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**Children of Prisoners:
Virtual Communities
Negotiating and
Managing Relationships,
Isolation and Stigma**

Researcher: Amanda Swallow

Children of Prisoners

- only 9% of children of imprisoned mothers are cared for by their fathers – compared to 92% who are cared for by their mothers¹.
- 5 % of children whose mothers are in prison remain in their own homes².
- 24% of children are cared for by grandparents³.
- between 11-15% of children are placed into care as a result of their mother's imprisonment⁴.

Children of Prisoners

- Experiences of social exclusion (political and societal)⁵.
- Alleged increased risk of expressing anti-social behaviour – Recently used as a political tool⁶.
- Recent research found that imprisonment costs state agencies (NHS, social services) an average of £4,800 over six months, per family⁷.

Children of Prisoners

- 66% of women in prison (4,252) have dependent children⁸.
- 7% (approximately 600,000) of the child population at school has an imprisoned parent, annually⁹.
- Under-researched!

Children of Prisoners

It is suggested that 160,000 children are affected by their parents' imprisonment, annually within England and Wales¹⁰.

However!

There is no single statutory body dedicated to the care, welfare or support of these children. No actual data is collected & all figures quoted so far are *estimates*.

Children of Prisoners

The very few researchers investigating this issue agree that there are particularly negative effects upon children who experience parental imprisonment, such as:

- Experiences of trauma (especially where a parent is arrested in the home)¹¹.
- Mental health issues (currently being debated and investigated)¹².
- May be stigmatised due to their parent's imprisonment¹³.

Legislation / Policy

- Ministry of Justice introduce gender specific standards for women in prison¹⁴.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 – Article 9 – implies the right that children have to maintain contact with imprisoned parents¹⁵.
- Human Rights –Family Life - Human Rights Act 1998 – Article 8 – “Respect for Private and Family Life”¹⁶.

Legislation / Policy (Cont.)

- National Offender Management Service (NOMS policies) – Claim that children and families are the most important pathways¹⁷.
- Corston Report – Four recommendations specific to female offenders, parenting and their children¹⁸.
- Every Child Matters – Prisoners' children have worse outcomes than other children, in terms of health and education, amongst others¹⁹.

For a full version of this presentation,
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