences, which affected their sense of self-identity, making them feel changed as people in the eyes of third parties, but this did not match in to the policy discourse of being risky or being likely to become offenders themselves.

The issue of the intersection of gender with familial offending has really only been

considered in relation to parental offending (Goodwin & Davis, 2011). There is no information available about the transmission of offending within families due to other relationships, such as siblings, partners or others. The observations here do, however, suggest that the risk of transmission of offending was perceived differently by the young men than the young women and this brought the potential to affect their response to the situation. As already noted, the young men, who appeared to feel more at risk of attracting an offender label, were more likely to stop visiting and to stay away from the prison, and from their imprisoned family member.

The present study therefore suggests that the way this policy discourse attaches itself to young people with a relative in prison is extremely complex, and appears to have a gendered effect. In addition, the fourteen young people involved in this project showed no signs of choosing or drifting into crime themselves, giving the lie to the suggestion that the children of offenders are most likely to become offenders themselves. One of the young people had less concrete plans than the others: Carly said that after school she had 'done a course, but I got chucked out,' and when I asked her what she would like to do now, she said, 'nothing.' Of the other interviewees, all had clearer ambitions. Aaron was doing a car mechanics course at college and said that eventually what he wanted was 'I just want to work…good job, good wee bit of money, motors, couple of motors.' Lewis was also at college, but he had a physical disability, which was holding him back: 'I want to get back into work as well but I want to get my back fixed first.' Megan had a new baby to care for, and Beth and Jane both had young children but were hoping to find work, too. Paul was taking an extra course at university so that he could become a physiotherapist: 'I'd love to have a job where I could come back every day and say, do you know what I'm helping people.'

The remaining interviewees, half of the entire sample, had ambitions that involved 'giving back,' or profiting from their experience, however negative that had found it, in ways that would bring benefits to others. Becky's quote was typical of the majority of the young people:

> It's made me understand what I want to do with my life, cos I want to help other people.

For similar reasons, Karen wanted to work in prisons, Liam was 'wanting to be a police officer,' Rosie wanted to do 'some kind of mentoring,' and Tricia wanted to 'go into law.' Although the young people themselves had not committed the crime, they felt that their negative experience of imprisonment had given them insight and 'greater understanding' (Rosie) that they could put to good use to help or mentor others.

As noted in Chapter Three, the risk of the transmission of offending from imprisoned parents to their children has arguably been over-interpreted. The data explored here signals there is a further risk inherent in promulgating a policy discourse that is based on unsound evidence, which can lead to already strained family ties ultimately becoming broken.

7.2 Support for young people

In order to understand the support needs of the young people, I next considered their experiences of seeking and receiving support. Several of the young people found support to be rooted in their own family, as observed in Chapter Six. The picture was more mixed in relation to accessing support from the community or from professional services. A universal service such as the school, for example, was generally not a useful source of support for the young people. In this section of the chapter the analysis considers how the young people described their interactions with services, and the implications for them of a, generally, inadequate service provision.

Rosie had an adverse experience at school, where she and the sister of her brother's victim were brought together and made to apologise to one another: 'they worded it as though we had to feel sorry for it, as if it was our responsibility.' She asked herself, 'how did my school get away with doing this?' Rosie also said 'I flashback to it,' showing how the incident had stayed with her throughout the eight years of her brother's prison sentence.

Lynne appeared to have a contrasting experience and had a teacher who knew her situation and who, she said, 'helped me through everything.' The help was quite practical, such as 'a time out card, you know, for classes so if I got like annoyed or anything I could just walk out,' and allowing Lynne to 'just speak to her.' Despite this help, Lynne said that she did not enjoy school and as soon as she turned sixteen she was approached by the head teacher and, 'got told to get my leaver's form and leave.'

In other instances, the young people did not speak out or were unsure about how much their school knew about their situation:

> There was my guidance teacher but she's a bit useless, but em like I said she didn't know anything (Frances).

> Even now I don't really know who knows, who knew at the time and who didn't… I think now if someone knew then they should've said something (Karen).

The range of experiences in school suggested that there was a lack of expertise or even willingness in some cases to engage with the young people and to find out if they had support needs, and what those might be. Despite being still children, the onus appeared to be on the young people to seek out help for themselves.

Social work services were often not well regarded. Aaron said the involvement of social workers with his younger brother at school 'probably made the matter ten times worse,' and Lynne avoided communicating with her social worker as much as she could: 'I just blanked her out when I went out with her.' However, Lynne had help from a third sector agency, which worked much better for her – when asked what difference it made to have that support, Lynne said 'a lot,' and listed help with prison visiting, arranging video visits, having someone to call up any time, and help with practical tasks such as fixing her phone charger. Lynne's experience was that she found social work support to be unhelpful or unacceptable but support from another source was useful. This was a common experience. Megan, for example, said that:

> I dinnae get help, only like, only person that's properly helped me to go up to the prison is (*worker*). I've never had any help fae naebody in my whole

entire life. I've had like one person but they wasn't helpful, they was fucking useless.

Although Megan's present worker was admittedly helpful, Megan still felt she had never been helped, even though there had been some input, which Megan felt was 'useless.' She also said that a voluntary service in her town was 'good,' and that she had done courses in 'lifeskills, Princes Trust and something else, I cannae remember.' So, although Megan had accessed support through the voluntary centre, and felt happy to go back there to visit, she nevertheless continued to feel that she had never had any help. In particular, she had not had help to find her own tenancy, saying that 'I got this hoose for myself…I done it all mysel' cos she was a lazy cow and never helped me,' ('she' in this case being a previous worker, not the present one who Megan found to be helpful). Something about Megan's experience made her feel isolated and on her own, even though local services had been available and she had been able to access them.

Carly similarly mentioned having come to the interview from a meeting with her social worker, and she spoke about accessing a youth project, and 'careers.' However, when asked if careers had been helpful, she said 'nope.' Carly also said on four occasions during the interview that no-one cared about her circumstances: 'nae one understands, nae one cares.'

Becky tried to seek help from her doctor:

> And I think I did go into a stage of depression…and I wasn't sleeping and I went to the doctors and…they didn't help at all…The doctor said, 'well, I do understand you are under a lot of stress.' I was like, 'yes, I understand that as well but the fact is that I am cracking up. I'm not sleeping, I can't be bothered doing anything, I don't have any motivation.' But it felt as if even they were scrutinizing against us because I wasn't getting any help whatsoever, nobody would help.

Like Carly, Becky felt that there was no help open to her, and that this was underwritten by 'scrutiny,' as if she had been judged and found undeserving because of her situation. This description shows how feelings of stigmatisation operate to prevent the families of prisoners from accessing support, even from universal services such as health professionals.

Although most of the young people did not feel they had been supported, there were one or two instances of interventions that the young people found useful, however. Liam said 'I've always been with the same foster parents I've never been anywhere else,' explaining that he had been in the foster family 'almost seven years.' Liam had social work support in his foster placement, and it was a good placement from his point of view: 'it's just kind of a happy family in the house.' Paul also found talking to a college tutor to be helpful, saying that she was 'sympathetic':

> It was quite nice, it was like somebody cared a wee bit. And in the couple of months before nobody really showed that they, like no-one really bothered about me, my mum, my sisters and everything like that, they didn't really think about us, so I thought it was really nice of her to do it.

The fact that Paul found his tutor's response so helpful made the absence of any other support all the more evident.

Taken together, the young people showed that whether they were still engaged with universal services such as education, social work or health, and even if workers were available to them, the help they received was frequently either not appropriate or useful, or they did not have a good relationship with the person working with them. These experiences showed that providing services to young people in transition is complex, and it may take more than one attempt to establish a trusting relationship and provide the right support at the right moment. They also showed that universal services-providers might not have the skills or resources to provide suitable support. And, even if help was offered, it did not prevent young people feeling that they were alone and uncared for. Nor did the negative views expressed by them mean that young people did not want to be supported.

7.3 What the young people said would help

The interviews sometimes provided an opportunity to ask the participants what they would have liked by way of support, or what they would have changed about the situation they found themselves in. Like other aspects of imprisonment, there was no singular view, but instead a range of needs and opinions.

Aaron did not think he needed any support, because he found all the support he needed in his family, saying, 'because my maw was always there you know and my father's family and that so it's no as if I had naebody.' Frances had suggestions for improving the visiting:

> Not having everyone in the same room at the same time and people who are dangerous in with other people who are just in to see their parent, like and their mum and dad.

But her response to a question about whether she would have liked more information in advance about the visits was, 'If someone told me what it was going to be like I don't think I would have went.' This set out the complexity of the situation: merely providing information would not be sufficient support, and providing information on its own might have the effect of preventing family contact. It also showed the extent to which Frances had found visiting the prison to be traumatic.

Tricia did not want to have to go looking for information herself but found that when prisons did have information available it was not helpful to her:

> I don't want to have to research intensely like how to you know, help groups or discussions or anything like that. I just think there should be leaflets and stuff in the prison which there are leaflets for, like say for example like if you're on benefit you can have help with your travel costs and things like that there are leaflets, but leaflets that don't apply to me. There's nothing that, I don't know, there's no support, I don't think for people.

Tricia's opinion on seeing information that was not relevant was to feel confirmed in her view that there was 'no support.' [48]

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[48] There is an interesting postscript to my interview with Tricia. When the interview ended, I said to her I had heard of an arts project that one of the organisations that helps families of prisoners was about to get under way. Later, I emailed Tricia the details of the organisation and many months later when the arts project was finished I recognised her name as one of the young people who had taken part. In retrospect, it seemed that Tricia had passed the point of keeping her father's imprisonment secret: she had first overcome her worries to confide in a friend, then a boyfriend, then my colleague who put us in contact with one another, then me, and finally she was ready to engage more widely with other young people in a similar situation. But this followed several years of keeping her secret closely guarded. It was all a matter of chance and it was fortunate that those people Tricia confided in responded empathetically to her. If the response had been negative she would in all probability have reverted to secrecy and remained very isolated.

It was not just information, or the lack of it, or the relevance of its content, that was the focus of what young people felt was needed. Karen was of the view that family relationships had already been damaged by the time a prison sentence occurred and therefore what was needed was:

> Trying to build those relationships back up and you need to have an environment that supports that at visits, or even people to support that. I think the Scottish Prison Service even now are still quite hands off with the whole, you know, 'we're here to keep them safe in custody' thing, 'we'll promote, try and get people to visits' but they're not really doing anything to support relationships and…you know build up, things that could be done.

For those who did not go into the prison, there was still a need for help. Outside the prison, Paul's sister had found a third sector organisation that could offer him support, which he said 'massively helped' and was 'a godsend.' Paul was able to speak to the worker there whenever he needed to and found that 'he reassures me that it's nothing to do with me, it's not my fault do you know, things like that?' As Paul's family had decided against visiting, it opens questions about the entitlement of families to support if they have turned down the opportunity to support the prisoner, and begs the question of which part of government policy about families affected by imprisonment speaks to families like Paul's. This is a pertinent question in the light of government investment in Prison Visitor Centres, discussed in Chapter Five, without equivalent investment for families who opt to stay away from the prison.

Becky also highlighted the importance of having 'an actual relationship' with an external professional, someone who would be 'there any time, it doesn't matter, they don't just leave.' For Becky, this entailed going beyond a minimal commitment so the relationship was not 'just 'oh yeah I'll come and see you every so often, I'll come and see you every week,'' but in addition, 'they'll still be texting you and on the phone to you to make sure that everything is OK, everything's fine.'

In Rosie's experience, 'awkward situations' in her school 'could really have been easily avoided if people were properly trained how to deal with this kind of thing.' There was a need for information, therefore, but the young people showed that producing information relevant to every circumstance would be complicated and in any event merely providing information was not likely to be sufficient.

As the schools failed to provide adequate support the young people sought this elsewhere and confided in one or more of their peers:

> I've got a really close friend and I told him and I told my boyfriend as well but I guess I couldn't tell them very much because I didn't know… But I told them as much as I knew and they were really good about it (Frances).

> eventually I did speak to my friend about it, em, and she was really like supportive and I was like so scared. I was literally in, like, shaking and in tears. I was just so scared that she was going to sort of cut me out like all my other friends did, but she was actually really supportive with it and still is now (Tricia).

> There's a small group of mates that I've got, like it's no exactly a big group there's only four or five of us but when it is us it's just, we can talk like literally about anything…whatever happens you know whatever happens between the four walls stays between the four walls with our side and stuff so it's kind of that way (Liam).

> One of my pals kens cos, I knew her for years. I used to be her best mate. That's who I stayed with for ages when I got evicted (Megan).

These remarks show that the young people were careful about who they chose to tell, usually choosing a 'close' friend or 'best mate.' It is recognised that children and young people will often turn to friends as a first line of support, even in relation to a difficult or distressing subject matter (Ogilvie-Whyte, 2005). Overall, these experiences of the benefits of sharing the burden with friends suggest a more positive set of outcomes than have been identified in other research, where sharing a confidence with friends was considered to be more of a 'double edged sword' (Bancroft, Wilson, Cunningham-Burley, Backett-Milburn, & Masters, 2004). The findings suggest the importance of identifying ways for young people to overcome the loss of voice discussed in the previous chapter, and to feel enabled to seek support.

7.4 Conclusion

The data have shown that the policy discourses that surround families affected by imprisonment are not relevant to the lived experience. The young people did not

equate imprisonment with the self-transformation of the prisoner envisaged by the policymakers. It was likely that if the young people felt their relative was responsible for their own rehabilitation, this was because they held them liable for their own offending behaviour, causing the young people to be uninterested in maintaining contact.

As observed in the literature review, several researchers have noted a gendered difference in the way that men or women respond to questions related to punishment of offenders, but have not found it easy to identify the cause. Gilligan's (1981) ethic of care theory has repeatedly been put to the test in an effort to arrive at an explanation, with mixed results. The young women in the present research appeared to take relationships more strongly into account than the young men. In addition, the young people appeared to recognise a narrative that says they are risky and liable to be the offenders of the future, but this resonated with the young men more than the young women, suggesting that this policy discourse is not only damaging, but is also gendered. These ideas are explored in more depth in Chapter Nine.

Finally, it is shown by the data that the situation for young people is so varied, so potentially painful, and so complex, that providing them with suitable and adequate support must also be extremely challenging. The lived experience of the young people showed that they understood themselves to be open to judgment by others, and this was a barrier to seeking help. In addition, even where help was available this was often not acceptable to the young people, so that they were left feeling even more isolated.

The following chapter provides an opportunity to consider these issues from a different perspective, through an analysis of data provided by professionals working with young people.

CHAPTER 8 Professional accounts of working with young people with a family member in prison

8.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter Five, I interviewed 18 professionals who work for a variety of third sector organisations. In the two preceding chapters, the data show that young people who have a relative in prison suffer considerably. There were practical difficulties but, in the main, the pains of imprisonment were felt by the young people at a psychological level, with implications for how they felt about their own identity and security. The analysis in this chapter therefore considers how the professionals observed, understood, and responded to, those concerns.

The chapter begins by mapping the extent to which family imprisonment was present in the caseloads of the professionals, and their awareness of this as an issue for the young people with whom they might be working. Next, the chapter goes on to discuss the extent to which the professionals were cognisant of the painful aspects of having a family member in prison, and includes their perception of how young people in such a situation felt the concept of home was affected. The analysis then moves to matters of reputation and risk.

The analysis continues by considering what the data showed about the challenges of working within the third sector to provide a support service to vulnerable young people, noting the practical and structural barriers that arose when it came to facilitating young people to have contact with an imprisoned relative.

The final part of the analysis considers how the professionals tried to find ways of working with young people, notably by focusing on relationships and by adopting a flexible working approach. The discussion goes on to assess whether and how young people could access the services available and, finally, the extent to which the national policy agenda helped or hindered the provision of services.

In conclusion, the chapter discusses how the findings from the data accord with the experience described by the young people themselves.

8.2 Family imprisonment as a 'hidden' issue for young people

Chapter Four sets out the range of third sector organisations in which the professionals worked: some worked for an organisation that exists specifically to support families affected by imprisonment, and this meant that they were based in prison visitor centres and/or they accompanied young people into prison to visit relatives or partners. Some worked for an organisation that supports prisoners' contact with their families: they were based in prisons but also worked in the community with the wider family members once contact with them had been established. The remainder worked for an organisation that offered a range of distinct services, the first of which worked specifically with young women who were involved in the criminal justice system themselves. In another service, vulnerable young people were offered residential respite care, and the third service was a partnership between parents and the organisation offering support to vulnerable young people referred through education or health services.

This sample of the workforce was highly experienced in working with young people and people caught up in the criminal justice system. Some had been in their current post for only a few weeks, while others had been in post for several years, but even where the current post was a new departure all of the workers had relevant prior experience such as formerly working in youth justice, residential childcare, the prison service, or addiction services in prisons.

During the interviews the professionals all used their general experience to discuss their understanding of the effects of family imprisonment on young people, but also provided specific, anonymised, examples to illustrate their testimony. In all, the professionals cited a total of 89 instances of family imprisonment, and it is significant that this number included 29 instances from the 12 professionals who were working with families and young people for reasons other than actual or

impending offending or imprisonment. In addition, although the issue of family imprisonment is most often framed as one that exists between children and their parents, the examples cited included 33 instances of sibling imprisonment, six partners, one grandparent and three uncles or cousins. In other words, almost half of the examples were in relation to non-parental relationships.

Some of the professionals recognised that their client group was very likely to experience having a family member in prison. For example, Helen assessed that in her client group, family imprisonment was 'very common.' She thought it could amount to about 70% of the 'younger ones in care,' who would be likely to have 'at least one parent in prison.' Vicky also saw it 'more and more' that young people would have someone from the family in prison; to the extent that she described it as 'a wee pattern.' However, some professionals initially doubted that their caseload would include any young people with a family member in prison. For example, Emma thought that family imprisonment had not been a 'great issue', although she immediately cited a case of sibling imprisonment and went on to illustrate her interview with three specific instances of family imprisonment. Sally said:

> It was quite interesting because when I came in I thought 'I don't have any, I don't work with any young people in my case load' but when I start thinking, actually I do.

She then went on to describe four specific examples in her interview. Thus, although it was likely that the professionals would often encounter young people with the experience of family imprisonment, it could go unremarked as an issue, thereby risking remaining a hidden phenomenon.

In the previous chapter, the young people discussed the pressures upon them to remain silent about the fact of having a relative in prison, and these included a desire to keep themselves safe, or free from judgment by others, and a lack of trust in adults in a position of authority. The professionals could see that the latter concern may have been a reason why the topic was not discussed, and that a trusting relationship was a precursor to disclosure. Petra, Carol, Emma, Keith and Kate all relied upon a relationship developing until 'we do build up a kind of relationship where you can ask those questions,' and the young person would disclose an issue, such as family

imprisonment, 'as time goes on' (Keith). However, it seemed apparent that the onus was on the young person to make the decision to open up about the subject. Emma, for example, said, 'It's not anything that anyone's said "actually this has really affected me."' And, although Keith would be prepared to ask his young clients about family imprisonment, he also said 'it's not part of my practice that I'd ask that question.' Carol took a similar stance, saying that if family imprisonment was disclosed this 'might come out…just through conversation.'

Several professionals spoke about doing a 'family tree' with young people, during which activity it might become apparent there was a relative in prison. Asked about whether this provided an opportunity to raise questions about the imprisonment, Emma said 'yeah, but I've never had any kind of major reaction about it,' and she said the issue was 'glossed over.' At the same time, Emma recounted that one young woman spoke about her father being in prison, saying:

> She thinks 'my dad he knows this he's worldly wise and he knows what's going' sort of thing. So she'll talk about her dad like that because her dad was in prison and because he brags about it.

However, Emma also took the view that, 'it's not been a major thing in her life,' even while noting that the young person did want to speak about her father. This appeared to be an example where the professional had missed a cue that the young person would be open to speaking about the impact of imprisonment. Other similar instances were apparent, such as Keith's account of taking a young woman to prison to see her brother. Keith said 'mum loved her brother more than her and it was all about the brother,' and he also observed:

> I think it was more about the brother and the mum's relationship and how he was the apple of her eye rather than the going to prison having any affect on her. But him going to prison meant that she still had to respond.

Thus, Keith understood that the family dynamic had been impacted by the brother's imprisonment, but at the same time, it appeared he had not spoken to the young woman about this, and he assumed that visiting the prison was itself a neutral event for his client. The young woman had asked Keith to help her with the prison visit, and she did receive support with this, so it was not that Keith was unhelpful at a practical level, but Keith did not go further and explore the implications of the

imprisonment more fully with his client.

Julia, who worked with families directly affected by imprisonment, and who was developing a practice in working specifically with young people, said, 'they need to be probed to talk about it.' Julia's comment suggested that the general approach of the other professionals that young people would open up a discussion of their own volition was unlikely to result in disclosure. This appears to coincide more closely with the data in the previous chapters, which showed that the young people were not very likely to disclose their situation to authority figures. The young people also displayed a general wariness of key professionals. Thus, the low-key approach to disclosure adopted by the professionals interviewed here was unlikely to be successful, and was arguably indicative of a lack of awareness on their part that family imprisonment might be an important issue that young people would need help to feel able to openly discuss.

If the imprisonment of a family member remains a hidden topic, this has implications for the well being of young people affected, but is also potentially problematic for professionals attempting to win the confidence of young people in order to be able to work effectively with them: as discussed above, in section 5.9.2, the failure of professionals to know 'the truth' about the lived experience of young people can leave the young people feeling as if they are entirely alone, and is very isolating for them (Adley & Jupp Kina, 2014, p. 8).

Despite an apparent reluctance to initiate a discussion about family imprisonment, the professionals were fully aware that their clients did need emotional support and, as the next section of the chapter shows, the professionals recognised that feelings of loss and trauma were part of the young peoples' experience. The professionals were also familiar with working with young people to resolve their housing issues, and so questions of home, security and identity are also discussed below.

8.3 Loss and trauma

In the analysis that follows, it is notable that the professionals often used similar language to the young people I interviewed when describing the nature and extent of their distress. This stands in contrast to the point made above, that the professionals tended not to discuss the full impact of family imprisonment with the young people. As the chapter progresses, some of the practical, attitudinal and structural issues that may explain this apparent anomaly are discussed.

When asked if they recognised the sense of bereavement that I had discovered in my interviews with young people most of the professionals agreed that, 'so many people' (Elaine) compare family imprisonment to bereavement.

> I always think of it along the lines of it's like bereavement or a divorce where they're there one minute and then they're gone the next and sometimes it's quite quick and young people are left sort of 'what happened there?' and they find it hard to deal with that way (Alison).

However, the feelings occasioned by the loss were often left unexplored. Helen said that her clients often felt 'that they were abandoned by their parents.' This, she said, was interpreted by one young person in particular as 'selfish' because it resulted in Helen's client ending up 'in care.' Yet, Helen also observed that, post-release, if the parent tried to re-establish contact, the young people found this very difficult:

> They'll often say 'no, I don't know how to deal with it' and it causes like high anxiety, almost panic because deep down they've been wanting to see their parents for so long but when push comes to shove they don't know how to react to it, they don't know how to take it on.

If Helen's assertion that the young people had been wanting to see their parents 'for so long' is true, it begs the question of why they were not enabled to do so. It also suggests that young people endured long periods of loss, identified in Chapter Six as ambiguous loss, a potentially traumatizing situation.

Phil also interpreted feelings of bereavement as a sense of 'abandonment' felt by young people and said that sometimes the work of the professionals was to discuss the abandonment:

> You have to promote the fact, they've abandoned you for whatever reason, maybe they didn't want to abandon you so you've then got to promote something in them that motivates them to keep that link going.

Arguably, the risk of Phil's approach is that it locates the young person's sense of abandonment between the poles of keeping contact with their imprisoned parent, or cutting off contact, and it leaves no real room for the messy place in between, the 'deep down' described by Helen above, which was a place filled with emotion and longing.

Vicky also understood that the impact of the imprisonment of a relative could be severe, to the extent that 'it's cutting them up completely.' She further commented on the fact that in that situation, young people put on a brave front, but could be left friendless, and very vulnerable:

> Different behaviour kicking in cos outside it's this bravado and when they come in or when that bravado falls because everybody's deserted them friendswise, that's when you see the vulnerability of them for sure.

Describing such a situation as one of 'total loss,' leaving the young people with 'nobody,' Vicky thought that to see the resulting vulnerability was 'kind of nice' as a contrast to the 'big hard exterior' and was evidence that 'there is feeling there, you know, and they're not just blank.' Vicky was empathetic, describing such a situation as 'very sad,' but it seemed that, despite being extremely vulnerable and alone, young people's acts of bravado could potentially be interpreted as a manifestation of a lack of feeling, unless or until they were able to show their vulnerable side. The act of putting on a front, as the young people described in Chapter Six, can be interpreted as a Goffmanesque adaptation to their situation: rather than there being any question of an absence of feeling, it was more case of them feeling that their self-identity was under threat.

In Mike's experience, young people withdrew from society in the face of uncertainty about how their parents' offending would be viewed. He used words of pain, such as worry, anguish and trauma, to describe this situation:

> They've kind of went into themselves a wee bit, become quite introvert, quite quiet. Obviously they're reflecting worrying and there's also stigma about what they've gone in there for, is it drugs? Has it been in the papers? Kids are

going to go over that as well, you know, it's quite traumatic experience…definitely a sense of anguish for them.

These observations captured and reflected the kind of self-imposed confinement or withdrawal, noted as a form of loss of liberty in Chapter Six.

Alison and Bridget also used the term 'traumatic,' to describe the situation faced by young people, and Sally noted one of her teenage clients had become depressed and refused to 'eat with her family,' when her mother was imprisoned. Several of the professionals noted that their young female clients became 'lonely' when their partners went to prison and Marie's clients (predominantly young women with children, whose male partners were in prison) felt 'scared of people judging them.' The professionals thus showed considerable awareness of how distressed and vulnerable their clients could become. Less clear was the extent to which the professionals identified the part that family imprisonment played in their clients' states of distress and trauma: if the professionals had a clear understanding of the direct impacts of the imprisonment of a family member, would they have remained so apparently hesitant to make overt reference to the issue in depth with their clients?

Alison noted that for one young person, the impact on her family was significant, and was felt as a massive loss:

> Her mum was in prison and her younger brother was in foster care I believe it was and she wasn't getting to see him either because he was in foster care. So I think she kind of felt her whole family had just disappeared on her apart from her constant being her gran.

In themselves, such losses posed as a potentially devastating and traumatic circumstance but Alison's service was one that provided residential care to young people in need, and therefore her client had lost her home as well as her mother and brother. Loss of home, and its links with identity, are explored in more detail below.

8.4 Home, and identity

In Chapter Six, the young people described 'home' in ways that showed how having a settled home was important to their sense of security and identity, which the

imprisonment of a family member could upset. Many of the professionals had supported clients to find or maintain housing, and it was apparent that imprisonment complicated and changed the issue of entitlement to a home, or the type of home that the relative of a prisoner would be deemed to be entitled to: 'I've had so many issues with housing where people have lost their home as a result of the crime' (Elaine). Elaine's observation showed how the issue both related to the practical aspects of navigating bureaucracy to secure shelter for clients (housing), but also the more nuanced concept of 'home,' which was at risk because of the imprisonment of a family member.

Elaine went on to say:
> They'll only be seen as a single person if their long term partner or husband is in prison, it doesn't matter how long for, they're still seen as a single person…Even if they're maintaining the relationship and because there's such a difficulty with housing at the moment.

In other words, housing officials, in their application of the regulations, would deny that the housing applicant was not 'single' by re-housing the partners of prisoners in single person accommodation, thereby linking housing entitlement to status, and demonstrating in very practical terms how the concepts of home and identity are linked. Kate noted that when one 15 year old boy's mother went to prison:

> Because of the length of custodial sentence the mother received, which was quite considerable, the boy was then made homeless, the Council wanted to evict him from his home.

It then became the job of Kate to assist her client to make a legal challenge in order to secure housing, and thus a home, for him.

Professionals also observed how the association of home with the criminal justice system, or with criminal offending within the home, changed the nature of the relationship that young people had with their home. Bridget spoke of a family whose home was searched. This was 'really traumatic' for the young people 'even if they weren't present.' And it left them feeling, not just that 'dad's been removed and isn't present any more' but also that 'elements of their immediate life have also been invaded and tainted by it as well.' Bridget's observation chimes with those young

people in Chapter Six, who felt that their home, and thus their secure identity, had been contaminated by the criminal justice process.

It could also be the case that, because imprisonment affected the role that young people had within the family, it changed the way they could behave within the home:

> Especially with the boys, if it's their father that's away often they become the man of the house, and there's not going to be a space at home where they can feel comfortable where they can discuss the things that they're maybe feeling. Whether they're going to do the same thing or whether they want to visit, whether they want to maintain contact, whether they never want to see them again, if they're angry, if they're sad, whatever it is, there's not space for that at home (Elaine).

Here, Elaine had observed the sort of role revision alluded to in my interviews with young people, when boys had to become 'man of the house.' Such role revision affected the relationship with home, suddenly rendering a space where childhood was being enacted to one now filled with adult expectations. This hints, too, at the emotional difficulties surrounding transition from childhood to adulthood, where the loss of a family member to prison meant that showing their feelings became something that young men no longer felt able to do because of the changed nature of relationships within their own home.

In contrast, Marie observed one family where the mother had 'only committed her first offence when she was 42,' meaning that her children (now aged 16 and 21) had 'a very stable upbringing' and when their mother was in prison 'that family structure was still really quite strong – they were still in the same family home, nothing else had changed really apart from their mum.' Marie felt that this constancy at the time of their mother's imprisonment had helped the young women to be 'quite balanced, they're quite secure in who they are.' In this example, home became a symbol of stability that helped the family to withstand the impact of the 'bizarre' late onset of the mother's offending.

The professionals discussed home in ways that reinforced the views of the young people, expressed in the previous chapter, namely that offending behaviour and imprisonment changed the nature of home, changed the young person's feelings

about and relationship with home, and changed aspects of the young person's behaviour and identity. In addition, the professionals showed how housing policy intersects with imprisonment in ways that are inimical to establishing a secure home and identity. As such, it could be argued that housing policy does not underwrite and support families to maintain a relationship with the imprisoned family member. In many cases the professionals recognised that the relationship with their home was a core issue for the young people, despite the fact that the professionals also had to deal with it as a practical issue of 'housing.'

In addition to housing issues, the professionals frequently worked in situations where issues of reputation and risk were key for their clients, as the next section of the chapter goes on to explore.

8.5 Reputation and risk

Although I have argued that the professionals may not have identified the extent to which family imprisonment was a key consideration for young people, it was apparent that the professionals had a strong sense that imprisonment was a fact of life for some families, and that this brought with it a certain degree of risk for the young people. In this section of the chapter, I discuss how the professionals spoke about these issues, and identify some problems inherent in the resulting narratives.

A first barrier to even recognising family imprisonment as a significant issue arose because the professionals worked in environments where imprisonment was not an uncommon event. According to Petra, for some families, imprisonment became 'mundane.' In addition, Petra said that if the members of the 'wider family' such as uncles or cousins were in prison, 'that's normal…it's just what happens.' As other professionals observed:

> If they're used to family members being in and out of prison I don't think it would be a major issue...I've worked with families where when their son is in prison it's no big deal. It's just an inconvenience (Kate).

> It's harder for some families than it is for others because of socially where they are. Prison's a fact of life for some families, as sad as that is (Elaine).

> There's a normality about that progression that you go to children's homes, you go to secure units, you go to young offenders and then you go to prison…it happens to everybody. Because it happens to so many people that they are in contact with on a regular basis (Phil).

Several other professionals shared Phil's view that the route from children's homes to secure units and then on to prison was a commonly encountered pattern.

This view of prison as an inevitable destination for young people was one also held by some of the adults in the families. One professional (Julia), who was working with an imprisoned father as well as the young people who were visiting him, recounted that the father had said to his two teenage daughters, 'oh, you'll end up in here.' This was a statement that Julia challenged by asking the father why he would say such a thing and she pointed out to him his daughters were obviously 'really smart.' Alison also took the opportunity to challenge her clients, saying 'you're trying to work with young people to say to them, 'that's not the way it has to be…we can help you change this and move on with your life.' Alison and Julia both showed that an important part of their function was to challenge the idea, which can take root in some families, that imprisonment was inevitable.

However, the use of language such as 'mundane,' 'inconvenience' and 'fact of life' served to downplay the perceived significance of imprisonment to certain families. As discussed in the literature review, chronicity (i.e. number of repeated occurrences) of parental imprisonment is likely to bring about adverse outcomes, both emotionally and behaviourally, for young people (Foster & Hagan, 2013). Therefore, by underplaying the matter, and by not addressing it directly as an issue, the professionals missed an important opportunity to give attention to a key risk factor in their young clients' lives.

The normalisation of prison in some young people's lives seemed to remove its power or significance as a form of punishment, either as a deterrent or as an expression of society's moral disapproval: 'there doesn't seem to be any recognition it's not a good place to be' (Carol). Professionals did note that in some cases having a family member in prison might embarrass young people, but it was the absence of

shame or stigma that was more notable: Carol and Phil both observed that there was 'no stigma.' However, the young people in their interviews described in Chapter Six said that they had to put on a front in order to manage wider social relationships, so this observation that young people perceived no stigma adds to the concern that in some respects there was a failure by the professionals to develop their relationship with, and thus understanding of, the young people more fully. This could, in turn, lead to a misinterpretation by professionals of the demeanour and actions of their clients.

8.6 How the 'risk of becoming offenders in future' discourse attaches to young people

In the previous chapter, the young men in particular showed that they were aware that they might be considered to be at risk of becoming offenders themselves by the mere fact of their relationship to the prisoner, and they were keen to resist this as a truth. The professionals, however, tended to accept the 'truth' of the situation, as can be seen from their remarks above. When they challenged the young people, they did so from a position of concern about how the young people might behave under pressure of this discourse.

The professionals observed that, despite their physical absence, family members in prison remained a presence in the young people's lives:

> You know for a fact that they're not even in touch with the sibling or the dad but yet you still hear them talking about them as if they're standing next to them (Vicky).

Vicky's words suggest significant issues of identity, absence and loss, but it was more common for the professionals to overlook those emotional, or internalizing, issues and to focus on the externalizing, or behavioural issues, such as Keith, who said:

> She's had no start in life and the impact of brothers and sisters that use drugs, go to jail, etc. etc. etc. has influenced her massively…She copies all their behaviour.

Their concerns about young people emulating or idolising imprisoned family members would lead the professionals to focus on exposing the adulation as a false belief:

> 'I worked wi a wee boy whose brother and father was in prison, em, and I'm still a bit worried that he may be thinking they're heroes' (Deborah).

Deborah said she did not talk to the young man she was working with about the fact that his father was in prison, because 'he knew that already,' but she was 'worried about his brother' and focused on what being in prison might be like:

> Kind of get him thinking about the things that people don't talk about, 'do you think he lies in his cell at night and greets?'

Deborah felt that this was beneficial because it was 'bringing that back to the real stuff,' and when the brother was released she asked him to speak to her young client:

> And he did and he tellt him it wasnae nice and he didnae ever want it for him, it's no brave. So that was good.

On the one hand, Deborah's concerns were entirely understandable because the father had been imprisoned for 'domestic violence' and the brother for being violent as well as 'drugs and all that stuff.' On the other hand, Deborah's efforts were directed towards the perceived behavioural risks attaching to her client, and she chose not to explore her client's feelings about the loss of his brother and father to prison.

Similarly, it was Shona's understanding that young people felt under considerable pressure to adopt a 'hard man persona' if their father was in prison, or their family was known for offending 'in the community.' When she asked such young people if they felt they 'had to' act in this way, the response she said she got was 'Aye', and Shona said:

> It's what's expected of them and it's difficult for some young people to go against what their parents do and their parents' behaviour if they get involved in offending. It's quite difficult for the children to say, "I'm no going to do that."'

Carol said that, unlike the wider community, 'We get to know the real girls and who they really are,' but the problems of an adverse family reputation rippled out into the

interactions the young people would have with people they do not know, and who do not know them:

> I think it's just more about society seeing this image that they're acting up to…for example if we can arrange for one of our girls to go to a course or something, but if there's people there who they don't know, who's heard of them then that would probably change how they would interact there with people they don't know, who don't know of them. So, it's more a kind of problem within their communities about word getting around and reputation. I think that's where the problem lies.

It was difficult, according to Carol, to challenge this: 'I don't know if there is a specific service that could deal with that.' Elaine was worried about the damaging effects of this kind of labelling of young people:

> I mean, statistics show us that you're more likely to go and commit a crime if you have a parent in prison and it's a statistic that I hate. I hate to see it…I don't think it's really helpful to put that statistic out there too often and label somebody because we've got a big enough problem trying to take away the stigma, it's just a statistic I hate.

However, Elaine's position was not that the statistics were untrue, or even open to question, but rather that they should not be put into play 'too often.'

It appeared to be the case that the policy discourse that young people were at risk of becoming the offenders of the future was concerning to the professionals, and they saw it as their job to undertake preventative work, as indeed many of them had been employed specifically to do, but this meant that the possible emotional impact of losing a family member to prison tended to be left unexplored. In addition, the professionals apparently felt somewhat helpless in the face of the community judgments and family pressures that the young people faced, and did not interpret the young people's responses as a crisis of identity (per Erikson, 1968). Rather, they engaged with the crisis of behaviour, which they felt more equipped to tackle, and thus arguably dealt with symptoms, rather than the more deep-rooted causes of distress.

8.7   Gender

As there appeared to be a gendered difference in their response to imprisonment on the part of the young people I interviewed, I also paid attention to gender in the analysis of the professionals' data.

Elaine, for example, observed how her young male client felt he had to become 'the man of the house,' when his parent went to prison. Phil also recounted an occasion when a teenage boy he worked with adopted adult role modelling:

> He was going to college, which he did, his idea was he would get out of college, hopefully get work of some sort, you know, be on the straight and narrow and dad could see that that was the way to go.

Petra said that her clients (all of whom were young women), who might struggle in other situations, such as applying for benefits, could become responsible when it came to supporting a family member in prison:

> They always find £10 to put in, always put money in when someone's in prison. They take on responsibility for their parent or brother etc. It's clear when someone is close to them there's a level of responsibility they take on with money, things they need.

Thus, the professionals observed role reversal and the adoption of adult roles in both their male and their female clients.

Carol found that her male clients were easier to engage with at the outset noting that, 'I felt you could build up a relationship quicker with boys whereas girls, I think they are kind of harder to build, earn that trust initially as well.' However, some of the professionals found it harder to gauge the emotional state of the young men they worked with:

> Boys are definitely harder, for me, I've found, because they obviously just sit at computers and not good at chatting and not good at sharing emotion, well these boys are. So that's been a real challenge for me and still quite a lot of work to do with that (Julia).

> On the surface it looked like he managed it, but I think there was things on the surface just bubbling, em, it was quite difficult for him to share what his feelings were (Kate).

This evidence would suggest that the issue of trust between young people and the professionals tasked with supporting them could be complicated no matter whether the client-group was young men or young women.

It appeared that the professionals could see a stronger trend for females to visit the prison than for males. In one family that Bridget worked with where a parent was in prison, the teenage girl did go to visit, but her brother did not, which Bridget said was because 'he was still too angry.' Julia also found that two of her male teenage clients had no interest in visitng their respective older brothers:

> I think boys particularly are not interested in visiting, or say that they're not interested in visiting and I wonder if that is about sitting for an hour and having an hour's conversation with somebody and that just not being something that 15 and 16 year old boys do?...So in both these cases it's their brothers and I've tried to kind of persuade them that maybe the virtual visits might be something they would prefer more because they're more used to speaking into an electronic, whatever, but I haven't really managed to get them to bite.

Making a general observation about the difference between working in a male prison as opposed to the women's prison, Carol noted that:

> The girlfriends and the wives would be loyal coming up every week, but the boyfriends and the husbands don't do that, there's nobody coming up to see the girls.

Keith had also worked with a young woman who did not receive any visits from her boyfriend when she herself was in prison, yet 'he was arrested on a warrant for not attending court and he's been in prison and she's been up twice already.' Asked why he though that his client was willing to go and visit her boyfriend, Keith said he thought it was 'Because she's begun to have a reliance, not a dependency, on him but a loneliness issue.' However, Emma thought that the reason her female clients visited their partners was due to a desire on the part of women to 'show that they're loyal to their man,' though she doubted that would be reciprocated 'if it was the other way around, which it often is as well.'

In the preceding section of this chapter, I discussed reputation and risk in terms of how the professionals interpreted and responded to this as an issue for the young

people generally, but I also analysed this data in order to consider gender more specifically.

Some of the professionals had an all-female client group, and reputation was an issue for their clients. Petra said that her female clients, 'have to live up to this family name,' and this meant 'they can't really show to be themselves.' Helen, too, noted that whereas her female clients themselves 'have never committed a crime,' their family circumstances put them at risk if: 'their family has a history of crime and they're very, very vulnerable.'

Marie's assessment, meanwhile, was that her male clients were likely to get drawn into territorial and family-related disputes in the area of Scotland in which she worked. She said of one of her clients that:

> In (*local area*) in particular it's territorial and there is a lot of gang-related violence and historic that stems from their fathers and family members. And people don't give up and walk away, and I don't know if that will ever change for him, but I really hope that it does.

Similarly, Shona was working with a 21 year old male prisoner in the adult prison, whose two younger brothers were both incarcerated in the Young Offenders Institution. Her client therefore:

> was saying his two younger brothers will be of an age to get moved to (*adult prison*) soon, so he says, "So the three of us will be up here soon as well."

Petra, Helen, Marie and Shona, all appeared to make the assessment that their clients were living in families and in geographic areas where crime was a common feature of family or daily life, and therefore family reputations posed very strong risks for their clients, irrespective of gender, and made it difficult for them to navigate to a crime-free identity.

In different circumstances, Bridget's female client, who came from a family that had no prior experience of crime, was badly affected by the media reporting of her father's crime (of murder). The effect was 'traumatic' and: 'For a teenager sitting

Highers, academically doing really, really well, looking at a really high end University, she didn't get there…'

Bridget's client was not currently visiting her father, as she was 'not ready yet' to do so, but, despite the traumatic impact on her life, 'She would like to at some point go and speak to him.'

Thus, just as with the young people I interviewed, it appeared from the professionals' accounts that prison visiting and loyalty to their family member was more strongly evident among their female clients. However, the reputational risk, or the effects of stigma and labelling, was portrayed as being more associated with the social circumstances of the young people than with gender.

8.8 Barriers to facilitating contact with a family member in prison

Several of the professionals worked in a prison setting and were actively engaged in bringing young people to see their family members in prison. However, even for those professionals it was not always possible to facilitate contact, and for others this would have been an exceptional piece of work for them to undertake. There appeared to be several reasons why the professionals would not, or could not, help young people to maintain contact with their family members while in prison. Some practical difficulties arose, but it was more common that a blend of attitudinal and structural barriers stood in the way.

8.8.1 Barriers to visiting prison: the visit room

As noted, many of the professionals worked in prisons, or in prison visiting centres, and most were willing in principle to assist young people to visit prison. However, when reviewing how the professionals spoke about young people's experience of trying to maintain a relationship with an imprisoned relative, it was significant that the professionals also gave their own assessments of the prison visit experience.

Elaine and Bridget said that visiting was difficult for everyone, not just for children and young people; and several professionals detailed the visit room experience:

> You've got to sit down and you've got 40 prisoners having visits at the same time (Phil).

Elaine said that she 'found it intimidating the first few times I went in, sometimes I still do.' And among the 'pressure' on families, it was occasionally the case that, 'You can see people being pinned to the floor,' in the visit room and as a result 'it's not somewhere people necessarily want to choose to go.' And Mike had seen 'fights happen' and said that it was 'quite frightening' to drive up to the prison. Kate also said it was quite frightening for anyone visiting 'for the first time.'

These concerns put visiting prison into context: it is a frightening and crowded place where drugs may be passed, fights may happen and people may end up physically restrained. These descriptions accord with the finding in the previous chapters that young people found visiting prison to be a 'scary' experience, and they reposition prison visiting from something that is hard for young people to cope with, which might be ascribed to their tender years, into a generally disturbing experience. Clearly the environment differs among the prisons, and family bonding visits, if available, are usually regarded as calmer and more family-friendly. But if skilled professionals reinforce the experience described by young people as being frightening or intimidating, then it does raise questions about the suitability of maintaining family contact in large prison visit rooms. It could also go some way to explaining the reluctance of some professionals to facilitate visits by young people to prison.

In response to the problem, Elaine thought that 'there's a case for (*over 16s*) to be treated as young people. And to have an appropriate visit...I think that under 21 you should be facilitating appropriate visits.' Only one professional had experience of facilitating the potential alternative to physical visits, namely virtual visits. This may have been open to Julia because she was working with a newly opened prison, which had the equipment, appeared willing to try new things and 'on the family side they're

doing a brilliant job' (Julia). The young people who undertook the virtual visits enjoyed them:

> Where virtual visits work it's just over in (*location*) that they have this virtual hub, and it's fantastic and the young people I have taken to do it have loved it, it's really, really good and it's just such an easy way for them to have that contact.

Despite the potential benefits of the virtual visits, only two professionals expressed awareness that these were an option for young people. It did appear that the idea of maintaining contact with a relative was most often assumed to be in the context of visiting prison, about which there were widely held anxieties. Meanwhile, a valuable alternative means of maintaining contact was not offered to the young people.

In any event, as the discussion now goes on to show, there were other obstacles to facilitating family contact that lay beyond the physical space occupied by the prisons themselves.

8.8.2 Attitudinal barriers to facilitating family contact

Vicky stated that social workers might rule against contact between young people and their parents in prison:

> Probably a lot of the time social work see it as a negative having the person in their life because it's someone who has committed a crime and then why would you be encouraging a young person to be in touch and engage and associated with someone who's in prison when you're trying to do the opposite and get them away from people that are in that situation?

Within this comment, the description of the prisoner as 'the person,' 'someone who has committed a crime,' or 'someone who is in prison,' loses sight of the familial relationship. Vicky ascribed these comments to social work and did not say if she shared this view. But even if the professionals were inclined to challenge such a de-personalised view of family relationships, the discussion at pp207-209 below shows that the hierarchy of decision-making was such that professionals in the voluntary sector had little scope to make such a challenge.

Other professionals also felt that workers in the statutory sector would not support contact with 'someone who's in prison.' Keith worked with a young woman who was in prison and whose sister did not visit because of being in residential care, and 'A children's unit isnae going to advocate to take a kid to prison.' There were other instances of service providers blocking visits that young people wanted to undertake. Alison said that in some cases, 'Young people are not allowed contact with their parents for different reasons.' Sally experienced a social worker refusing a 13 year-old visits to his mother, which he wanted to undertake, because the social worker thought that the mother would be 'cuffed.' Sally felt this exposed a lack of knowledge of modern prisons or the potential for family bonding visits in prisons - 'that's somebody who hasn't seen the moves that are trying to be made to include the families.' Meanwhile, Bridget found that two teenage girls in one family, who had been truanting from school, were denied contact with their father:

> I was trying to work with the prison and they were happy to set up video conferencing or happy if the social worker were to bring them up during the day. Unfortunately I spoke to the social worker and she absolutely put the kaibosh on that and said 'no, I'm not interested, we're focusing on the school stuff. Until we get that sorted I'm not interested in,' I think her words were 'giving them the reward of going to see dad'. Which really riled me, so then I'm left with the situation of these young people are not getting to see dad.

The idea that prison visiting was some sort of 'reward' along with the failure of the social worker to consider how the lack of contact with their father might be impacting on the young people's engagement with school are worrying signs of a failure to understand how young people might feel in response to losing contact with their father in prison. Little wonder that Bridget felt 'riled.' But Bridget was impotent in the face of the social worker's stance.

For some young people, the choice to maintain family contact by seeing their parent in prison was blocked by the parent providing care at home. For one of Joan's clients, a mother of an adolescent son, 'she doesn't want him having contact with (*father in prison*) because she says he's still involved in the drugs scene…and the criminal element, so she's trying to shelter him in a way.' Joan worked in a service that provided support to young people in partnership with parents, so Joan occupied the middle ground between the mother and her son, and therefore the young male in

this case did not have an advocate for his wish to see his father. Many of the professionals worked in services that supported the family as a whole, a recognised model of support, known as a 'whole family approach.' The whole family approach has been cited as good practice in working with families affected by imprisonment (The Robertson Trust, 2013) but this example shows that in balancing the needs of the whole family, the needs of children and young people may be obscured.

Together, these examples not only show that the decision for young people to visit or not is mediated through a number of agents – prisons, carers, support workers, social workers or children's units – but also that workers in third sector organisations are not empowered to make the final decision about visiting if statutory services are involved. The liminal position of young people, who have the capacity to make a decision about whether to maintain contact with their imprisoned relative, but not sufficient autonomy to put their desire into action (especially in the face of official opposition or reluctance) seemed very difficult for services to accommodate.

Beyond barriers that arose due to outdated knowledge and other attitudinal stances, the professionals could also be deterred from investigating or promoting contact with family members for reasons I describe as structural, as the following sections of the chapter show.

8.8.3 Structural barriers

Some of the structural issues for the professionals have already been alluded to above, such as how the service is funded, or the feeling they had of being outranked by social workers when young people wanted to have a relationship with a relative in prison. The data have shown, therefore, that although the provision of services by third sector organisations could be enhanced by their flexible approach, described below, a conflict between policy and practice as well as organizational hierarchy could also inhibit it.

The Introduction to this thesis explains that, within the holisitic policy framework of GIRFEC, there is a role for third sector organisations to work in a multi-agency way, and Julia found that she had 'good multi-agency support,' including with social workers. Yet, a colleague, who was working for the same third sector organisation in a different local authority area, said that she found collaborating with the local Criminal Justice Social Work team 'quite tough' and, despite trying, she 'really struggled to get any kind of relationship with them' (Bridget). These differences translated to the service that Julia and Bridget could provide to their clients: Julia was able to take birthday cake into the prison so the young people's birthdays could be celebrated with a parent and she was able to suggest a meeting in the prison with both parents of one 16 year old, as they happened to both be incarcerated in the same prison at the same time. This occurred with multi-agency support:

> We supported them through it and the children's home were great because they obviously had the relationship with (*young person*) and everything, prison social work had the relationship with both the prisoners so it was putting forward what everybody wanted and making sure that (*young person*) understood that this was her family and everyone was interested in what was going to happen next.

Without the same support from social work Bridget was unable to arrange contact for two young people and their father, as detailed above (p206). Bridget thought that the reason for her inability to get 'access' to the social workers was 'down to their personal busyness and stress,' suggesting that local circumstances and priorities could play a part in the service that young people received, but also emphasising that a third sector worker ultimately held little sway when it came to changing those priorities.

Vicky explained that a decision about whether to facilitate a young person to visit prison is one that carried responsibilities with it:

> If you decide to put it into place a young person goes to visit and it goes wrong, who takes the blame? Is it the person that's decided 'yes, they can do it?' Does it go higher above that? And I think there's a worry there that they don't want to be part of that blame.

Vicky went on to say that, in fact, 'we don't have the authority here to make that decision.' These comments illustrate the hierarchy of decision-making, which had

the potential to impact on how support workers could do their job. This may provide another possible rationale for not discussing family imprisonment with young people, as it could be difficult to initiate a subject that the professional could then find they had no power to advance: if discussion led to the young person expressing a desire to visit prison, the professional might have to disappoint them, and 'be left with the situation,' (as Bridget is noted to say above) which could jeopardise their relationship.

The professionals were not only concerned with the decision-making process, however. They could also find they were prevented from providing a service at all, or that services were sometimes dispensed with at an inappropriate time, often for reasons to do with budgets. Elaine said one client had access to a taxi service to transport her children to school, but 'social work wanted to withdraw that because dad was home for his first home leave so it was the first time he got out of prison in three years and he was home for a week and that's a really unrealistic expectation, things just don't go suddenly back to normal.' And Alison described how her service was 'pulled' from supporting one young woman when she reached 18 in favour of a 'cheaper option.' For Alison, the hard work of building a relationship was jeopardised by the removal of that support at the wrong time, but Alison's organisation did not have the power to prevent this. As a result, Alison felt their good work was undone and now the young person's progress had reversed: 'she's totally just flipped back about 5 years.' The significance of this should not be underestimated: Alison's client was now 'on heroin…and she's in court on Monday.'

According to Vicky, where 'you don't always necessarily agree with the decisions that are made,' there were no options other than, 'you've just got to go with that' because, as workers, they were 'at the bottom end of the spectrum.' And Phil said that it was a 'lottery,' both in terms of whether the social work team 'deem it necessary that they are a family in need of support,' as well as the type of support provided. Even Julia, who had a good working relationship with social workers, found that their inflexibility, especially a tendency to work in an office setting, was

unhelpful to the clients: 'it's a social work centre, the minute you say that to somebody that's not what they want' (Julia).

8.8.4 Age as a barrier to service provision

Age is an issue that overlaps with some of the structural difficulties described above. Alison gave an example, noted above, of services being withdrawn from an 18 year old, to her detriment. Phil, meanwhile had concerns that older teenagers were less likely to be offered a service in the first place, noting that 'very few referrals are made beyond the age of 17 and a half,' which he felt was financially driven: 'they're always thinking "right, who's going to be picking up the tab for this?" At 15, a problem child at 14, will get a service. A problem child at 17, less so.' Phil's comments are significant, not just because they reveal an age-limited service agenda, but also because they show how bureaucrats problematise the child or young person (see also 'problematic child' noted below), and fail to recognise a young person beset by problems not of their own making. This chimes with the 'risky' child discourse noted in the wider policymaking activities of the Scottish Government, and discussed in chapter Five. It also illustrates Côté's concern to understand adolescent identity as going beyond the purely psychological, and as being affected by structural and societal issues, as discussed in Chapter Two (Côté & Allahar, 1994; Côté, 1996). Phil's comments also underline the calculation that may be going on in service provision: in the upper teens, young people are edging towards 'adult' service provision, and therefore their status as a child in need of support begins to look less certain.

There were also issues with age-related health services, especially mental health where Helen and Emma both found that girls below the age of 18, 'cannot get a diagnosis' and therefore could not get a service. In addition, if young people were offered an appointment with a mental health practitioner they were burdened with adult expectations: 'because it's an adult service if they miss two appointments that's them off.' (Helen). In this way, moving young people to adult services before they are ready could effectively be seen as setting them up to fail.

Sixteen appeared to be a critical age. For example, Petra commented about the young women she worked with that, 'they're expected to be adults as they are over 16. And they've never had a level of responsibility due to being in care.' And Alison, among several other professionals, also had concerns about this age group:

> Sometimes social work you think…they can't wait to get to 16 if they are a particularly problematic child to try and move them on. And that's when I think children of 16, and they are still children, they're young adults but they're still children, kind of fall through the net a wee bit.

But professionals observed that it was not just service providers that had expectations of 16 year olds. In Alison's experience the young people themselves hankered for independence: 'young people in the past when they come to 16 it's like, 'oh, bye, bye, cheerio I'm going to get on with my life.' However, this could be a time when the young people missed the support they had previously received and 'they're left floundering' and ultimately 'fall between the cracks' (Alison). In some young people's experience, too, it was their parents who were keen to move them on. Joan noted there had been occasions she came across when 'young people at 16 have been chucked out of the house and have been waiting, parents are sitting there saying they're waiting till the date until they were 16.'

Thus, although transition into adulthood may occur throughout the period from teenage years into their twenties, the young people known to the professionals here appeared to be particularly vulnerable around the age of 16. For many of the professionals, 16 or 18 was not necessarily an age at which young people were ready for adulthood, although individuals, families and other service providers might assume otherwise. Vicky suggested that the stakes were high for that age group because 'between 16 and 18 is a very difficult age that if we don't manage that very carefully we'll lose a lot of young people to the streets and with no money, no way of knowing how to make money and that's difficult.' For Marie, even 25 was too young for adult responsibility in some cases: 'although at 25 they're still an adult, it's still very young if they're at that level of maturity.'

The disparity of the approaches described above, varying among the age groups from mid teens to mid twenties, serves to underline how vague and indeterminate the approach to young people can be, which inevitably has implications for service-provision. Indeed, from the foregoing it can be seen that providing support to young people affected by family imprisonment can be difficult for a variety of reasons, and the chapter now goes on to consider service provision in more detail.

8.9 Service provision in practice

Given that the professionals appeared to have a number of practical, attitudinal and structural barriers facing them, this part of the chapter considers what they had to say about overcoming those barriers. Firstly the professionals had to develop relationships with the young people and then they had to adopt flexible work practices. The analysis goes on to consider the extent to which these approaches made it possible for young people to access services, and finally discusses the overarching role of national policies.

The professionals uniformly stated that building a relationship and securing the engagement of young people was critical to working with them successfully. However, they did not underestimate the challenge that this posed, often because the young people had been exposed to so many workers and interventions already:

> I've had young people who have worked with hundreds of workers throughout their life and they are fed up telling them the same thing, the same people and as they see it there is no change, so why bother? (Helen).

The experience of services was often 'negative,' and for young people who have 'been through so many, many different services, so many foster homes, so many children's homes…it's all about rejection. Nobody hangs around for long, that's really how they see it' (Phil).

Added to this complex interplay of issues was the realisation that, whatever their skills and sincerity, the professionals are paid workers: 'they'll say, 'I don't want anybody being paid to be my friend.' (Deborah). Together, these observations point

to the scale of the task facing the professionals when they set out to provide a service.

Overcoming these barriers in order to build a working relationship was the first step: 'you can't have a conversation where a young person is going to take on board issues that are important unless you have a good relationship with them' (Emma). The main challenge lay in getting young people to engage. Many of the professionals felt that being 'non-judgmental' was an important facet of engagement, such as Shona, who said the key challenge lay around 'Building up a rapport wi' the young people where they feel they're not being judged, that they are being listened to and that you're taking them seriously as well.' To ensure young people would engage with them, professionals felt they had be 'relaxed' (Julia) (Mike), 'confident, you've got to be assertive,' (Mike), and professionals had to come across as genuine because 'they're quick at seeing through falseness and quick at seeing through people that are condescending or pandering to, just trying to get on their good side' (Phil). Even so, somehow the professionals had to find a way of 'getting them to like you' (Keith). One way of achieving this was to adopt flexible working practices.

8.9.1 Adopting a flexible working approach

In contrast to the perceived constraints of social work practices and structures, the professionals felt that, as third sector employees, they were empowered by a more flexible approach and ability to respond to their clients. For example, working with the young people often involved taking them out for something to eat, and MacDonald's, Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken were all mentioned as venues where the professionals could sit and talk to their clients. Although it may have been the familiarity or anonymity of those venues that created a safe space in which to talk, the humanity of providing food and eating with their clients was important:

> That includes me sitting and eating with them as well, which I think is really important and sometimes we just buy loads of fruit and you should see the way they gobble up this fruit and I think, 'you never get fruit' but how easy is that to go and buy some grapes and bananas or whatever? (Julia).

In addition, the professionals had to be flexible in how they worked. Deborah said this meant:

> You've got to do it on their terms. If they're running, you need to run wi' them, and when they settle you need to settle wi' them, so it's really on their time.

Joan pointed out, however, that working on the young person's time could pose practical difficulties because 'people don't have crises when your diary dictates that you're gonnae be in work.' In other words, it was not always possible to be on hand when clients had a crisis and were most in need of support. Despite such difficulties, Deborah said that her project enabled her to be responsive because 'we're no hourly paid for, we were able to say right hold on a minute, change the diaries.' Julia also felt that her organisation allowed for flexibility, noting that, 'being so needs-led and so flexible towards what works…we're approaching it in the right way I think.' Most of the professionals shared Julia's description of having a 'needs-led' service.

That said, Bridget cautioned that agencies did not always accurately assess what it was that young people needed: 'sometimes what we think they need is not necessarily what they want. So at that point they will disengage with you themselves.' To avoid this, Bridget said that 'we've got to take our time' to build a relationship in order to make a better assessment of need. Although many of the professionals felt they had sufficient time to build a relationship, some projects were funded in such a way as to make this more difficult:

> Previously we worked for a lot longer than that and it's just the way our funding has came in that; it's been more restrictive…Some families take years and years to work with to get them in a place where you're ready to finish up with them (Marie).

Despite this, there was a sense that some young people should be 'moved on' because funding was limited: 'we're wasting time as in we're not getting paid to work with the 23 year olds, the 22 year olds' (Keith). Keith's point was that he should be focused on the under 21s for whom his project was funded. Thus, professionals as paid workers could ultimately only ever focus on relationships as far as funding and structural constraints would permit.

Nevertheless, some professionals felt that those working in third sector organisations were more resourceful: 'In the voluntary setting we seem a bit more able to find those supports that are there' (Sally). In Sally's assessment, therefore, young people would stand a better chance of accessing services if they were linked in to a voluntary organisation, rather than statutory services. And, while this may be true, it adds another layer of bureaucracy for young people to navigate: how are young people to discern the difference between statutory and voluntary services? A further question might also be, to what extent are they given the chance to choose?

8.9.2 Young people accessing services

This chapter has already flagged up some ways in which it may be difficult for young people to access services, especially when crossing the divide at age 16 or 18 into adult service provision where funding may be an issue. Professionals tended to have differing views about whether sufficient services existed: Sally said that although there were no services 'specifically' for young people with a parent or sibling in prison, there were generic services such as 'befriending.' Gaining timely access to such services, however, could be problematic:

> If somebody's dad or mum's gone to prison, or brother, sister and this young person is feeling the impact of that, they're wanting support now, they're not wanting to have to wait six months, a year by which time the person's out of jail (Sally).

Kate also felt that there were services, but that young people's 'knowledge of how to access' was the issue, and she said there was 'no way' that a young person she had helped with a legal issue could have accessed the law centre by himself. A young person who was not in receipt of support would be likely to struggle on their own, therefore, if, as Marie said, 'people don't know what services are available,' and 'they're just kind of left to it.'

The professionals also noted that there were practical difficulties involved with access to services, and Petra said that the 'reality of their lives is not matched by the services,' explaining that when required to access the Jobcentre or benefits there was 'an assumption they all have access to the internet. There are some computers in

libraries and a few in the Jobcentres but it's daunting to go into the library.' In addition, particularly because 'some girls have poor reading skills,' Petra said that it was an 'unfair expectation' that the young women could manage these tasks. Another problem for young people was that they needed to be ready to access services that were available. Carol said that if young people were on 'training placements' or 'rehab' this could be disrupted if:

> All of a sudden something else can happen in their family life or they could pick up another charge for something and all of a sudden they're not going any more and it just hasn't been the right time yet when they were steady enough to maintain another service.

In those circumstances, Carol said that the young people would lose their placement. Thus, even if the professionals were able to offer flexible services their effectiveness would be limited if other service providers could not offer the same degree of flexibility as a means of accommodating young people's sometimes uneven transition to adulthood. In general, the professionals described a broad range of problems for young people in respect of identifying or accessing support services.

8.9.3 The role of national policies in service provision

As Chapter One and Chapter Five discussed, the delivery of services to children and young people in Scotland below the age of 18 takes place beneath the umbrella of GIRFEC, and holistic policies such as the Whole Systems Approach (WSA). Three of the professionals mentioned GIRFEC and/or the WSA by name and one mentioned the well-being measurement indicators located within GIRFEC, known as SHANARRI (standing for Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included). Helen said that agencies should all be working from the WSA and GIRFEC, 'but not everybody follows it.' As a result, 'the reason our project exists is because we're there to pick up the lost people in this whole thing.' And Mike explained that, on taking referrals from education, social work or a local mental health centre his service would 'work on the tasks that they've identified.' However, after carrying out a SHANARRI assessment, 'sometimes these assessments do conflict a wee bit.' Despite the potential for conflicting assessments,

Mike said his project had good working relationships with partner agencies, so that this was acknowledged as 'part of the process, and we understand that.'

Carol highlighted one way in which young people might get lost notwithstanding the holistic approach of policies such as GIRFEC or the WSA, noting that for one young woman, 'her whole systems worker left as soon as she turned 18, as they do.' For Julia, there were gaps because 'for those that aren't on the social work radar at all, who picks them up and realizes their support need? It's just by complete chance.' There was also an identified disconnect between the stated policy and the reality of service provision, which Joan described in the context of 'the whole GIRFEC' as being:

> It's good having these policies but what are you doing on the ground running? When your local authority are pulling the plug on our local youth and alcohol project, drugs project…And you're thinking, 'yes, you're going out and you're putting all these policies and strategies in place but what are you putting in actually on the ground, in the coalface?'…There's something that's not tying up.

Thus, although there were clear indications that the professionals were aware of the policies overarching their work, it was also clear that the system was working imperfectly. In particular, the problem of inadequate resourcing led Joan to question the merits of the policy itself, and to suggest that policymaking was adrift from the reality of providing services in practice.

One of the key differences that became apparent in the approach taken by statutory services and those located in third sector organisations was that the latter adopted the principles of well-being, whereas the former were working from statute, and thus from a rights-based approach. As has been observed in Chapter Five, taking such a different approach can affect how outcomes are measured. Julia felt that by adopting a needs-led approach, 'the outcomes they just come themselves.' However, other professionals had concerns about measuring outcomes. Helen made the fundamental point that, for the 'individual girls,' success might 'not be a huge success story as maybe the funders might want to see' but still, for that young person, 'it's been massive.' Phil felt that 'politicians…looking for votes in the general election in

May' would only be interested in 'a headline that they can say, 'look, sorted,'' and they would not be interested in the longer term nature of the outcomes:

> If I work with a young person at 16 or 17 you might not see the fruits of that till they're 21, when they become a decent young person who is living a half decent lifestyle. You might not see that between 16 and 20, but 21, 22, 23 they might flourish.

And Joan felt that the outcomes were likely to be intangible, and not amenable to measurement:

> We're a soft service in a lot of ways because you can never really validate how effective our service is because there's not a strong indicator saying 'well, if we never went in, would they still have maybe came through it all?'

There was, therefore, a range of problems surrounding measurement which were a source of anxiety for the professionals, and which might signal longer term problems for measuring the efficacy of the policy framework.

8.10 Conclusion

In Chapters Six and Seven, the young people talked about their experiences of having a family member in prison in ways that made it apparent that they found the situation to be emotionally painful and traumatic, and they felt that their identity and security to be threatened. Those young people said that they felt an immense sense of loss, similar to bereavement, they described considerable emotional hurt and trauma, and they expressed ways in which their relationship to their home was fundamentally altered, with implications for their ontological security and thus their self-identity. In addition, the young people interviewed seemed to lose control of their situation, and they found it extremely difficult to talk about anything to do with their relative's imprisonment, or how it made them feel. In many ways, the painful aspects of imprisonment that prisoners are known to endure were similarly felt by the young people.

The data analysed in this chapter, has many parallels with that of the two preceding chapters. For example, the professionals recognised that the young people they

worked with felt a sense of loss when a family member went to jail. It was evident, too, that the professionals observed a gendered response to the imprisonment of a family member, in that they saw it was more likely that their female clients would visit the prison than the males. The professionals also saw that the young people were often traumatised by their situation, and that it was very important for them not to feel as if the professionals were judging them. All of the professionals expressed a good deal of empathy and concern for their clients, and were strongly motivated to develop trustworthy relationships with them.

However, I contend that, in the main, the professionals responded to the behaviour they observed without adequately addressing how imprisonment specifically had affected the young people, and therefore missed an opportunity to fully address their clients' needs. This occurred, not through a lack of care, but because the way in which imprisonment impacts feelings of self-identity among young adult family members has rarely been studied and is not well understood. In addition, there were a number of barriers operating to prevent the professionals from getting to the heart of how the young people were affected. As a result, the professionals worked towards addressing practical and behavioural problems, rather than the deeply felt emotional issues, and they often underestimated the impact of family imprisonment upon their young adult clients.

It was very apparent from the data provided by the professionals that they had to face serious structural difficulties which were tied into their status as employees in a third sector organisation. Although GIRFEC promotes multi-agency working, which could be presumed to imply equal status, the professionals clearly felt that the system was a hierarchical one, in which they ranked below statutory services, and social work in particular. This impacted on their work, sometimes stripping them of the authority to work in a timely fashion with their clients, or the ability to assess the appropriate moment to withdraw their service, or whether to assist young people to visit a relative in prison. The professionals were aware of the precarious nature of their funding, and that work that was based on building relationships could be hard to measure. Furthermore, it could be difficult to evidence effectiveness, and they were

often constrained by models of service provision that were age-limited. Thus, although the professionals strove to deliver flexible, needs-led services, underpinned by strong personal relationships, the structural issues they encountered often undercut this and could present barriers to multi-agency working, to the disadvantage of the young people.

Funding restriction and an adherence to age-limited statutory duties combined to restrict the professionals' ability to deliver services that would match their clients' needs. In particular, the young people who would be liable to be referred for support to the professionals were likely to have complicated transitions. Thus, young people from families that expected them to be independent at 16 were also likely to be the same young people who would not manage to navigate the benefits system or to find and sustain employment from the outset. To support young people making complex transitions, professionals need to be well-resourced and empowered to make key decisions in their clients' best interests. Further, they need to be available to young people from age 16 until their mid or even late twenties.

However, many of the professionals were tasked with preventative work: they were often brought in by Social Work or Education services because a young person was perceived to have behavioural issues, or to be at risk of offending or even at risk of being (re)-imprisoned. Addressing the emotional impact linked to the imprisonment of a relative was not a clear objective for those professionals. Instead, the key objective was to address any risky behaviour that was in evidence. This meant that the onus was on the young people to open up and talk about the imprisonment, even though the previous chapters showed that this was highly unlikely to happen. I would suggest that the professionals could not fully develop the trusting relationships they sought if they did not know the depths of feeling of the young people they were trying to support. In addition, there was a missed opportunity because the professionals did help their clients in many ways (getting to prison visits, sorting out housing, finding training places, and so on) but they did not help resolve a core issue to do with their clients' identity crises.

When family imprisonment did arise as an issue, the professionals often downplayed it, either because they felt that some families were used to imprisonment as a 'fact of life,' or because they believed that it had little impact on the young people. Several of the professionals assumed the young people did not feel stigmatised, even though the young people in Chapters Six and Seven did state that there was stigma and they felt at risk of being judged. The professionals here were likely to take an appearance of unconcern at face value, and did not understand that this, and similar acts of 'bravado,' were coping mechanisms, adaptations to a situation that posed a threat to the young peoples' sense of self-identity.

The policy discourses that prisoners are responsible for their own rehabilitation and that family contact aids prisoners to stop reoffending, are key to the Scottish government policy on imprisonment and reducing reoffending yet they do not appear to have much traction in the lives of the young people and their families with whom the professionals were engaged. However, a third policy discourse – that young people are risky and the offenders of the future – was very much in evidence. The professionals were realistic in their acceptance of the truth of this discourse because it was what they had repeatedly observed in their work. They were particularly aware that young people entering residential care were susceptible to following a pathway that would end in prison. However, in their realism the professionals risked minimising the potential impact of imprisonment on the young people, viewing repeated instances of imprisonment as making families resilient and more impervious to its effects, instead of considering that repeated prison sentences could bring repeated harms.

Many of the professionals also observed that young people might idolise an imprisoned relative, and felt that it was their job to persuade the young person that their admiration was misplaced. As the previous two chapters showed, young people have very complex feelings about having a relative in prison, and it is painful for them to recalibrate their view of their family member. This also has implications for how young people feel about themselves. I would argue that the professionals did not show sufficient understanding of the complexity of the situation when they simply

challenged the young people and tried to take down the mythological status of their relative. That is not to say that the professionals should have agreed that the imprisoned relative was heroic, but it is rather to argue that the young people were not just mistaken, and about to follow an inevitable path into offending themselves. Instead, I contend that the young people were going through an intense period of identity crisis, with which they needed explicit and detailed help.

Even if the professionals had been minded to explore the impact of imprisonment in more depth, there were a number of barriers to them doing so. Prison visiting rooms are not suitable places for families to meet and try to retain some sense of intimacy. The professionals themselves found the idea of prison visiting rooms off-putting but also appeared not to have any great awareness of alternatives such as virtual visits. In addition, there was a bureaucratic hierarchy that meant that professionals working directly with young people, but in third sector organisations, felt they did not have the right to decide that a young person should have contact with an imprisoned relative. Arguably, it made it more difficult to explore the issue if the professional could not fulfill the young person's wish or need to see the prisoner. It also meant that the decision about maintaining contact with an imprisoned relative did not belong to the young people, but was liable to be mediated by several others, many of whom, as this analysis shows, are likely to have an incomplete understanding of what imprisonment means to young people.

Finally, when reflecting on how easily young people could access services, the professionals identified this as an area that presented various hurdles, and they concluded that many young people would simply not have the resources to enable them to secure a relevant service. The young people occupied an indeterminate space between services for children, and those available for adults, and were disadvantaged because of this. Thus, despite an avowed holistic policy environment, young people remained invisible to some services, their needs obscured by competing policy discourses and, as one professional observed, at risk of 'falling between the cracks.'

CHAPTER 9   Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the following questions:

- How do young people experience having a family member in prison?
- Does the imprisonment of a family member pose problems that are particular to young people during the transition to adulthood?
- How does Scottish policymaking approach the issue of family imprisonment for young people in transition to adulthood?

The aims and objectives of the thesis set out in Chapter One were thus to consider the place that imprisonment occupies within a Scottish policymaking context, especially from the perspective of young people over the age of 16, who are in transition to adulthood, and who are also contending with the imprisonment of a close family member: this perspective was augmented by that of professionals working with the young people. Taking all of their experiences into account, I sought to understand the adequacy or otherwise of the policymaking environment that pertains. This final chapter therefore draws together the evidence within the thesis that I argue fulfils these aims and objectives. I conclude by suggesting ways in which research and policy could be developed to better meet the identified needs of young people with a family member in prison.

9.2 Young people, transitions and identity

As Chapter Two sets out, identity is a complex and multi-faceted concept, in which a single person can occupy a number of identity positions simultaneously. In addition, the passage from adolescence to adulthood is a period when young people are trying to establish their self-identity while at the same time navigating key transitions: away from family and home, away from school into education or employment, and into intimate relationships. The journey through these transitions is not always linear and

smooth, and the evidence considered in this thesis suggests that there are some considerable problems about how young people from families affected by imprisonment are characterised and how their transitions are understood and catered for in law and in policy.

9.2.1 Transitions

In Chapter Two it was argued that young people who are in the course of moving into adulthood are potentially vulnerable to risks that may threaten or complicate their efforts to establish a secure sense of their self-identity. The literature on transitions and on identity suggests that disruption to family life, and the need to keep secrets can pose risks to identity. In addition, the discussion in Chapter Six showed that when the young people spoke about how the imprisonment of their relative affected their connection to their home, this also had implications for their ontological security, and thus their identity.

Arguably, then, transition is a phase during which young people should receive the utmost care and support. However, the policy analysis in Chapter Five suggests that, although policymakers do make statements to show a recognition of the late teenage years and early twenties as a time of vulnerability, there is little positive policymaking activity that actively supports transition. The most recognisable strand of policymaking for this age group is, as explored in Chapter Five, for young carers and young people who have been looked after by their local authority. In other cases, such as when the Scottish Prison Service may decide to hold a young person in a Young Offenders Institution after age 21, or when prosecutors decide whether to divert a young person away from prosecution through the court, there is at best a discretionary approach rather than any rights-based entitlement.

Otherwise, young people will be treated as adult from the age of 18, and frequently from as young as 16, as the professionals in Chapter Eight explained. The professionals set out a number of situations where this was inappropriate in their view, such as young people attending adult mental health services, or having training places or mentoring terminated too early. Additionally, the young people themselves

do not always feel their treatment as adults to be appropriate. Tricia for example, found the discontinuation of her ability to attend bonding visits in prison terminated as soon as she became 18, noting that on reaching that age, 'they don't take into account that he's still my dad and I'm still that same person but you just morph into a normal visitor and it's just so weird.'

Anyone over the age of 16 can visit a prison unaccompanied, but Lewis, who was 21 (and was himself a father) only visited once on his own and found it 'weird.' he preferred to visit with his grandmother and his aunt because this made him feel 'a bit mair safer.' There were therefore clear signs among the young people that on occasions, especially when they were interacting with the prison regime, they felt the need to be protected from adulthood, and to still be able to claim a childlike status. In the observations of both the professionals and the young people, therefore, the years from 16 on into the early and mid-twenties represent a liminal period when young people occupy a space of both childhood and adulthood. There is no neat division between the two spaces, which have fluid edges and often overlap.

The confused approach of policymakers and the complex feelings of the young people themselves combine to place young people in transition to adulthood in a marginal state where their status and entitlement to services are rendered unclear. The situation is further complicated by the intensive, almost exclusive, focus on the parent-child relationship, as the next section of the chapter explores, and which I suggest is problematic for many young people.

9.2.2 The problems associated with ascribing a narrow identity to young people

One of the most notable aspects of undertaking research about young people from families affected by imprisonment is the very narrow identity that is ascribed to such young people: they are subsumed into the term 'family,' and are identified only in terms of the parent-child relationship. Chapter Five made the point that such policy as there is in relation to young people with a family member in prison is focused

upon those under the age of 18 who have a parent in prison. Yet, of the sample of 14 young people who took part in this research only eight were affected by parental imprisonment. Of those, one of the young people with a parent in prison also had a step-brother and an uncle in jail, and another had experienced an uncle going to prison as well as her own mother. Meanwhile, three young people had a sibling, and three had a romantic partner with whom the young person had a child, in prison. And as Chapter Eight notes, professionals working with families affected by imprisonment are as likely to encounter a case of non-parental imprisonment as they are to encounter the imprisonment of a parent.

Thus, young people who have a sibling or a partner in prison are left out of account. Yet, as Rosie said, the impact of her brother going to prison when she was just 12 affected her 'massively,' and during the eight years of his sentence she had to cope with 'someone not being there that always was there,' as well as 'the stigma surrounding it.' Lynne was also affected by her step-brother's imprisonment and said that his imprisonment, following her father's, meant that 'I don't get close to people…I push people away.' In her small-scale study of younger siblings with an older brother in prison, Meek (2008) found that there was considerable distress among her sample, which she described as 'a particularly vulnerable group who remain largely invisible in terms of policy, practice and research' (p. 273). The present research confirms that this group is indeed largely hidden, and that they are likely to suffer the pains of imprisonment to the same degree as any other family member.

One of the professionals I interviewed told me that family bonding visits in Scottish prisons are theoretically available to all children, including siblings, but only some of those young people who were visiting a parent mentioned attending bonding visits in their conversations with me. Although the general use of the term 'family' or 'families' in relation to prisoners does not exclude siblings, the policy environment is so much focused upon parents that exclusion by omission effectively occurs.

In a similar way, the young partners of prisoners are largely absent from policy and research, unless the focus is upon parenting and the potential impact of imprisonment

upon their children. Beth, however, found her situation 'sad' and uncertain when she said (p154) that she did not know if her partner would stop offending in the future. Her future plans were in doubt because of her situation. In Jane's case, her partner's imprisonment was clearly agonizing for her, as the discussion of her emotional turmoil at p153 shows. Jane went on to explain that the rules at bonding visits were strict: 'basically you're just there tae obviously to bring the wean in and supervise the wean.' So, even in the more intimate family time, there was no space for her to be with her partner and 'a few times I've heard the lassies shouting at people for maybe, like, cuddling or that, you know.' Jane's role at the bonding visit was merely to attend with their child so her partner could parent under the eyes of the prison staff, who gave directions: 'you're here to spend time, it's a bonding visit, so bond with your child, come up and get your child.'

One of the professionals interviewed had a number of young mothers with a male partner in prison among her client group. She thought that the situation was difficult for those young women because the support of their own family would fall away if the young man returned to prison more than once: 'the family soon get fed up of picking up the pieces all the time.' For those young women it was 'difficult' because 'they've always got that hope that things will change… the young mums really cling on to that' (Marie).

Thus, the situation for young women with children waiting for their partners to reform, and meanwhile maintaining contact by visiting prison, was emotionally burdensome, and the young women could become isolated from their own families. In terms of prison policy and prison visiting, however, their identity was restricted to that of parent, and their young children were, according to the Early Years policy approach cited in Chapter Five, already viewed as being at a 'higher risk of growing up to be offenders themselves.'

The term 'family' is evident throughout policy documents such as the GIRFEC materials, but it is apparent that this is a term that is frequently used as a proxy for the parent-child relationship, and it is therefore a term that risks obscuring the strength and importance of other 'family' relationships. If policy is too often refracted through the prism of parenting, then it will leave non-parents behind, and,

in addition, it will ignore the capacity for parents to have simultaneous identities, such as those of romantic partner and young adult.

However, as the discussion of intersectionality in Chapter Three suggests, discourses that do not recognise multiple identity positions are essentialising and disempowering. Furthermore, the sociological aspects of identity are such that imprisonment places young people in intensely difficult situations, causing them to struggle with their sense of self-identity, as I now go on to discuss.

9.2.3 Young people and societal responses to them

Third sector organisations often choose titles for their reports or campaigns that make plain the fact that families feel punished when a relative goes to prison: the international organisation COPE (Children of Prisoners Europe) runs an annual campaign under the banner *Not my crime, still my sentence,* and the SCCYP report of 2008 was entitled *Not seen, not heard, not guilty,* for example. In the two reports that underpinned the desire to carry out this research, referred to in Chapter Two, young people spoke about feeling as if they, too had done something wrong:

> It makes you feel horrible, like you have done something too. They watch you and make you feel guilty just for being there (Brown K. , 2001, p. 35).

> The way you're treated…Treating visitors like prisoners (McCulloch & Morrison, 2001, p. 20).

These feelings were also articulated by the young people that I interviewed, such as Rosie, who said: 'no family member should have to go through that visit because it literally like treats us like criminals,' or Tricia, who asked about the way that prison officers behaved, 'why are you then saying that my mum and I have to suffer? Like, what have I done? I haven't done anything.' These voices of young people add to the many adult voices in the literature that suggest that the family feels they are punished along with the prisoner (Comfort M. , 2003; Breen, 2008; McGillivray, 2016).

In Chapter Two the enduring relevance of the works of Sykes (1958) and Goffman (1961) was discussed, and in Chapter Six reference to this literature helped to show how the pains of imprisonment endured by prisoners are replicated for young people outside the prison. If, as the evidence suggests, young people feel they are blamed, punished and treated just like prisoners, the parallels in Chapter Six ring all the more true. In particular, the analysis in Chapter Six showed how the young people also experienced the kind of psychological harm articulated by Sykes and Goffman. For these young people, the imprisonment of their family member was effectively an assault upon their sense of self. However, in Chapter Two I made the case that self/identity could not only be understood by considering its psychological aspects: it is a sociological concept, too. This was borne out by the analysis in chapters Six, Seven and Eight, which showed that the young people responded to how they felt themselves to be perceived in their wider family, in their local community, and by society more generally.

The sociological links with identity are particularly important for young people who have a family member in prison because, as Chapter Two argues, the passage to a secure adult identity is made more difficult when young people suffer from a disruption to their family life. When Frances spoke about her mother, who had spent several months in prison, she highlighted how difficult it was not to have her mother there: 'my mum's like the main person of the family sort of thing, she's like, <u>the</u> family, so em, without her it was just weird' (Frances' emphasis). Lewis, too, found it hard to cope with his father in prison, saying 'I miss him.' As explained in Chapter Three, the loss of a family member to prison creates a situation where feelings of ambiguous loss arise, adding grief and confusion to the traumatic impact of the imprisonment.

In addition, the place that young people occupy in wider society is rendered much less certain when they are affected by family imprisonment and a lack of stability, or with having few resources. The professionals I interviewed felt that the young people they worked with, who were faced with these problems, were struggling to find their place in society: both Emma and Deborah described their clients as believing

themselves to be 'different,' and Emma pointed out that 'there's no point in trying to get them to go to a place where they're just no going to fit in.'

These observations underline the way in which identity is impacted by social structures, and show how sensitive young people are to the messages that 'society tells them' (Deborah) about who they are and where they fit in. Being marked out as 'different' from other young people (as the young people I interviewed clearly felt themselves to be) brought huge disadvantage to the young people the professionals encountered, and circumscribed the opportunities they had available to them. It added to the reasons for young people not to speak out about their situation. As Chapters Two and Three suggest, it is important to be able to create a story of oneself and to develop a narrative identity, but young people with a family member in prison instead suffer a loss of voice. The narrow and negative discourse that attaches to young people with a family in prison is thus extremely harmful. Further, as the chapter now goes on to discuss, a *lack* of policymaking also serves to create harm.

9.3 The policy gap and policy incoherence

As noted in Chapter Five, examining the policy environment in Scotland shows that families of prisoners occupy multiple roles: they can be seen as victims, or as agents for change, or as service users in their own right. In their first role as putative victims, Chapter Three showed that although this is a relatively common portrayal, there is a lack of agreement about the nature of the victimhood of families.

The ideal victim was a stereotype that Nils Christie (1986) envisaged to explain who was most likely to have 'legitimate and unambiguous victim status' conferred upon them as a result of having a crime committed against them. Christie's ideal victim has six key attributes. Firstly, they are weak in relation to the offender. Secondly, they are legitimately going about their business. Thirdly, they are without blame. Fourthly, they are unrelated to the offender, who is a stranger to them. Fifthly, the

offender is big and bad and finally, the victim has sufficient power, influence or sympathy to evoke the status of victim without, meanwhile, being 'opposed by so strong counter powers that you cannot be heard' (Christie, 1986, p. 21).

Clearly, families of offenders can never truly achieve the status of Christie's ideal victim because of their relationship with the offender. In addition, families of offenders are rarely seen as being entirely free from blame – the National Parenting Strategy, discussed in detail Chapter Five, is an example of how failure to prevent children from growing up to be offenders is posited as a failure of parenting and the children of offenders are portrayed as risky subjects, not virtuous victims. Perhaps most fatal for families, however, is the threat that they would pose if their status as legitimate and unambiguous victims were to be accepted. How could the decision to imprison be defended if it was acknowledged to cause harm that ripples out to 'innocent' victims? The social order dictates the currently accepted definition of 'victims' (Quinney, 1972), and to include families of prisoners within this would cause a potential upset.

The Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) report of 2008 referred to victimhood, specifically in connection with children and young people, noting them to be, 'the invisible victims of crime and the penal system' (SCCYP, 2008, p. 8). The aim of the SCCYP report was to persuade the Scottish Government to take action to support the young people affected. To achieve this, it cited victimhood as the result of 'crime,' rather than of the more individual 'offending behaviour.' And it also shifted the onus for creating victims to 'the penal system,' - a state function – thereby seeking to place the responsibility for finding a remedy with the state. In this way, SCCYP adopted quite specific justice language with the aim of achieving legitimate victimhood for the families. This was a doomed approach, according to Christie's terms, because it is the very family link to the offender that puts the family in harm's way. Ideal victim status is simply not available to the families of offenders.

Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) report-writing guidance, as noted at p122 Chapter Five, also casts families as potential victims. In that example, it is 'the

offending behaviour' which is alleged to create the victim status of the family, and portraying the offender as perpetrator is key, because the CJSW report is intended for a court to determine how much punishment to mete out, and the dominant discourse of government is always that crime is an individual responsibility.

The contrasting ways in which SCCYP and the CJSW called upon the term 'victim' provide an example of a situation where:

> Some discourses have greater impact on social life as they are owned and propagated by parties with disproportionate power to owners of other discourses on the same topic (Coyle, 2013, p. 40).

The SCCYP report on the plight of the children of offenders did not result in any tangible action for such children until a further eight years had passed, and even then the degree of change effected, as discussed in Chapter Five, was of a limited extent, suggesting that the adoption of the discourse of 'victim' was not noticeably empowering for SCCYP.

In a further consideration of the competing powers of discourses, I want to reflect back on the correspondence that passed between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and me when I was enquiring about their use of a statistic of 17,000 children affected by parental imprisonment (p17 of Chapter One). In answer to the question about the disparity between that figure and the figure of 27,000 children per year quoted by Families Outside, SPS commented:

> These are estimates and the truth of the matter is we do not have an accurate way of recording dependent children on the Prisoner Record system. Families Outside continue to use the top end figure because is suits their PR purposes as a third sector service and pressure group (email correspondence).

In making this response, SPS exemplified the socially constructed nature of the prisoners' family. Although in their final response SPS (p17) stated the best estimate was 20,000 the website offers a figure that is 3,000 less. SPS positioned Families Outside as a 'moral crusader' (Becker, 1991) in relation to prisoners' families, suggesting that they may be indulging in 'claims-making' to boost their cause (Clapton, Cree, & Smith, 2012). The consequential question is why it suits SPS to

publicise a lower figure than even they believe to be true: this thesis suggests that families of prisoners represent an inconvenient truth for the government as policymakers and, if that is accurate, then it would be advantageous to underrate the impact of imprisonment upon families, and especially upon children. Such minimisation of the problem fits with a minimal approach to legislation and funding. Prisoners' families thus clearly fall to be constructed as a social problem of varying magnitude, depending on who is the author of their narrative.

This observation leads on to a reflection upon the policy environment and the role of various policymakers within it. It was also shown in Chapter Five that when young people do make an appearance in policy, they are portrayed as risky people who are likely to become the offenders of the future. This is a stark alternative to the characterisation of young carers, who are discussed in heroic terms, or looked after young people, whose vulnerability is the focus. In Chapter Three, it was noted that the phenomenon of self-silencing is likely to occur when it is perceived that voicing one's feeling is 'dangerous, shameful or socially discrepant' (p62). The young people I interviewed mostly stayed silent about their situation, which may not be in their own best interests from the perspective of their psychological wellbeing. However, it is entirely understandable when it is considered that to speak out would be to situate themselves in a socially discrepant group of potential offenders of the future.

One of the most confusing aspects of the policy approach to families who are affected by imprisonment is the tension between two clearly articulated policy discourses. It is apparent from the policy analysis of Chapter Five that families are seen to play an important role in helping prisoners to manage their sentence, in aiding re-entry to the community after the sentence, and in reducing the likelihood of reoffending. This is a widespread discourse echoed by the Scottish Government, by the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service, and by the third sector organisations that come together to form the Community Justice Family Support Network. Third sector organisations make this point in order to underline their case that families need support, but it also serves to

highlight the fact that third sector organisations need funding to provide support services. Thus, families are portrayed as agents of change in the lives of offenders, and this appears to be an important role within national criminal justice policy.

Organisations such as Shelter point out that families might be required to provide a good deal of practical support in order to fulfill this function, as discussed in Chapter Five. It would seem obvious that, having recognised the value of families when it comes to helping to achieve the transformational change that is expected of prisoners, the government would provide funding and services to them, and draw the families of prisoners into the mainstream of society. The reality is different, however. In Scotland, as happens elsewhere in the UK, prisons try to offer family friendly, or bonding, visits. This can help to minimise the harmful effects of the large visit room, described by the professionals in Chapter Eight. In addition, the Scottish Government has committed what at first sight seems to be quite a large sum of money towards the establishment of more Prison Visitor Centres across the prison estate, as noted in Chapter Four. However, although there was a commitment of £1.8million, that sum is spread across three years, and relates to maintaining the seven existing visitor centres, and establishing a total of four more (Aitken, 2016), so in reality the commitment at each prison is relatively modest, and does not include the entire prison estate of 15 prisons. In addition, as noted in Chapter Five, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice made the announcement of spending with the justification that it 'helps to break the cycle of offending in young people.' So, for young people with a family member in prison, the message of support from the Scottish Government is double-edged.

The double-edged nature of government policy was repeated in the National Parenting strategy, as Chapter Five highlighted. In that case, although parenting in general was lauded and celebrated by the Government, parents in prison were charged with deterring their own children from offending. So, just as support for families via Prison Visitor Centres is based upon the assumption that any young people the centres would serve were potentially likely to become caught up in a cycle of offending, the same message is repeated in the National Parenting Strategy:

children of prisoners are putative offenders. Furthermore, although the role of parent is reified, as this chapter suggests, the role of the imprisoned parent is also a risky one: in this case the risk is of passing on criminogenic tendencies to their children.

This is the confusing, and arguably incoherent, aspect about the policy discourses: on the one hand the families of offenders are praised and valued while on the other they are stigmatised and devalued. Chapter Six showed that this message is received by young people as a gendered issue, and it is one that, in the case of all of the young men I interviewed, helped to cement their decision not to maintain contact with their fathers in prison. The young men saw it as too unsafe to maintain a relationship because they could see that they were in danger of acquiring a risky reputation, which they did not want. The confusion spreads out to prisoners via the National Parenting Strategy: those who can hold their families close will do better, but they nevertheless pose a risk to their families.

This confused situation muddies the construction of parents if they are also prisoners, and it also muddies the construction of the families of prisoners, and of young people who are located within the very families that are apparently valued, yet within those families the young people represent something threatening.

I have argued that policymaking can be a widely defined activity, and that policymakers could include practitioners. The literature review in Chapter Three makes the point that many of the research reports that form the backbone of the literature on families affected by imprisonment were carried out by, or on behalf of, third sector organisations. As the literature has grown and awareness of the range of problems faced by prisoners' families has increased, it has become apparent that third sector organisations have a valuable role in influencing knowledge and debate about the issue.

The range of policies that were included in the analysis in Chapter Five encompassed legislation, guidance and policy pronouncements, thus tending to uphold that broad definition of policymaking. However, as has been pointed out, virtually every source of policy was linked back to the Scottish Government if not directly, then indirectly

because of funding. Some third sector organisations, such as the Howard League for Penal Reform in Scotland, refuse to seek government funding, as their website explains:

> The League does not receive government funding and, therefore, can speak independently on penal reform and related issues.[49]

This suggests that to receive such funding is to circumscribe the extent to which organisations can maintain an independent voice. Third sector organisations undoubtedly do have a role to play in Scottish policymaking through involvement in cross party groups and by submitting oral and written evidence to Scottish Parliamentary committees during the passage of legislation. They also develop expertise in frontline service delivery, which can be fed back into practice guidance. Nevertheless, the evidence in Chapter Five suggests that the need to seek government funding frequently mutes the voice with which organisations advocate for the groups they represent. In the case of families affected by imprisonment, the repetition of the discourse that family contact will help to reduce reoffending feeds into the national criminal justice agenda, instead of challenging it. A rights-based approach asserting that families need support in their own right is almost always tempered by the justification that this will serve another, wider purpose.

The move towards a holistic policy, such as GIRFEC or the Whole System Approach, appears to create more space for third sector organisations to participate because these approaches require multi-agency working. However, the professionals interviewed in Chapter Eight made it clear that, unless an organisation is providing services that are mandated by statute, there is a hierarchy in which third sector organsiations will, as one professional said, be at the 'bottom end.' Not only was this shown to directly affect the way that the professionals were able to work, but I argue that it constitutes one of the reasons why there was not a full engagement by the professionals with young people about having an imprisoned family member, and about whether they might want to visit them in prison. The disempowering effect of being at the bottom of the hierarchical structure appeared to get in the way of the work that the professionals felt able to undertake.

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[49] http://howardleague.scot/about/what-we-do Accessed on 24th August 2016

As the thesis has thus far explained, Scotland generally pursues a policy approach to young people that recognises, in line with the UNCRC, that anyone below the age of 18 is a child. However, young people can leave school at age 16, and they are able to acquire other legal rights at that age (such as marrying or voting). It is also recognised that children from about the age of 12 have capacity to make certain decisions for themselves. The teenage years therefore represent a period in life when policymakers have to accommodate the urge to empower and responsibilise alongside the need to restrict and protect. However, as I have shown, policymakers struggle to meet these twin demands, despite the Scottish Government's emphasis on holistic policymaking.

9.3.1 The policy gap and holistic policymaking

The dominant approach of Scottish Government towards young people begins with the national policy, GIRFEC. As Chapter One discussed, GIRFEC is a holistic approach, rooted in universal services such as education and health, and focused upon the concept of wellbeing. The upper age-limit for the application of GIRFEC is age 18. The impact of national and local policy, including GIRFEC, is measured according to the national indicators contained in the National Performance Framework.

When these policies percolated down into the lives of the young people I interviewed, however, it could be seen that the apparently tight mesh of a holistic approach to policy had some holes in it. Of course, anyone over the age of 18 would fall outside the net in any event. But even those who were younger when they experienced the imprisonment of a relative were not always kept safe by universal services that ought to have been applying the principles of GIRFEC. In Chapters Six and Seven, one young person spoke about a school that made them feel responsible for the crime that had been committed, another about a school that never showed any awareness of their situation, and another about a school that moved them on as soon as they reached 16. One young person asked for help from her GP, but received none. The professionals also saw evidence of the failure of GIRFEC: a local

authority that moved to make a young man homeless, the failure of mental health provision, and social workers who blocked young people from seeing their parent in prison.

When they found themselves in the situation of having a relative in prison, the young people felt unable to talk about it, and felt very isolated. In these circumstances it was more likely than not that the young people would stay quiet about the imprisonment and would put on a front. It is not clear that the adults who were interacting with them at school or elsewhere would recognise that the wellbeing of these young people was at risk, and it was therefore unclear what relevance GIRFEC had to their situation.

Young people who have been identified as belonging to a recognised vulnerable group are much more readily visible in policy. As Chapter Five discussed, young carers are relatively well served by policymaking activity. There is a young carers strategy, a section of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 outlining the entitlement of young carers to assessment and support, and an annual Young Carers Festival, held at the Scottish Government's expense. Young people who have been looked after by their local authority are also entitled, through legislation, to a package of planning and support. Unusually, the rights of looked after children and young people extend beyond the age of 18, as has already been commented upon in Chapter Five. The Scottish Government also funds CELCIS (a centre of excellence for looked after children), as noted in Chapter Five.

Other vulnerable groups also receive policymaking attention. For example, young people with additional support needs are served by legislation, and the Scottish Government funds Enquire, the national advice service for additional support for learning. In addition, there is a national system of additional support needs tribunals where young people and families can seek redress if they have a complaint about assessment or provision of services. Children and young people from travelling families are also recognised at a national level: the Scottish Government and the University of Edinburgh co-fund a project, known as STEP, for this purpose. STEP

provides a telephone helpline, as well as training and consultancy services for teachers, parents and young people. These services have all adopted the principles and practices of GIRFEC.

Clearly, a young person who can be classified as belonging to a formally recognised vulnerable group will be included in national policymaking activity, from which local services can take a lead. There are risks, however, of being readily identifiable if the group to which you belong is one that attracts stigma, blame and shame, as Chapter Three shows.

In Chapter Four I make the point that the policymaking activity in relation to older teenagers and young adults, young people making complicated transitions, and children and young people from families affected by imprisonment, is hard to discern. One exception to this is the cross party group on families affected by imprisonment, although the focus of the cross party group (and its successful intervention in the framing of legislation) has tended to centre upon the needs of children below the age of 18 with a parent in prison. With few exceptions, therefore, young people with a family member in prison occupy a policy gap. This occurs notwithstanding a policymaking environment that is said to be holistic. Once the policy gap is recognised, it becomes much more easy to understand how the young people who spoke out in this research felt so many pains of imprisonment, and yet seemed to receive insufficient support and understanding. In other words, despite a focus by policymakers upon the wellbeing of young people, those with a family member in prison, especially if over the age of 18, appeared to inhabit a space on the margins of national policymaking activity, however widely the latter term is defined.

9.3.2   The response of policymakers

I have made the argument that there has been a minimal approach to legislating and funding to resolve the problems faced by families affected by imprisonment, and this raises the question about whether this has arisen through inadvertence or deliberate neglect on the part of Scottish policymakers. As set out in Chapter Four, the Scottish

Parliament considered the issue of including child impact statements into the court process during the passage of legislation in 2010. The purpose of the amendment was to ensure the court was fully aware of the impact of a sentence of imprisonment upon the children of an accused who was likely to receive a custodial sentence. The amendment was rejected on the basis that the court would already have a social work report, which would contain information about the family, and also that defence agents would be sure to put forward family circumstances to the court.[50] In this respect it can be said that the failure to address the needs of the families of prisoners amounts to a deliberate act on the part of the Scottish Government.

James Kelly, who was one of the MSPs who voted against the amendment, summarised the difficulties as:

> I think that we all agree that it is important to take into account the children of offenders and the impact that any sentence may have on them, but it is also important to strike a balance. When a crime, particularly a violent crime, has been committed, we must balance the rights of the children against the rights of victims. If we went down the proposed route, there could be inconsistency in sentencing…and people who had committed the same crime could be given different sentences, depending on whether they had children. That is not an appropriate way to proceed.[51]

This dilemma encompasses the range of problems that dealing with the families of offenders poses. It also separates the 'children of offenders' from other 'victims' and indicates that the rights of offenders' children are less than those of victims. This is the ideal victim dilemma discussed above, where even if the children of offenders are recognised to be victims, they can never fit the ideal stereotype and their needs will never be held equal to those of 'proper' victims. Even if the court was always only considering a prison sentence in the case of the 'violent crime,' which the MSP called on to support his argument, the perpetrator of the crime is not the offender's child, yet a punishment that could severely adversely affect that child is still held to be a justifiable outcome.

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[51] http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=5488&mode=html Accessed on 3rd September 2016

However, there is evidence to suggest that sentencers will take the offenders' responsibilities towards, and support from, their families into account when deciding whether to impose a custodial sentence. This weighing of factors occurs even in cases involving violence and injury, albeit that the cases where it would come into play were described by sentencers as being on the 'borderline' between a custodial and a non-custodial disposal (Tombs, 2004). Thus, consideration of family circumstances can and does have a bearing on sentencing practices.

The arguments that victims' needs must come before those of offenders' children, and that of the need for consistency in sentencing, open up much wider questions about the nature and purpose of punishment. These are such profound moral, philosophical, and political questions that it is small wonder that successive governments have shied away from addressing them. Bulow (2014) adopts a moral philosophical approach to argue that the collateral harm to children and families is such that imprisonment should only ever be used as a last resort. He further argues that the imposition of a prison sentence ought to give rise to 'residual' moral obligations such as enhancing the knowledge of those in the criminal justice system who deal with the families of offenders, attitudinal change so that families are not stigmatized but are treated with respect, and financial support so that families are not made poorer when their relative is imprisoned.

Although it is clear that Scottish policymakers have frequently been confronted with the moral dilemmas posed by the collateral harm suffered by the families of prisoners, the response has always been dictated by the wider concerns with the administration of justice and of punishment. This has resulted not in absolute neglect of the needs of prisoners' families, but in a very conservative approach to addressing their needs, in order, I suggest, to avoid grappling with both the bigger moral questions about imprisonment as a form of punishment, and the state's role in imposing punishment upon its subjects. It is the magnitude and complexity of these moral questions that has stood in the way of a more comprehensive and positive response to the problems of families affected by imprisonment. Yet this is a question which has rarely been articulated, far less examined, and this thesis has served to

show that, by taking the perspective of an underserved population, it is possible to identify moral and philosophical questions that could usefully be taken forward by researchers to follow.

9.3.3 The impact of the policy gap on professional practice

In Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, both the young people and the professionals spoke about ways in which the provision of services fell short of the young people's support needs, or were hampered by the policies that governed service provision. As previously observed, the persistent linking of support to families with the aims of the reducing reoffending agenda has meant that third sector organisations that provide services have not approached this function from a rights-based standpoint. In Chapter Five I argued that this has privileged the aims of the Scottish Government over the needs of families, including the young people within them.

Furthermore, because policies that affected young people are almost always tied to specific age-ranges, practitioners who provide services are restricted. Thus, even though many professionals are aware that some young people struggle to manage the transition to adulthood in a linear way, and may rebound between dependency and independence for a number of years, those professionals cannot respond to their client group with a similar degree of flexibility. If professionals were able to adopt a truly needs-led approach instead of categorizing their clients' eligibility for services according to numerical age, there would be two distinct advantages. Firstly, young people could access support throughout the time that they needed it. And secondly, professionals could secure better outcomes if they did not need to withdraw from providing support at inopportune moments.

Even when young people do qualify for a service because they fall within its age remit, professionals in the third sector face difficulties in offering adequate support to them. In Chapter Eight, the professionals showed how they had very little power to over-ride the directives they received from statutory services such as social work.

Until recently, too, young people with a family member in prison had no recognition in the law (and even now their legal rights are minimal). These factors combine to produce a situation where a disempowered group, generally categorised as having negative characteristics, are required to seek support services from professionals who are disadvantaged by a hierarchical structure of service provision in Scotland. In terms of service provision, as this research has shown, holistic policies that insist upon collaboration among service providers do not equate to parity among the partners in such collaborations.

9.4 Conclusion

By reaching out and listening to young people with a family member in prison, I argue that it has been possible to learn new things about the effects of imprisonment, about the social construction of prisoners' families, and about the lack of clarity that abounds in a policy environment that is portrayed as being holistic and oriented towards a clearly defined set of goals. Young people are seen to be very much at risk of harm from their experience of having a family member in prison, and they are seen to be under-served by both policymakers and service providers.

It is clear from the qualitative accounts by members of prisoners' families available in the research literature that each experience is unique. The interviews of the young people included in the present study underline this fact, and also show that the experience is emotionally taxing and confusing, especially in relation to self-identity. This research opens up avenues for further research: for example, it would be interesting to re-interview the young people at a later stage in their life in order to hear how the experience of coping with the imprisonment of a family member affected their eventual transition into adulthood. In addition, this study points to the value of including hard to reach groups in research. In part this satisfies the aim of inclusion and ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to be heard, but it also brings a new perspective to this field of research.

It would also be valuable to know more about the gendered nature of family support to prisoners: the fact that women bear the burden of family imprisonment to a greater extent than men is already relatively well known, and the research I have conducted lends further weight to this. However, the underlying reasons for this gender imbalance are not well understood, and the theoretical approach taken to date remains contested. My findings suggest that the effects of labelling and the policy discourse may be more significant to how young people respond to the imprisonment of a family member than the relational or moral reasoning explanations that have been more usually considered by researchers.

Having adopted an approach that critiques the policy environment, it seems appropriate to bring the thesis to a close by considering ways in which policymakers could adjust their activity to bring more clarity and benefit to my subjects of interest. Firstly, there should be far greater recognition that the transition to adulthood is complex, and it is a crucial stage for young people. The ages of 16 and 17 have a particular vulnerability, and the assumption that at age 18 young people are always ready for adulthood and adult services is mistaken. Young people in transition occupy a liminal space in policymaking terms. Yet, this is a time when individualized and flexible services are most needed. It is also a time when young people, far from being less in need of support than younger children, are in need of the utmost support and understanding. The young people in this study showed that having a family member in prison adds trauma, pain and loss to this complicated phase of their lives. In the absence of a deeper understanding of the issues facing young people over the age of 16, it will remain difficult for them to find their voice and be heard.

In addition, this thesis clearly adds one more to the many voices that advocate for less use of imprisonment. In the vast majority of cases, imprisonment has an impact on more than just the recipient of the sentence, and almost always to punitive effect. The only sure way to reduce the number of people who suffer the indirect consequences of imprisonment is to send fewer people to prison.

The efforts being made to make prison a better environment for visitors are clearly beneficial, but more needs to be done. Transport to and from prison would help, but there was a clear message from the young people that they found the prison environment to be scary. The prison service should consider reviewing the visiting regime to ascertain ways to make the large visit rooms less intimidating, or to find better alternatives to mass visits, and should offer remote visits as a matter of course, especially for younger visitors.

There needs to be a more systematic way of gathering evidence about anyone affected indirectly by a prison sentence, and information and support should be offered at the earliest opportunity. Information should be offered at different stages during the sentence, too, because the relationship with, and feelings towards, the prisoner can be subject to change as time goes on.

The discourse around families affected by imprisonment should be changed urgently. If families are seen as an asset to the criminal justice system, and a key part of the reducing reoffending programme, they should be described and valued as such, and they should be offered support and services commensurate with such an important role. Imprisoned parents should not be described in ways that imply they are at risk of contaminating their children with criminality. The young people in those families should not be described as problematic or risky because, although statistically it may be possible to say that having a parent in prison is a predictor of imprisonment, the causal link between these two issues is not proven. To continue this discourse would be to continue to problematise children and young people and would permit the government to continue to ignore the structural and societal problems that underlie most offending behaviour.

In addition, policymaking should occur in ways that enable the right of prisoners' families to receive support to be stated without also having to make the case that this will serve the criminal justice agenda. Help and support should be provided where it is needed, because it is needed, without it becoming conditional upon serving wider political interests.

The use of the term 'family' should more clearly be used to encompass the whole family and should not be used as a proxy for the parent-child relationship. The evidence of the young people who participated here is such that it is made clear that the pains of imprisonment have the potential to reach out to all of the individuals in a prisoner's family. Support to families should therefore be sufficient to include siblings, partners and other significant family members.

Policymakers should reconsider the role of third sector organisations. If the third sector is valued because it can deliver a flexible service in innovative ways as a means of supporting national and local government to meet statutory obligations, there should be a more equal partnership or a full delegation of statutory duties. Otherwise, third sector organisations can only function as the junior partner in multi-agency structures, and their effectiveness will be curtailed.

Appendix One   Ethics form

University of Edinburgh, School of Law
Level 2 Research ethics approval form
The CHSS Code of Research Ethics applies to all research carried out in the
CHSS, whether by staff or students:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/humanities-soc-sci/research-
ke/support-for-staff/college-research/ethics-framework.

In order to ensure that research carried out in the School of Law complies with
the Code, this ethics approval form should be completed by the Principal
Investigator, leader of the research group, or supervisor of the student(s)
involved. Those completing the form should ensure, wherever possible, that
appropriate training and induction in research skills and ethics has been given
to researchers involved prior to completion of the form, including reading the
CHHS Code of Research Ethics. This is particularly important in the case of
student research projects.

If the answer to any of the questions below is 'yes', please give details of how
this issue is being/will be addressed to ensure that ethical standards are
maintained.

When submitting this form, please also submit a short summary of your project,
including the methodology of the project.

1 THE RESEARCHERS	
Your name and position	Dinah Aitken Doctoral Research Student
Name of supervisor (if appropriate)	Dr Anna Souhami Professor Lesley McAra
Proposed title of research	Talking about imprisonment: Narratives of young people with a family member in prison.
Funding body	College of Humanities and Social Science, University of Edinburgh
Time scale for research	November 2013 – June 2014
List those who will be involved in conducting the research, including names and positions (e.g. 'PhD student')	Self only
2 RISKS TO, AND SAFETY OF, RESEARCHERS	
Those named above need appropriate training to enable them to conduct the proposed research	No

safely and in accordance with the ethical principles set out by the College		
Researchers are likely to be sent or go to any areas where their safety may be compromised	Yes –	I may interview participants in their homes, although this will not be the preferred option and alternatives will be sought. I will take advice from the support worker about the safety of this before agreeing to it. If there appears to be some risk, I will arrange another neutral venue. I will ensure the support worker and another independent contact know the time, date and place of the interview and will make contact after the interview is over. Interviews will be terminated straight away if there is any perceived danger to any party.
Could researchers have any conflicts of interest?	No	
3 RISKS TO, AND SAFETY OF, PARTICIPANTS		
Could the research induce any psychological stress or discomfort?	Yes	The subject matter may be distressing for the participants as it is on a sensitive topic. The interviews will be carried out in such a way that they should be a positive experiences for everyone involved, but because of the sensitive nature of the topic there is the risk that a participant may feel upset during or after the conversation. I intend to work with support workers known to the young people to identify who might be suitable to take part, so that any particularly vulnerable young people will not take part. Most interviews should be conducted in the office of the host organisation (Circle) where the young person has access to advice and support if distressed. In addition I will ensure I have information on support

		services which I can provide and will be willing to secure and provide any additional information abut sources of support that are identified by me or the young person during the interview. (This information will be drawn up in collaboration with Circle, who may already have preferred organisations for signposting. It could include national advice services such as Breathing Space and Young Minds. It could also include local services, where available, such as Greenock's I-Youth Zone, Granton Youth Centre etc. If needed, I will help the young person make contact with the appropriate service.) An example of the information leaflet is attached. If the interviews take place outwith Circle's offices the support worker will know the time, date and place of the interview so they are available to provide direct support if needed. I will check back with the young person after the interview to ensure their well-being is satisfactory and if there are ongoing problems other sources of support will be offered.
Does the research involve any physically invasive or potentially physically harmful procedures?	No	
Could this research adversely affect participants in any other way?	No	
4 DATA PROTECTION		
Will any part of the research involve audio, film or video recording of individuals?	Yes	Interviews will be audio recorded.
Will the research require collection of personal information from any persons without their direct consent?	No	
How will the confidentiality of data, including the identity of participants (whether specifically recruited for		I will be the only person with access to the audio recordings/paperwork. Paperwork will be kept in a locked

the research or not) be ensured?		file in a location at my home, which only I have access to. Participants will be referred to in a coded way within written work so their identity is not revealed. Any characteristics that may lead to their identification in their local community or more widely will be changed. The organisation(s) through which I have accessed participants will not be named in written papers.
Who will be entitled to have access to the raw data?		Only me, and my supervisors for the purposes of supervision.
How and where will the data be stored, in what format, and for how long?		Audio recordings will be transcribed as quickly as possible and stored in a password-protected file on computer. Transcripts will be stored on my laptop in password-protected documents. If printed out, transcripts will be kept in a locked file in a location at my home, which only I have access to and will be securely destroyed after the research is complete. The data will be kept for a minimum of 7 years.
What steps have been taken to ensure that only entitled persons will have access to the data?		Transcripts will be password protected. Papers and audio recorders will be kept in locked file.
How will the data be disposed of?		When the time comes to dispose of the data, audio recordings will be deleted. Printed transcripts, consent forms etc. will be shredded and securely disposed of. Emails that contain participant names will be deleted.
How will the results of the research be used?		In a PhD thesis and associated academic articles and conference presentations. The thesis will be published in the public domain.
What feedback of findings will be given to participants?		I will offer participants the opportunity to reflect on the initial interview, to identify themes they want to expand upon or to identify

	things they have said that they do not want to go forward into the research. I will provide a summary of findings to the organisation(s)/individuals who have helped me to recruit participants, with the request they share with participants directly. I will notify them if I achieve wider publication.
Is any information likely to be passed on to external companies or organisations in the course of the research?	No

5 RESEARCH DESIGN	
The research involves living human subjects specifically recruited for this research project *If 'no', go to section 6*	Yes
How many participants will be involved in the study?	6 - 8
What criteria will be used in deciding on inclusion/exclusion of participants?	The organisation (Circle) will nominate individuals they know well and believe are suitable to take part. I will recruit participants over 16 years. Any participant who appears to be too vulnerable to cope with interviewing will be excluded, taking into account the extent to which they appear to understand the nature of the research, any concerns expressed by the Circle worker, any signs of reluctance to take part and their initial emotional reaction to the prospect of being recorded discussing their family and personal situation. Otherwise, all suitable and willing participants will be included.
How will the sample be recruited?	I will recruit through family support workers at Circle Scotland. If this doesn't produce sufficient numbers I will work with individual social workers in youth services to identify suitable participants, in which case I will follow the usual national and local protocols for conducting

		research with young people engaged with social work services.
Will the study involve groups or individuals who are in custody or care, such as students at school, self help groups, residents of nursing home?	No	
Will there be a control group?	No	
What information will be provided to participants prior to their consent? (e.g. information leaflet, briefing session)		An information leaflet will be provided, support workers will be briefed, and I will offer a briefing session to participants before seeking formal consent.
Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any time. Please tick to confirm that participants will be advised of their rights.	✓	
Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)	No	
Where consent is obtained, what steps will be taken to ensure that a written record is maintained?		The consent forms will be securely stored for the duration of the research project. The process of securing consent will be documented in my thesis.
In the case of participants whose first language is not English, what arrangements are being made to ensure informed consent?		I aim to only recruit participants with good spoken English. This is due to the narrative nature of the research where it is important that there are no fundamental linguistic barriers that could cause any misunderstanding of meaning that might inhibit the interpretation of the narrative provided through interviews.
Will participants receive any financial or other benefit from their participation?	No	
Are any of the participants likely to be particularly vulnerable, such as	Yes	The young people involved could be considered to be vulnerable due to

elderly or disabled people, adults with incapacity, your own students, members of ethnic minorities, or in a professional or client relationship with the researcher?		the fact they live in a family affected by imprisonment. In addition, they may be 'looked after' (see below).
Will any of the participants be under 16 years of age?	No	
Do the researchers named above need to be cleared through the Disclosure/Enhanced Disclosure procedures?	Yes	The researcher has a current enhanced disclosure obtained for voluntary work with prisoners' families (with Families Outside).
Will any of the participants be interviewed in situations which will compromise their ability to give informed consent, such as in prison, residential care, or the care of the local authority?	Yes	It is possible that some of the young people I interview may be 'looked after' by the local authority even though they are living at home. However, the impact of this upon informed consent should not be problematic as I will not interview anyone below the age of 16 and will take precautions to ensure consent is informed, ongoing (in the case of more than one meeting or interview) and entirely voluntary.
6 EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES		
Is the research proposal subject to scrutiny by any external body concerned with ethical approval?	No	Circle does not require ethical approval: they are content that the project is subject to ethical approval and supervision by the University.
If so, which body?		
Date approval sought		
Outcome, if known *or*		
Date outcome expected		
7 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PROPOSAL		
In my view, the ethical issues listed below arise and the following steps are being taken to address them:		

Signature   "Dinah Aitken" Date   12.11.13 Email Address: Dinah.aitken@btopenworld.com

8   Ethical consideration by School

The following section should be completed by the Head of School once the proposal has been considered by the School's research group.

I confirm that the proposal detailed above has received ethical approval from the School [* subject to approval by the external body named in section 6].

Signature   Date
Convenor of Ethical Issues

Delete as appropriate

Appendix Two   Information leaflet

The experience of young people with a family member in prison

THE PROJECT
This is a piece of research looking into what life is like for young people aged 16-25 when someone in their family goes to prison.

THE RESEARCHER
I am PhD student at Edinburgh University. My contact details are at the end the page.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE RESEARCH
I will interview a small number of young people by asking them to tell me about their situation. The interviews will be recorded on a voice-recorder. When I have completed all of the interviews I will write about them and try to describe how young people are affected when they have a relative in prison. I will use the interview material for a PhD degree (thesis) and I may also publish other papers or give talks about my research.

NO ONE WILL BE NAMED IN THE RESEARCH
I will treat everything I am told as confidential and will take care to ensure no one can be personally identified from anything I write about my research (this also applies to any family members that may be mentioned in the interview(s)).

CONFIDENTIALITY
I will not usually talk to anyone about anything I am told during

interviews. BUT if you tell me something that makes me worried you could be in danger, or someone else could be harmed, I have to let someone official know about this. If possible, I will try to let you know if I think this is about to happen in the interview so you can choose whether to carry on speaking about it.

OPTING IN AND OPTING OUT
If you agree to be interviewed and to let me use the interview in my research I will ask you sign a consent form. But you can stop the interview any time and

you can back out of the interviews altogether if you decide you don't want to take part after all.

QUESTIONS
You can ask me for more information before you sign the consent form and during the interview.

CONTACT
Here are my contact details:

Dinah Aitken
Postgraduate Office
The University of Edinburgh
School of Law
Old College
South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH8 9YL

Email: D.Aitken–5@sms.ed.ac.uk
Mobile: 07951 404929

Appendix Three   Consent Form (young people)

CONSENT FORM

The experience of young people with a family member in prison.

I consent to the information I provide in one or more interviews with Dinah Aitken, PhD student, being used by her for her research.

I understand that Dinah will use the interview material for a PhD degree (thesis) and that she may also publish other papers or give talks about her research.

I have been provided with information about the project and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that everything I tell Dinah will be confidential and she will take care to ensure I cannot be personally identified from anything she writes about her research (this also applies to any members of my family that may be mentioned in the interview(s)).

I understand that if I tell Dinah something that makes her believe I am at immediate risk of harm, or that someone else could be harmed, Dinah will have to tell her University supervisor and the support worker (where relevant) about this.

I am aware that I can refuse to answer questions during the interview(s) and I can withdraw my consent any time before or during the interview if I no longer want to continue.

I agree to the interview(s) being audio recorded.

Signed

Print name

Date

Appendix Four   Consent form (professionals)

Consent form (Professional)

I consent to taking part in research carried out by Dinah Aitken in relation to young people who have a family member in prison.

I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.

I understand that the interview will be confidential, but will be used by Dinah in her PhD thesis, and may be included in other publications, such as academic papers, or in public presentations of Dinah's work.

I understand that Dinah will take all possible measures to ensure my anonymity.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions, and I can withdraw from the interview if I wish.

I have been given information about the project, and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

Signed……………………………………………………………………………..

Print name……………………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………………………..

Appendix Five   Schedule of interview questions

Interview schedule
1. What is your job title and role in the organisation?
2. How long have you been in this post?
    a. Similar experience elsewhere?
3. What services to young people do you provide in your role?
4. What age group do you work with?
5. How was that age group determined?
    a. Core role of the agency to work with this age group?
    b. To meet actual/perceived demand?
    c. Funding – led?
6. How do the young people come to your service?
7. Do any of the young people you work with have a family member in prison?
8. How do you know if they have a family member in prison?
    a. Is this something you would ask about routinely?
    b. If disclosed by the young person, would you follow up on this issue?
    c. If disclosed by some other source, would you raise it with the young person?
9. What do you think that young people in this situation need?
10. Can their needs be met by you in your role?
11. Are there other services you think they need that would be the job of someone else to provide?
12. What are the challenges of working with this age group?
13. Have there been cases where you have been able to meet the needs of the young person?
14. What was the key to success in that case/those cases?
15. Have there been cases where you found it more difficult to provide a suitable service?
16. What were the challenges or obstacles in that case/cases?
17. What is the most challenging thing about providing services to young people in your view?
18. What would make providing services easier?
19. Thinking more widely, do you think there are strategic or political changes that should be made to make it easier to provide services?
20. Any other comments or experiences you would like to share?

Thank you.

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