



Good Practice Collection

Family Relations



EuroPris Family Relations
Expert Group

September 2017

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PRACTICE

Supported by the Justice Programme
of the European Union



About EuroPris

The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) is a non-political, non-governmental organisation that was founded at the end of 2011 and is registered in the Netherlands.

Membership is open to public institutions or organisations in the Council of Europe region, which provide prison or correctional services on a legal or statutory basis.

EuroPris brings together prison practitioners with the specific intention of promoting ethical and rights-based imprisonment, exchanging information and providing expert assistance to support this agenda. The organisation exists to improve co-operation among European Prison and Correctional Services, with the aim of improving the lives of prisoners and their families, enhancing public safety and security; reducing reoffending; and advancing professionalism in the corrections' field.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Visiting facilities and physical structures	4
Community involvement	9
Communication.....	16
Intervention Programmes.....	24
Staff Training.....	33
Conclusion – Final Observations	44
Useful Links.....	46

Introduction

Having a parent in prison can have a significant impact on the lives of children. From the moment of their parent's arrest, and throughout the sentencing and execution of the sentence, children are affected. An estimated 800,000 children in the EU are separated from an imprisoned parent each year. Some may perceive the separation as abandonment by the parent; others can experience anxiety and loss of self-esteem. From a mental health perspective it is crucial to support the development and maintenance of normal child-parent relationships. Having contact with and being responsible for one's child can have a strong positive influence on the life of an offender while in prison and even more so after release. This being said, the prison service should not be the only party responsible for providing opportunities for quality contact between children and their imprisoned parent. Good co-operation between the prison service, the social network of the parents and social support organisations inside and outside of a prison is crucial for success.

Family relations also concern the contact between partners and wider family members that have been separated as a result of imprisonment. It is important that partners are able to stay in contact and to support each other during the time in prison. Maintaining their relationship is equally important for the period inside prison as for the period after release from prison.

All Member States of the European Union are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and are therefore required to uphold the rights included in the Convention. Some countries have incorporated the rights into their national law, and in these cases the rights are enforced. Of particular relevance to the situation of children whose parents are in prison are:

1. the right to be free from discrimination (*Art. 2*);
2. protection of the best interest of the child (*Art. 3*);
3. the right to have direct and frequent contact with parents from whom the child is separated (*Art. 9*), including the right to be provided with information about the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child (*Art. 9.4*);

For two years EuroPris (together with Children of Prisoners Europe – COPE) has been exploring the possibility of a multilateral, co-operative project on issues related to children of prisoners. At the 2015 Annual General Meeting the EuroPris members explicitly requested the establishment of an expert group on family relations.

EuroPris' aim is to bring practitioners in the prison sector together to promote ethical and rights-based imprisonment, improve prison conditions and the professionalism of staff. Prison and Correctional Services across Europe face similar problems but do not necessarily share the same levels of resources or opportunities for development. It is therefore critical for correctional professionals to develop common solutions. EuroPris and COPE play an important role in advancing the exchange of knowledge and best practice throughout Europe. The EuroPris Expert Group on Family Relations has been established to advance these aims and goals.

The Expert Group is composed of 10 experts on family relation issues from European National Prison Services in EuroPris member countries. The experts of the group and the chair of the group can be rotated/refreshed once every

2 years. COPE is not an official member of the group, but has been invited to contribute with their longstanding and wide spread experience on the subject.

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Visiting facilities and physical structures

Pat Dawson and Tuija Muurinen

We asked four questions to enquire into the quality of infrastructure provided for visits across the contributing countries.

UNCRC Article 18 says that: The care of children is a shared responsibility of both parents, and the government should help parents by providing services.

What kind of visit facilities do you have in your prison system? Are there open family visiting facilities or boxes where there is glass between the visitors and prisoners?

The responses show that all countries recognise the importance of visits in terms of maintaining family relationships and also recognise the security challenges posed by open visits. All prison services provide a range of family visits, from informal family rooms to private family rooms available for conjugal visits. The barriers between visitors and prisoners are determined by the risk factors or security threat posed.

An example of good practice is to provide suitable outdoor visiting areas at prisons, allowing for the possibility of organising family days and special events for families.



In Scotland and Ireland good practice was recognised with the provision of "visiting centre" facilities located at the prisons. In Visiting Centres families can meet with the prison employees and volunteer workers, get information on matters relating to imprisonment or support, as well as providing a child-friendly experience before entering the prison for the visit. Employees can also control visitors and family members support services as needed. This model is also in place at prisons throughout England and Wales.

Estonia, Germany, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Croatia and Finland have separate family rooms in prisons that are available for a period of family meetings. One example is the Finland Vanaja open prison, which has a separate family house, where the family meeting can be arranged, if necessary, for a period of several days. Family houses contain four apartments of different sizes.

How have children been taken into account?

The responses show that all respondents recognise the importance of children having contact with their parent in prison. Most countries have play areas and provide toys for children to play with. Some countries also have Family Liaison Officers who interact with the family unit. Special family days are hosted in prisons with the involvement of charities.

An example of good practice from German prisons are treatment rooms, where care for children is possible during a visit. Some prisons also loan buggies to facilitate movement around the prison.

In Croatia, certain prison personnel demonstrate that children have been taken into account as they do not wear prison uniforms for family meetings and special occasions such as the COPE European awareness-raising campaign “Not my crime, still my sentence,” Easter and Christmas holidays.

Many countries, including Sweden, have developed brochures and materials for children for prison visits. A good example is a colouring book that describes prison, which a child receives at the beginning of a visit to reduce stress and provide them with information about the prison.

In close cooperation with charities, Slovenia has been able to refurbish prison facilities to make them more child-friendly. Prisoners have been involved in this improvement process, with the particular focus of increasing the comfort of the facilities for children.

Best practice suggests that toys, books, and games for children of all ages should be available in prison waiting areas and throughout the areas of the prison the children might frequent.

Are the visiting facilities in good condition?

Respondents are actively ensuring that safe and child-friendly areas are provided for in the prison setting. There is a general understanding of the need to “soften” the visiting environment to enable better interaction for families.

Best practice suggests that soft colours and a normalised environment promotes better and more meaningful visits. The simple use of prison art can help in this regard both in the visits space itself and on the walls as visitors approach the visits area.

Italian NGO Bambinisenzasbarre has had great success with their Spazio Giallo (Yellow Space) that has been implemented in several prisons across Italy. The Spazio Giallo are waiting areas in prisons for children that are painted yellow, and that have toys and activities, allowing children an opportunity to play while waiting to see their parent. The space is designed to mitigate the impact of a stressful prison visit. There are specialist staff members

present to support the child. Children also follow a path laid out with giant footsteps and brightly decorated as they approach the prison to make the experience less scary.

In England, the NGO POPS has integrated a range of child friendly signage into the 11 prisons in which POPS operates child and family services. The signs feature POPS' mascot: Popsicle the Penguin, and aim to soften the prison environment for visiting children. The signs distract children from the austere environment and the worry of going through security or being searched.



Is there something else you would like to add about visiting facilities in prisons?

Prison services are aware of the need for a multi-agency approach to assisting families with imprisoned parents. Some prison services have well-developed charters and policies in this regard. A standard practice is that visitors must provide photo ID and be named in advance by the prisoner.

In Sweden, separate family rooms security has been added to an alarm system. Family rooms have a separate alarm, which alerts the staff at the scene if necessary.

Scotland's visiting centre and "family hubs" contribute to the safety of family get-togethers, while also facilitating interactions between prison staff and families.

Ireland has "Visitor Centers" operated by NGOs in all closed prisons which provides supports for visiting family members.

Romanian prisons offer the possibility of online communication. Families have this option when they live far from the prison and the opportunity to have meetings in prison is difficult or impossible. Online communication allows

for more frequent child-parent contact during imprisonment. In many cases, the European country's prisons may provide the use of Skype to maintain contacts between family members.

Swiss NGO Relais Enfants Parents Romands (REPR) have 8 welcoming centres for families of prisoners located outside of prisons. The centres are open 1-6 days a week, in correspondence with prison visit times. These centres are run by a team of volunteers from REPR, who offer:

- a presence that is available to listen and talk, with respect and discretion
- a variety of information related to imprisonment
- addresses of associations and public or private groups that may be useful for families
- a welcoming space to go before or after a prison visit
- a place to have a drink

In several countries, prisons have outdoor visiting facilities, sometimes with play equipment for children. These facilities allow children the opportunity to visit their parents in prison in a more relaxed atmosphere.

General Points / Recommendations

Most prison systems operate table and chair type visits for some if not all visitors. This approach tends to normalise these types of visits rather than visits that may offer a better opportunity for meaningful family engagement.

All respondents recognise the need for visiting areas to be child friendly. It is generally recognised that the visiting experience for children needs to be as friendly as possible thus minimising the potential negative impact of visiting a prison.

Many respondents have close relationships with charities who provide services in prison visitor centres and visits rooms or run special parent/child visits. This relationship also can help when designing visiting areas that meet the needs of visiting families. In some jurisdictions, there are off-site “neutral venues” where visits can take place when certain security issues are addressed. Prisons rely on their relationships with NGOs to facilitate these visits.

Some of the respondents brought up the austere nature of the physical structures provided. The meeting space and the comfort level should pay particular attention to the child’s perspective.

The visiting times should also reflect the reality of life outside the prison; allowing for evening and weekend visits to be the norm. This is particularly important for children to ensure they do not miss school to visit a parent in prison.

Budgets should be available to minimise the financial impact of visiting the prison. Disabled visitors must also be considered in the physical structures provided.

With the objective of normalisation, families should have the opportunity to share a meal together. This also enables the parent to fulfil their parenting role and enjoy family time with their child.

Several countries have given examples of family visits facilitated in special family units. These facilities also allow for conjugal visits and allow the family to spend time together in privacy.

Communication is a critical element of the visiting process. Both the families and prisoners must be made aware of the possibilities for family contact. Clear messages regarding expected visitor behaviour on visits, along with clear information on expected treatment of visitors should be available in a child-friendly format. A mechanism for recording the input and feedback of children regarding the visiting experience should also be developed.

Some jurisdictions have embraced modern technology such as Skype and email to enable family contacts. Online visit booking systems are also used to provide information about the routine of the prison.

Community involvement

Stina Sjodin, Kristin Tandberg and Núria Pujol

Summary

It is important to consider that imprisonment and the period after release are two elements that affect not only the convicted person; the consequences and effects of imprisonment are experienced by close family and friends of the convicted; affecting the daily routine of their families and particularly that of children. Accordingly, prison services should work to improve conditions to guarantee the rights of children in their own environment. If the home environment is maintained as a positive one for children, there is a higher possibility of reintegration of prisoners after release, and consequently a lower recidivism rate.

If we consider that exercising parental responsibility is one of the most important preventative factors for recidivism, penitentiary facilities not only should include Parental Responsibility Programmes in prison, but aim to expand to the community, with the support and participation of community partnerships, such as schools and social services.

Considering this context, it is necessary to reflect upon the possibility of fortifying community networks and improving professional interventions. To achieve this, innovative practices should be implemented, the connections for common working methods should be strengthened and reflection and work spaces should be created; including other public administrations and social systems. This could generate new opportunities, not only for prisoners, but also for their families, and particularly for children and teenagers impacted by having a parent in prison.

Networking

Denmark: The Danish Prison and Probation service has two family houses where prisoners can serve the whole or a part of their sentence together with their children, while at the same time receiving support and counselling from a team of family therapists, social workers and pedagogues. The team is in close contact with social authorities outside prison. When the social workers or contact persons (prison officers) in the prisons are formulating individual plans for imprisonment and post-release, inmates are always asked about their family situation.

Wales: The Invisible Walls Wales project is delivered by a consortia of agencies. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund until 2016, G4S is the lead agency and grant holder, working in partnership with Barnardo's, Bridgend County Council, Gwalia and Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice.

The project aims to:

- Reduce reoffending by strengthening family ties, and
- reduce intergenerational offending.

Invisible Walls works to achieve these outcomes by working across two service hubs - HMP Parc and the surrounding community. This model enables the service to work with both the imprisoned fathers and their partners and children living in the community.

The following interventions and support services are provided to prisoners and their families via Family Intervention workers based inside the prison and practitioners based within the community (although workers will often work across both areas):

- Parenting programmes
- Advocacy services
- Family Group Conferencing
- Volunteering programmes

For more information visit:

http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/233/~/-invisible-walls-wales

England/Wales: Family services providers have partnered with the prison to deliver a range of services to prisoners and their families through visits services. In certain prisons family days are organised where imprisoned parents and their children can spend time together in a relaxed and as normal an environment as possible. Some prisons provide homework clubs where children can spend time with their parent in prison and engage in learning. Family learning opportunities are also available where the education provider or a charity provide learning opportunities on subjects such as parenting, family relationships, budgeting and money management. Family engagement workers are employed in some prisons to work with prisoners and family members inside the prison and can continue such relationships in the community. Their services can include improving relationships and counselling.

Parent Support

Finland: When a person comes to prison their family situation is considered and if they have underage children and are the primary guardian, contact is made with social services.

The policy at the Finnish Prison Service is to strengthen the family ties of inmates and clients and this is a key element of a short programme that is in place in many prisons and some community sanctions offices. In Finland they work with a program called: “Talking about children”. This method is based on the understanding of the effect of mental health problems on parenthood and on children. It is also based on the knowledge about factors that parents can use when they want to support their children in their development.

Children themselves have a risk of mental health problems; there are things that parents can do to support their children and prevent problems from arising.

“Talking about children” is a method that was originally developed for public health care, for the staff member who is treating/nursing a mentally ill parent. This parent might be in an open ward of a hospital, or be placed in a hospital or receiving other specialised treatment through ordinary public health systems. The basic education of the staff member using the method can vary, and they do not need a therapist’s education to use this method. The method can also be used in social and educational services.

In criminal sanctions in Finland a version of the method is being developed to be used with prisoners and community sanctions clients. The handbook is not finalised but will be published shortly. A pilot version is currently in use and

staff members are being trained to use it. The method is fairly straightforward and only requires one or two meetings with the prisoner/client.

Sweden: The Swedish PPS have parental education programmes in prisons in collaboration with the NGO BUFFF. The programme is called “For our children’s sake”. The aim of the parental education programme is to support the parents in their parental role in promoting the child’s positive development, as well as educating parents about children’s development and what a separation from the parent can mean to the child. The education programme consists of 10 meetings that cover a variety of subjects, such as: “what does it mean to be a parent in prison,” “children’s thoughts and feelings” and “children’s development”.

Cooperation with NGOs

Scotland: SPS works closely and collaboratively with a wide range of statutory public services and voluntary (Third Sector) organisations such as Families Outside to support the partners and children of those in custody. The SPS recognises that the Third Sector has a distinctive contribution to make across public policy challenges, and justice in particular, and that the Third Sector can often reach where the state and the market cannot. Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) have been formed to support returning citizens on release from custody to assist them reintegrate with their families and re-establish themselves in their communities.

Latvia: The Latvian Prison Administration is also collaborating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) registered in the Republic of Latvia and organising different events aimed at children with imprisoned parents by providing gifts and cards made by inmates or by organising summer camps. For Christmas 2016, all children in the women’s prison Medical department (including the mother and child section) were gifted toys, and among these educational toys. In the women’s prison Medical department (including the mother and child section) children with their imprisoned mothers can stay until the age of 4 years old. This Christmas event has been in practice for four years, due to the involvement of NGOs. The main activities of NGOs are focused on supporting inmates’ children, which is achieved through workshops where children are able to make cards for their parents in prison, along with preparing gifts for other children of prisoners. In addition, during the summer several children of prisoners are provided with a chance to spend their free time at educational summer camps for free.

Sweden: The Swedish PPS works closely with NGOs to support children with family members in prison or on probation. The following describes the work of the two largest NGOs in Sweden that work with this target group;

BUFFF is a national children’s rights organisation that aims to support children and youth with a parent/family member in prison or on probation. The association works in a variety of ways, from different kinds of advocacy work to advice and support on an individual level. BUFFF manages nine local associations spread over the country and operates national support provided through a hotline and an online chat. BUFFF works closely with the Prison and Probation Service and regularly visits all the country’s prisons and detention centres. The support given is about parenting and how the parent/family member can best support the children. For more information visit: <http://www.BUFFF.nu>

Solrosen (The Sunflower) is a support and activity centre for children who have a family member who has been, or is, incarcerated. Solrosen also provides support to parents/caregivers affected by the situation. The support is offered both individually and in groups.

The staff at Solrosen is experienced and well educated to meet the needs of parents and children. They run parent groups at prisons and are available to accompany children to prison or on custody visits. They also regularly give lectures on children's rights and needs at the prison services training centre. For more information visit: <http://www.raddningsmissionen.se/solrosen>

Croatia: The Croatian Prison System works closely with the NGO Roda - Parents in Action in many programmes. For the reading programme "Together in a World of Tales," a child's imprisoned parent makes an audio recording of themselves reading a story to their child on CD. The CD is sent to the child, with the book and a personal note from the parent. The programme began as an EU grant project implemented by Roda for incarcerated mothers and children, with the goal of strengthening and developing positive parenting skills among inmates. The programme was so successful it was continued in partnership with the Croatian Reading Association and has spread to include all prisons in the Croatian Prison System.

The same project, financed by the European Social Fund, included workshops for female inmates and prison staff with the goal of improving mothers' parenting skills and to train the staff to support the parents in spending creative and purposeful time with their children during prison visits.

A further project, Bars are not Barriers, provided female prisoners the opportunity to participate in the complete product development cycle - from working with Croatian design students to create marketable products that could be produced in the prison workshop, to creating samples and preparing marketing materials. This project is still underway and is seeking further funding to develop a social enterprise in the prison, the profits from which would be used to finance travel expenses for children visiting their mothers in prison. During the "Unbroken Bonds - Attachment Parenting from Prison" Roda collaborated with the Croatian Chamber of Midwives to provide support to pregnant women and young mothers in practicing attachment parenting, providing psycho-social support and enhancing parenting skills. Roda distributed a booklet of the same name during the project to all prisons and penitentiaries, providing advice for inmates, children and parents outside of prison on parenting and maintaining a parenting relationship.

The NGO Status M works with male prisoners by holding workshops for fathers and those who are expecting children, developing the programme "Super Dad Without Barriers". In collaboration with Social Service Centres, the NGO IDEM conducts a programme called "Psycho-social Support for Incarcerated Parents, their Partners and Children.

Norway: The Norwegian PPS works closely with NGOs to support children with family members in prison or on probation. The following describes the work of the largest NGOs in Norway that work with this target group:

Myrsnipa: "Myrsnipa" is a place where "Kirkens Bymisjon" (Church City Mission) creates a good and safe opportunity for children and their parents to be together. The target group is children with one or both parents in prison. At Myrsnipa, children and their parents can participate in various common activities like cooking, playing games, drawing, watching children's TV or doing homework. Myrsnipa plans and carries out the meetings in collaboration with the parents, the children and the Child welfare services. For more information visit: <http://www.bymisjon.no/>

Red Cross – Network after ended sentence (NES) – (Ex-)Offenders’ children: NES Oslo has a network of 160 volunteers who follow up regularly with 280 participants, all of whom share the fact that they are seeking a new social network without crime or substances. Between the 280 participants, they have a total of over 400 children. One of the most important tasks of this programme is to assist participants in their role as a father or a mother, and provide them with positive experiences that they can build on. For more information visit: <https://www.rodekors.no>

Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners (FFP): FFP is an NGO and the only organisation in Norway with the primary task of giving support to and advocating for the family and friends of prisoners. They have a multi-disciplinary team of professionals (social workers, child welfare workers, psychologists, criminologists, etc.) and most board members have experienced having an imprisoned family member.

FFP has a close dialogue with the Correctional Service and other authorities, and does informational, lobbying and educational work to raise awareness on the consequences imprisonment has for the affected families. FFP works to improve the situation for families visiting prison, and gives input to the correctional services regarding visiting facilities and programmes for parental skills. For more information visit: <http://ffp.no/>

One example of a fruitful cooperation between FFP and the correctional services is a Family therapy in prison programme:

Family therapy in prison: As a result of cooperation between FFP and the correctional services, families have access to therapy together with their family member in prison. This gives the whole family an opportunity to work on issues during imprisonment rather than postpone this until after release. This has a very positive impact on both the prisoner and the rest of the family, and is of great value in the rehabilitation process.

Poland: A parenting programme “Kontakt” was put into place by the NGO Probacja, in partnership with two prisons: AS Montelupich Kraków and ZK Nowa Huta Kraków. The Kontakt programme aims to raise the parental competence of imprisoned parents. As part of this project a series of lectures and workshops are conducted, during which different issues are addressed such as responsible parenting, developmental psychology, building a positive relationship with a child, communication and creativity in play. At the end of each topic a children’s visit to the prison is organised to enable fathers to put the theory gained into practice.

England: Many NGOs, including Pact, POPS, Ormiston and NEPACS work to support prisoners and their children. For example PACT has successfully developed a “Visiting Mum” programme, a special project at HMP Eastwood Park in which volunteers drive the children of prisoners and their carers to visit their parent in prison on a regular basis and offer the wrap-around emotional support they need. In addition, as part of this project, information and resources have been created for the child to help explain what prison is like.

Cooperation with Social services

Catalonia, Slovenia and Croatia: Collaboration between Centres for Social Work and Prison services allows for a range of approaches to address different aspects of prisoners lives and needs and conflict resolution. Activities with prisoners are related to children’s visits, especially if there are obstacles with the prisoners’ partner or any other difficulties. Centres for Social Work may be involved in situations where there are some behavioural difficulties with children or if the prisoners have concerns about their children. Centres for Social Work cover the above issues; and there is potential for prison staff and Social Centre Staff to collaborate to implement penitentiary monitoring.

Latvia: In accordance with the law, representatives of the resocialisation field in the penitentiary system collaborate with governmental and municipal institutions (custody courts, social services, extra-familial care institutions, including custodians, foster families) about children's rights protection issues regarding inmates' children. These issues often concern the children's right to contact with their imprisoned parents; extra-familial care services payment order; inmates' social problems while their children are placed in extra-familial care, etc.

Finland/Sweden/Norway: Other than contacting social services when a prisoner with children begins their sentence, there is no other penitentiary monitoring of children with an imprisoned parent in the community. If a mother/father comes to visit their spouse in prison with children and the prison guard observes something worrying, he is to contact social services (for instance, if the person coming to the meeting with children is intoxicated). The service with the primary responsibility for working with children and families is social services, according to the principle of normality.

The work is mainly led by the Criminal Sanctions Agency. Naturally there is collaboration with the social services, and there are also have some close NGO-partners working in this domain, and a lot of co-operation is done with them.

Finland: If a prisoner has their small child living with them in prison they are placed in Vanaja open prison, where there is a special family ward. This ward is run by an NGO. If the parent is working or studying the children will be placed in regular daycare outside of the institution.

Remand prisoners with small children are placed in Hämeenlinna prison, on a family ward, run by the same NGO as in Vanaja open prison. The decision of whether a child lives in prison or not is made by municipal child welfare authorities, who also finance this scenario.

Co-operation with Schools

Scotland: The NGO Families Outside has a training for teachers programme in which teachers are brought into prison to experience a visit, and this remains quite popular. In 2016 this initiative was extended to include Early Years practitioners. The training has teachers enter the prison for a visit, and follow the same route a child would upon arriving at the prison. The teachers are asked to how they would feel going through the prison as a child, and to consider what they can do to best support children with a parent in prison.

England: The NGO POPS has worked to organise a homework club programme, where children can bring school work or a reading book to a visit so they can work through it with their parent. Several prisons offer visits after school where fathers are encouraged to help their children with their homework.

Germany: The NGO Treffpunkt e.V has published a book for children ages 3-6 called "Like chocolate and Spaghetti", which aims to help children cope with having a parent in prison. The book was published in January 2017, and is the first material of this kind for this age group. The book can be for a child who has a parent in prison but can also be used for general discussion on the topic of prisons. The book has additional support material and tips for pre-school teachers and parents. As part of sensitivity training a teaching module has been developed for classroom discussions to address the issue and raise awareness among students.

France: A pilot project called “Aide aux devoirs”(help with homework) took place at Châteaudun prison, where imprisoned fathers were able to see their children’s report cards, with the aim of supporting the parenting role in a child’s education. The fathers worked on school lessons and homework with their children. The families that participated in this pilot were pleased with the results, and the parents expressed the desire to continue a project like this one.

Wales: The Invisible Walls Project involves parent/teacher meetings, held inside the prison with the teacher and child both present. This contributes to the imprisoned parent’s role in their child’s education.

Malta: prisoners are able to apply for Home Leave (temporary release) to attend a parent/teacher meeting at the child’s school.

Communication

Cristina Teoroc and Lucija Bozikov

The preparation of this report would not have been possible without the responses given by Prison Services to the EuroPris Knowledge Management System (KMS) questionnaire and the best practices from each member country of the Family Relations Expert Group.

The main objective of this chapter is to focus on all aspects of communication, to understand how it can be made more efficient and family-friendly in the prison environment. Communication is closely linked to information and support that is provided to families.

This chapter covers the following topics:

1. Providing public information regarding prison visits
2. The importance of consistent and clear poster information in visit waiting areas
3. The importance of other interventions regarding communications with family members
4. Ensuring the transmission of information for people with impaired vision and hearing through the use of specific strategies
5. The opportunity for visitors to submit complaints, remarks or proposals in visit waiting areas
6. Providing publications for children with child-friendly explanations

Providing public information regarding prison visits

Many obstacles surface when prisoners and their families are ill-informed about the procedures revolving around prisons and other security procedures. *Can we visit the person? What are the required formalities? How does prison operate? What can we bring to the prison and how to go about this? Do prison visits require booking?*

The visitors need support. Information about the prison and prison visits needs to be available and accessible to all visitors and especially for family members. They need to learn a whole new language and process.

In every country there exists public information regarding procedures to gain a permit in order to visit a detainee; to fix an appointment to a visit a detainee or the procedure of the visit itself. Rules, details about the visit system and information about numbers of visits, length of visits, numbers of visitors, etc., are provided to the families and prisoners upon arrival at the prison, in the remand period (Sweden and Romania). It is important to ensure this information is produced in simple language and in a variety of different languages to reflect the main nationalities of the population within the prison.

Every country provides information on the Ministry of Justice/prison system/prison website; notices are posted in the visit waiting areas in prison, there exist leaflets about the prisons, telephones and brochures. In the Netherlands and Romania, prisons have cable television networks and information is provided to prisoners on the in-cell televisions. In Romania, a few prisons have info kiosk (database that can be accessed by inmates with a personal card). Many countries also provide information regarding disabled visitors, such as information about public transport and the location plan of the prison.

Scotland provides information on all aspects of visits including times, procedures and regulations. There is a frequently asked questions section on the Prison Administration (SPS) website and hard copy leaflets are also available in prisons and from partner agencies in the community.

The Irish Prison Service – Information regarding visits is available to the general public on the Irish Prison Service (IPS) website. Similarly, information on visits can be found on the Croatian Ministry of Justice website, as well as in the brochure "Manual for prisoners". The largest penitentiary in Croatia has internal cable television where useful information including information on visits, is delivered to the inmates.

Austria provides information on the visit time, the length of visits, procedures, public transportation, number of visits, disclosure, obligation of having the permission from the court, information about money transfer (letters...) and accessibility of the prison.

In Catalonia each prison has an Information Office. These offices outline everything related to visits.

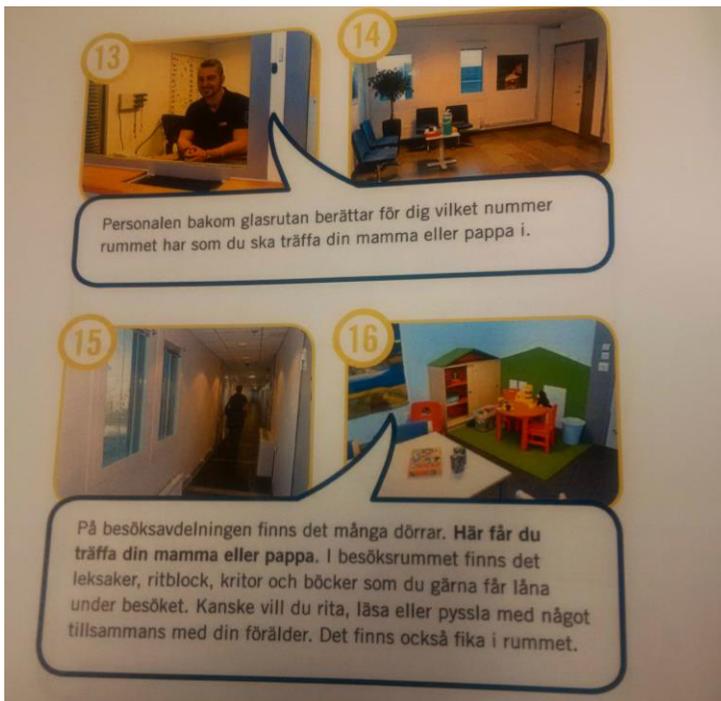
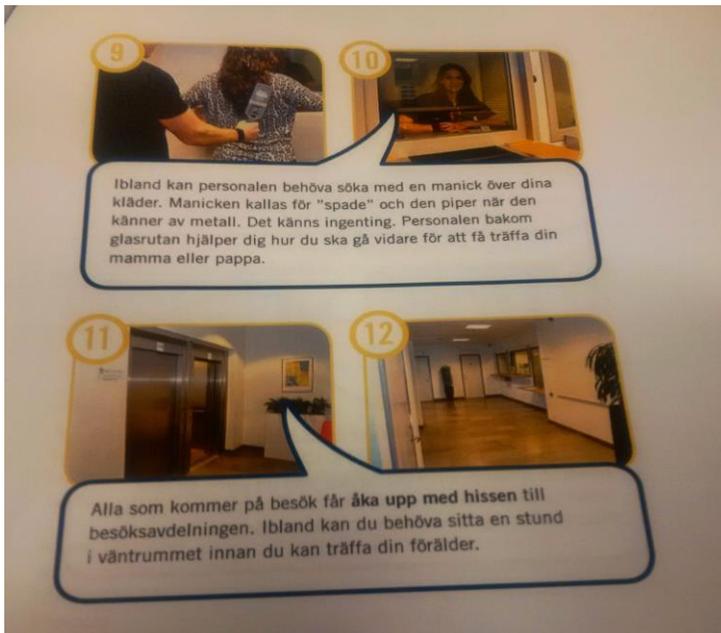
In England and Wales, there is existing Policy concerning the provision of Visits and Services to visitors. This policy covers information provided to visitors such as how to book a prison visit, security procedures and penalties for non-compliance. Details about help with travel for visitors who have financial difficulties are available through the Assisted Prison Visits scheme. Visits timetables are available as well as information about what visitors can expect to happen on a visit. Information about prison for children is also available.

Importance of consistent and clear poster information in visit waiting areas

Clear information in visit areas is very important. Efforts are underway in all countries to ensure that all necessary information is well displayed in visit waiting areas. It is recognised as a matter of course that both prisoners and visitors receive the best possible support while a person is serving a sentence.

Notices are mainly displayed in the main gate regarding prohibited articles. Some counties have a short video outlining the search process for visitors. Where present, this runs continuously throughout the visiting period.

An example of good practice from Sweden is the below poster with necessary information for visitors and for children:



In England and Wales, staff who work with visitors are able to provide information and respond to difficulties/queries. Information about security is available in visits waiting areas which describe regulations and the consequences for non-compliance.

In Ireland, notices are displayed on the main gate regarding prohibited articles beyond a certain point. The Prison Service displays information posters in all visit waiting areas, setting out Prison Service policy, procedures and consequences in relation to maintaining security and the detection if contraband is found whilst visiting the prison.

In Scotland, they have worked in partnership with two third sector organisations (Barnardo's Scotland and Families Outside) to design a five year strategy for working with individuals in their care as well as supporting their families and wider social networks.

The following guiding principles underpin the [Family Strategy](#) and inform all practices relating to families affected by imprisonment:

- Family members are treated with fairness, dignity and respect

Families should never feel stigmatised, with the assumption being that family members have done no wrong. We must be mindful of this principle in all our dealings with people in our care and their families.

- Families are included in their relatives' rehabilitation wherever possible

We will work in a more holistic way with those in our care and their families wherever possible to improve outcomes.

- Every family is unique

Different families will experience and respond in different ways to a family member's imprisonment. All decisions and actions relating to the family should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

- The best interests of Children are paramount to any decision making

In line with Scottish Government policy, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is at the heart of strategy, policy and practice affecting people in our care, children, young people and their families in order to promote wellbeing and positive life outcomes.

- Effective Partnership working is key to successful outcomes

All partners should work collaboratively towards improving outcomes for people in our care and their families. We need to work with our partners to build on existing and future evidence of what works.

Supporting communication with and between family members

Imprisonment confronts all family members with a variety of difficulties and it is important that all involved are aware of this. It is in the best interests of all involved in the prisoner's life that an appropriate induction process is provided. During the induction process, specific family support and parenting needs should be identified and this identification should include arrangements for facilitating contacts and communication. These must be specific to

the needs and requirements of the prison population. The role of the staff that work directly or indirectly with prisoners and their family members is crucial.

The Irish Prison Service Three Year Strategic Plan 2012-2015 set out the commitment of the Prison Service to strengthen family supports to facilitate on-going contact with prisoners while in custody and their reintegration post-release, with appropriate support and programmes. This led to the establishment of the Families and Imprisonment Group and a pilot project entitled the Family Links Programme. The project aims to develop parenting and family programmes specific to the needs and requirements of the prison population.

Catalonian and Slovenian prison systems have a multidisciplinary team and the social worker of the team is the person who communicates with families from a person's admission into prison until the end of their sentence (everything related to prison life).

In Northern Ireland, each prison typically has a Family Support officer available to offer support and guidance. Examples of positive family support include: Skype facilities being rolled out across all establishments and opportunities for different types of visiting experience constantly being sought. Positive family support is further evidenced through Sunday lunch visits allowing families to sit down together for a meal; and the development of familiarisation visits for family members when a prisoner transfers to a different location, thus illustrating the opportunities available on-site and in the community.

In Scotland all prisoners are provided with a thorough induction process. The aims are to assist and support the prisoners' integration.

Several initiatives have been carried out in Europe to support family members in their various roles. There are also many parenting initiatives, such as parenting courses, family learning and family support in various countries.

Transmission of information for people with impaired vision and hearing through the use of specific strategies

Only a few countries ensure the transmission of information for people with impaired vision and hearing by specific methods. Austria has Touch Screens in prison visiting areas, while the Catalonia Department of Justice has provided funding to the Deaf Federation of Catalonia for a programme that provides support to deaf people and their families through sign language. For visually impaired inmates in Catalonia there is a residence outside of prison centres where sentences can be carried out.

Scotland, Belgium and Sweden use different methods for communication with people who have hearing and visual impairments. Sweden, for example, facilitates information for people with hearing impairments on the Prison Service homepage by pressing the "lyssna" button. In Belgium, the website of the Federal Public Service of Justice is accessible to people with a disability. It obtained an Any Surfer Label, a quality label for accessible websites.

In other countries, the prison staff helps guests with special needs, adapting the environment to allow for accessible prison visits or cooperating with the Association of Deaf and Blind when necessary, as is the case in Croatia.

Opportunities for visitors to submit complaints, remarks or proposals in visit waiting areas

Any comments, complaints or suggestions about the visit experience can be beneficial. Visitors should be able to comment on the visit experience and receive a response. This opportunity is made available in all countries, but the commenting process varies from country to country.

In all countries visitors can contact staff at any time regarding complaints, remarks or proposals. Some countries also provide boxes for ideas or complaints in the visit waiting rooms, but not all.

In many countries, there are opportunities for consultations with children, adult visitors and facilities to collect comments and complaints from visitors. Visitors are encouraged to report behaviour that they find to be unacceptable or they believe is contrary to the equalities policy statement. These comments and complaints are then investigated.

The prison services in all countries are very customer-focused. They are always looking for ways to improve their service delivery. They take complaints very seriously and have a formal process for examining them. In some countries there is a simple, tactile way to evaluate whether a visit was positive or negative (see below photo).



Providing publications for children with child-friendly explanations

Preparing children for prison visits is a top priority. Countries such as Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, Denmark, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia have rooms with facilities for children, special rooms where children are able to visit their imprisoned parent or play areas indoors and/or outdoors.

Children are allowed to visit their parents in prison accompanied by an adult but there may be some constraints to the visit, depending on the regime (in Romania, prisoners serving a sentence in maximum security or in a closed regime have contact with their family through a glass partition and cannot embrace) or space and equipment available (number of tables and chairs, etc.).

In countries such as England and Wales, staff work alongside partner organisations in visitors' centres with the goal of providing services for children and families of prisoners. These partner organisations tend to have special websites with targeted information that can be accessed by interested parties. In Croatia, parents' associations have donated brochures that are available in the visiting rooms, prison wings and prison libraries.

In a few countries, there are posters in the visits waiting area that demonstrate how to develop and maintain positive communication between parents and children. Prisoners receive leaflets with recommendations on how to better understand a child's perspective on their parent serving a sentence and how to talk to children about it (Croatia). In many countries, including Scotland, England and Wales, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Finland there are child-friendly booklets in the visiting area or the prison library, such as in Belgium. These leaflets are also made available to families through outside agencies and NGOs.

Prison systems in Finland and Denmark promote films for children with parents in prison on the home pages of their websites. In Finland, there is an animated film about having a parent in prison. This film tells the story of a ten year-old girl and her brother and their experience of their father being sent to prison. The Finnish prison system has also published a book of fairy tales entitled "Teddy bear Osmo and his father's mistake".

Denmark has a number of films that contain general information about imprisonment and custody. These films aim to give children of different ages insight into what to expect when visiting a parent or relative in prison, and to inform children about where to seek more information/help.

There are some countries in which the inmate has the possibility to create a booklet to send to their children, with everyday pictures of the parent, their cell, activities, etc. It is also possible to read a bed-time story that is recorded and then sent to children to listen to, based on the very successful English project – Storybook Dads. These possibilities are sometimes facilitated by certain officers in the prisons, who have a particular role to play concerning children of prisoners, or by NGOs. Some of the prisons have published booklets about the institution, meant for the parent to read with their children, and thereby help to create a dialogue about life in prison, and the thoughts and worries of the children.

Luxembourg, Catalonia and the Netherlands do not have specific booklets for children to inform them with pictures and easy-to-read stories about security procedures; in Austria this is under construct.

Scottish NGO Families Outside has recently produced a publication called [My Diary](#) aimed at addressing the difficulties experienced by young children who have a parent in prison. The book is written for children, from the

perspective of a child with a parent in prison. It explores the wide range of emotions that may be encountered by a child with a parent in prison, such as anger, sadness, happiness, confusion, fear, relief, and how their day-to-day and school life may change.

There are a number of publications designed to prepare children for prison visits. Bambinisenzasbarre published a book in 2011 that translates to “The Wednesday of Lalla”; Action for Prisoners’ Families has a number of resources, including a booklet entitled “Telling the children,” and a booklet for young people with a family member in prison. Action for Prisoners’ Families has also published [storybooks for younger children](#), with titles such as “Tommy’s Dad,” “Danny’s Mum,” and “Finding Dad.” It is important that resources are available to meet the needs of children of all ages.



Conclusion

It is imperative that each prison provides clear, accessible and consistent information to the public with regard to visits and prison life. The aim has to be to develop different print and electronic resources, to best assist families of incarcerated persons.

Informing prisoners/visitors is more effective if a variety of tools and methods are used (websites, leaflets, books, films, radio/TV broadcasts, etc.), ensuring that the information communicated is clear, precise and useful.

Prisons must pay special attention to children who come to visit both in terms of preparing the prison and the visit itself. They need to ensure that all of the necessary information about the visit is communicated to minors in age-appropriate terms, with the aim of a positive experience for children, companions and prisoners.

Appropriate communication with people with disabilities is very important. Many prison systems are not yet prepared for this, though the experience of some countries demonstrates that there is the possibility for help from specialised associations.

All countries recognise that children and families are hugely motivating factors that can influence positive behaviour change in prisoners. All prison systems are committed to working with families, community and voluntary sector partners in order to maintain and develop meaningful family contact throughout a person's period of imprisonment.

The next chapter presents several suggestions for efficiently supporting imprisoned people.

Intervention Programmes

Bernardica Franjic Nad, Andrea Moser-Riebniger

Parenting programmes

Children and families are hugely motivating factors that can influence behaviour change in prisoners. In order to help prisoners to develop and maintain quality and meaningful relationships with their children and families, many prison systems are implementing parenting training programmes. This is often achieved in collaboration with community and voluntary sector partners. The aims are to develop parenting and family programmes specific to the needs and requirements of the prison population. The role of the staff that work directly or indirectly with prisoners and their family members is crucial.

Several initiatives have been carried out in Europe to support family members in their various roles. There are also many parenting initiatives, such as parenting courses, relationship programmes, family learning and family support in various countries.

Catalonia: There is one specific parenting programme addressed to women and run by a combination of social groups, multidisciplinary teams and a volunteer organisation in Catalonia. The Mothers Unit is a comprehensive training programme on parenting issues addressed to mothers in prison. There is also the possibility for mothers from the Mothers Unit (inside prison) to attend parenting courses in a Dependent Unit for mothers with children located outside prison. In addition, there are residential spaces offering parenting courses that can be attended by female prisoners during their permits. Courses are offered on subjects that relate to parenting, such as sexual education, health and maternity.

One programme for male inmates, “Parental responsibility and education,” is led by educators from the prison Treatment Teams together with the organisation “Niños sin Barreras”. The programme lasts about two months and touches on the following: Expectations as a parent; Children’s needs; Being an adult; Being a son or daughter; Being a father; “Where do we want to educate?”; Styles of fatherhood; Separation and the family; Preparation and support in communication; Limits and communication; Emotional education; Positive authority. Besides parenting skills, the programme also focuses on the emotional aspects of parenting, such as what the parent means to their child, and considers the child’s perspective in differentiating between son and daughter. The programme also explores how it feels to be a child and what a child needs to grow. From here, they talk about what the adult needs to advance in society and discuss two aspects: how society expects them to be as adults and what difficulties adults (as parents) are facing to make their needs compatible with those of their child. Here they talk about the difficulties that can come along with carrying out different aspects of parental responsibility, and the importance of looking for help and support through different social networks (schools, friends, etc.). They talk about the different fathering styles; discussing the model with which they identify from their childhood, the shortcomings and positive points of each of the models from their experience as children. The underlying themes of all of these topics include: communication with their children, the emotional functions of parenting, the convenience of talking with children about separation and incarceration, relationships between couples, referents for the child and the best interest of the child.

Croatia: The Croatian prison system has developed the "Prisoner as a parent programme" (PaP) for inmates. This programme is carried out by specially trained treatment and security staff, according to the "Handbook for implementation of the PaP programme". The programme aims to promote parental competence of prisoners who, in the supportive environment of workshops through experiential and group work, share their parenting experiences as well as learn and acquire new skills; reinforce responsibility for their own parenting processes, for the quality of the relationship with the child and for maintaining family ties. This programme rests on the fact that parental competence is largely based on learned behaviour and that through learning it is possible to improve parental competence. The aim of the programme is to encourage the active, positive and responsible parenthood of prisoners, one that is in the best interests of the child. The programme also provides the necessary assistance and support to inmates regarding separation from their children during the term of the sentence. It consists of 14 workshops, such as follows: Communication; Active listening; Talking; Assertiveness; Needs; Emotions; Thoughts, emotions and behaviour; Conflict and cooperation; Self-confidence and self-respect; Parenting; Developmental phases of childhood; Parenting styles and parental behaviour; Disciplining of child; Problem solving in upbringing; Conflict between parents before and after divorce. The manual for PaP also includes topics regarding legal framework that affects parenting in prison, presented in the form of frequently asked questions. Prisoners complete a questionnaire about parenting competencies at the beginning and at the end of the programme, and the results show a significant increase in many aspects of parenting competence. Prisoners earn a certificate upon finishing the programme. Croatian NGO Status:M works with men and boys through workshops based on the 'Programme T', which is a manual on how to work with current and future fathers. They have also developed the Programme "Super dad without barriers".

England & Wales: The Prison Services owns and supports delivery of a range of Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes. These programmes encourage and support positive relationships between participants and their families (as appropriate), and can play an important role in supporting the wider Families Strategy. The evidence shows that supportive and pro-social family and marital relationships are important factors in enabling desistance. Programmes strengthen family ties and relationships with others by: Encouraging individuals to set pro-social goals and develop action plans which encourage them to work on improving their skills; supporting participants with skills acquisition. Depending on individual need, this is likely to include: Improved problem solving; Increased perspective taking; Improved management of impulses; Improved emotion management skills; Reduced conflict in close relationships; Improved ability to manage relationships with anti-social others; Positive relationship skills; Improvements in assertive behaviour where there are identified deficits; Enhanced warmth and ability to care for others; Confident and responsible parenting behaviours; Feeling hopeful and motivated to give up crime. There is an effort made to actively create opportunities within programmes to support the involvement of family members who are exposed to the individual's areas of need, progress updates, and developing goals. In some programmes this includes attending critical programme sessions, in others, attempts are made to involve family members in the post-programme review.

Examples of such programmes are Time for Families, Fathers Inside and Family Man (developed by NGOs); and accredited programmes such as the Healthy Relationships Programme, addressing domestic abuse which includes a focus on abusive behaviour that is both violent and non-violent (e.g. Verbal and controlling) and the effects witnessing such abuse can have on children.

As Programmes are constantly evolving, please contact interventions_businessenquiries@noms.gsi.gov.uk for further information.

They also offer parenting-oriented courses through their partner providers.

Finland: The Let's Talk About Children (LP) - training programme has been given to prison guards and other personnel from various institutions. LP education prepares inmates to face their children and prepares staff to talk about children and family, together with the prisoners. Some prisons use the Let's Talk About Children – programme. The LP – programme is two step method/short programme to support the everyday life of children and families during a parent's imprisonment. The programme helps parents and children to cope with their day-to-day lives despite the parent's imprisonment. The aim of working with LP is to support each parent to be as good a parent as possible during imprisonment and after release from prison. This programme focuses on helping parents support their children at home and outside the home (school, hobbies, etc.) while imprisoned and to help the family reach the services they need. The priority is always the best interests of the child. Additionally, discussions with the Family Liaisons officer about children, the couple relationship and strengthen parenting skills are available for prisoners.

Norway: "Dad in prison" is a programme for inmates with children that focuses primarily on the role of being a father. It is intended to help participants develop new perspectives and attitudes related to their commitment to the family. The programme is conducted over a period of 4 weeks and includes meetings where the family participates, and an assignment where the prisoner communicates with his children via video. Some key elements of the programme are: Communication; Developmental theory – child development; Role theory - roles and role models; Emotions - how to deal with emotions – coping; Challenges and problem-solving; Children's health - prevention and treatment; Children's rights - parental responsibility; Public services - whom to work with. VINN is a programme aimed at female offenders and has a number of modules where relationships with children and/or partners are covered.

Romania: The offer of programmes and activities for inmates in Romania includes educational programmes for parenting on the following topics: Rights and parental responsibilities; Parenting skills development, Me and my baby; Parental Education.

Germany: Two prisons in Schleswig-Holstein have special training programmes on parenting for prisoners. The training is led by an external family counsellor and supported by staff. The topics are: Being a parent; Responsibility; The needs of children. At the end of the programme the prisoners organise a family visit including games and activities for their children.

Scotland: Through National Parenting Strategy Outcomes Policy, the Scottish Prison Service recognises that it has an active role to play in delivering parenting support to prisoners. 6150% of the prisoners who participated in the SPS Prisoner Survey in 2015 said they were parents and the most recent information from analytical colleagues suggests around 20,000 children are affected by parental imprisonment in Scotland. Parenting Support across SPS should achieve the following outcomes: parents play an active role in strong, stable families; parents gain a greater understanding of the value of being a parent and their role in the family unit; parents have positive aspirations for

their children; parents gain a toolbox of skills to allow them to develop positive relationships with their children; parents have the confidence to ask for, and engage with, support services without the fear of stigma; parents understand that maintaining positive relationships improves their child's health and wellbeing and parents enhance their literacy and skills through contextualized learning i.e. in activities that are not solely classroom based and delivered by the education provider. The SPS is committed to working with offenders, their families, the community and partners in order to encourage and maintain meaningful family contact throughout an offender's time in custody. SPS is leading the development of a parenting and relationships programme for offenders, initially this will begin with young men at HM YOI Polmont. This programme will have prisoners consider their own experience of being a child, their approach to relationships and being a parent, as well as the development of life skills and practical parenting skills. Barnardo's is delivering this Parenting Programme along with SPS staff.

The Scottish Prison Service also work in partnership with Early Years Scotland to support prisoners, their children and partners. Families are provided with opportunities to improve attachment so that relationships are more likely to stay strong, leading to more positive outcomes for the children. The partnership supports families through the following interventions:

- Family Play Session
- Baby Massage
- Healthy Eating Sessions
- Fathers' Programme and Fathers' Forum
- Follow on play session in the community for prisoners on release
- Awareness raising sessions with prison staff and other agencies
- Signposting to other support agencies.

Sweden: The PPS in Sweden have activities that aim to emphasise the role of parents. There is a Parental Group programme, which aims to support parents in their parenting role to promote children's positive development. The programme provides information about children's development and how being separated from a parent can affect a child. It also gives knowledge about protective and beneficiary factors that work against risk factors for child development; children's needs; how children can think and feel when a parent is committed for a crime; the importance of the parent and how crucial it is that parents/adults collaborate with the best interests of children in mind. The study material has been developed by the NGO Buff (Children and Youth with Parent/Family member in Prison). Finally, the PPS have a special prison in class 3, Gruvberget, where clients can live in more open conditions for a week or two and participate in different courses. The client's family can also participate in some courses. In these cases the client and their family are able to stay in a house on their own.

Other ways of supporting prisoner's parenting

Prison systems that do not have their own specific parenting programmes or training on parenting can also consider prisoner's parenting through cooperation with the Community (Belgium); talking with staff individually or in small group session meetings (Slovenia); the support of a contact person or even psychologist or social worker (Estonia) and treatment programmes which may include cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, etc., (Czech Republic).

Standard training/programme for prisoners on improving family/partner relationships

There is no training programme for prisoners on improving family/partner relationships in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany or in Slovenia, but this topic is often part of individual treatment programmes. In the Czech Republic, this type of programming is called formation of external relations and involves social interaction, mainly with family members. A specific programme regarding family/partner relationships is under development in Norway. In Lithuania there is a Cognitive behavioural corrective programme: "Only you and I", "Behaviour-Conversation-Exchange" and Social skills training programmes which can be useful for improving family/partner relationships with prisoners.

Estonia: Estonia generally does not provide training programmes for prisoners in order to improve relations with the family and with partners, but there are some family and intimate partner violence reduction programmes. Estonian prisons also have social workers and psychologists who have received training in family therapy and, if necessary, they will advise prisoners on how to improve family or partner relationships. Family days are held with a focus on improving family relations, where families can come to the prison and participate in the events along with the prisoner.

Catalonia: In Catalonia, family/partner-relationships are directly dealt with in family support groups and indirectly dealt with in various specialised programmes: VIGE (Gender Violence) and DEVI (Violent offences). In terms of relationships, a specific programme is not provided, however the Domestic Violence Programme does cover the following aspects: Types of abuse in the couple; Cycle of violence in the couple; Communication in the couple; Receiving complaints and compliments in the couple; Empathy with the partner; Cognitive distortions towards women; Myths of romantic love, Jealousy and resentment towards the couple; Conflict resolution within the couple.

Romania: Romanian prison services have programmes for persons deprived of liberty in prison, aimed at improving family relations: "Me and my family" (addressed to minors); Programme for maintaining/developing relations with the environment of support "For family and society"; "Marital and Family Relations" programme; "Education for family life" programme.

Sweden: The Swedish PPS do not provide specific programmes on improving family/partner relationships but there are two treatment programmes focusing on partner violence and sexual violence. Idap (Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme) is a treatment programme for male clients who have used threats, violence or other controlling behaviour towards his female partner/ex-partner. The programme was developed in Britain and is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and social learning theory. The programme consists of nine different themes, where each theme contains three sessions. The clients work together in a group and watch movie sequences about the concerned subject, which they discuss and analyse. To take the understanding of the subject further, every participant receives an assignment to describe a personal situation regarding the subject. The programme aims to support clients in finding positive alternatives to violence and controlling behaviour, and give them the opportunity to practice this through exercises and role playing. ROS (Relationship and Cohabitation) is a cognitive behavioural therapy programme with psychodynamic elements which is a treatment for male sex offenders. The programme was developed in Canada and has been adapted to Swedish conditions. The clients work together in a group or individually with five components, where each component contains 5-8 themes. Each theme is initially defined on a general and abstract level. Exercises, role playing and homework assignments will, step by step, lead to each client working through the theme on a personal level. In addition, there is a sixth component, self-management, where the client does an individual risk analysis of recidivism, through writing his own autobiography and abuse analysis.

Based on this, the client will write a risk management plan to develop a strategy for how he will prevent recidivism after release from prison.

Croatia: In Croatia there is no special training on improving family/partner relationships, but there is training on social skills which is facilitated by prison staff in all prisons and penitentiaries. This programme consists of 16 workshops, and prisoners earn a certificate upon finishing the programme. NGO Status: M has been active in engaging men and boys in addressing violence against women since 2010 through their project "Be a man, change the world". Status: M works with men and boys through workshops, which are based on the 'Programme M' and 'Programme T': manuals on how to work with boys (M) and current and future fathers (T). Topics covered with young men focus on gender equality, homophobia, healthy lifestyles and building a culture of non-violence and tolerance. Topics covered with current and future fathers include the before-mentioned topics, as well as topics on parenthood and fatherhood. The main message of this project is that men and boys should be actively engaged in the fight for gender equality. Although in Croatia there are normative and regulatory requirements when it comes to fatherhood, in practice, is only a small percentage of fathers who take parental leave and have an active engagement in parenthood, and share equal responsibilities with mothers when it comes to unpaid housework. With their project, Status: M hopes to encourage and empower current and future fathers to take on an active parenthood role. At the same time, they are working with young men in correctional facilities with the goal of raising awareness on topics such as gender equality, homophobia, healthy lifestyles and building a culture of non-violence and tolerance.

Finland: During their sentence, prisoners in Finland have the opportunity to meet with the Family Liaison officer to discuss relationships and family matters, and a pastor can be seen for marital affairs. There are family camps and family days to support families and parenting relationships during imprisonment.

Family counselling or family psychotherapy for prisoners

Social workers in Catalonia provide assistance and family counselling to all prisoners who request it. There are offers of family psychotherapy promoted by external institutions and addressed to those prisoners who are serving their sentences in open prison regimes. For everything that is related to criminal proceedings, the legislation allocates assistance to the relatives of prisoners to the Social Services within the Penal System. This service provides advice and guidance to the family, but it does not have a Family psychotherapy service. Family members who need therapeutic support due to the consequences of the imprisonment of a relative, are referred to Public Community Health Services, under previous assessment of the family doctor of the Public Medical Health System. In Belgium this kind of counselling is available only extramurally via leaves in preparation for the social rehabilitation of inmates. The Romanian prison system carries out activities and programmes involving the prisoner's family members, but inmates are not offered counselling or psychotherapy. Scottish SPS provides a number of cognitive offender behaviour programmes, some of which deal with relationships and appropriate personal interactions. In Lithuania, if necessary, a family doctor has the right to send a patient to the appropriate specialist (including family psychotherapist) consultation. Slovenian prison staff provide counselling or psychotherapy to all inmates who express their need or who have questions about family. In Estonian prisons they do not have psychotherapy, but family counselling and family therapy is guaranteed for prisoners. In Latvia inmates have the possibility to turn to a psychologist or social worker regarding family questions. The Swedish PPS do not have any resources for offering family members help in terms of counselling, but there are other social services that are responsible for offering such help. Psychologists provide psycho-social counselling in the Czech Republic. The Norwegian NGO "Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners" (FFP) has a short-term project which offers family counselling

in three prisons. The Correctional Service is in talks with the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs about a collaboration to offer family counselling to prisoners. The new penal law in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, has a family-oriented approach and every prisoner has the right to speak to a family counsellor or therapist if necessary. There is no family counselling or family psychotherapy on a regular basis in Croatia or Finland, but prisoners can turn to psychologists or psychiatrists for support regarding family issues if need be.

Other support interventions to maintain, enhance and improve family relationships

Catalonia: Niños Sin Barreras, a social organisation in Catalonia, works to meet the needs of children of prisoners. They accompany the children to the prisoners centre for visits when the family cannot bring them to visit their parent. Social workers from professional treatment teams are responsible for coordinating with Niños Sin Barreras. Family Meetings and family days take place, and are of a treatment nature. These are days in which a certain unit of the prison centre (therapeutic community, artistic workshops, school or other) will organise an open day with the families of all prisoners from the unit who wish to participate. Catalonia is also implementing a Program of support and follow-up after release where they are worked with inmates and their families: the program contains measures that should be implemented to reduce recidivism.

Croatia: All prisons and penitentiaries organise different activities during visits on the holidays, for Family Day, and during the COPE campaign, such as: creative workshops for parents and children, special occasion workshops on parenting for prisoners, presentations, film projections, puppet plays, musical performances from both outside musicians and prisoners, group photos for prisoners and their families. Leaflets with advice on parental issues are also available and prisoners can write articles in the prison newspapers. They have a reading programme, developed and implemented by the NGO Parents in Action - RODA, in which the parent in prison records their voice on DVD while reading a book for their child. A DVD called “Together in a world of stories”, with a personal note and the book is sent to a child as a gift. The child can listen to their parent's voice while reading the book at home with the support of their other parent or a family member. The NGO Roda has also distributed the booklet “Ties unbroken – Attachment parenting from prison” to all prisons and penitentiaries in Croatia.

Czech Republic: A principle positive intervention for a prisoner is a visit outside the prison for up to 24 hours. Application of this intervention is decided by the prison governor. The main purpose is to strengthen family ties. Other programmes may include family therapies, video phone calls and assisted child-parent visits.

Estonia: In Estonian prisons, risk assessment interviews always cover family relation issues. The purpose of social work is to help the prisoner maintain and create important and positive social contacts outside the prison, to increase their ability to cope and to act within the law. It is important that the person has a support network after their release, particularly including their family.

Finland: If a couple is imprisoned at the same time, prisons cooperate closely. Family Liaison officers, pastors and counsellors meet with couples during the sentence, and work with them in discussions to strengthen family relationships.

German, Schleswig-Holstein: The prisons organise special events for prisoners and their children such as: Christmas baking in the prison bakery, puppet theatre, magic shows, etc.

Latvia: In the Cesis Correctional Institution for Juveniles in Latvia a parent conference has been organised annually. This conference welcomes participation from parents (or other legal representatives), the personnel of the Cesis

Correctional Institution for Juveniles, as well as inmates. In addition, family days, where inmates can meet with their relatives, will be organised regularly in Olaine prison Addiction centre.

Norway: Many prisons arrange tours of the prison area so that children can see how their mother or father lives, including where they have classes, work and leisure activities. Some prisons facilitate parents reading bedtime stories for their children through various means of communication.

Romania: The social worker responsible organises both children's visits and workshops with family members in Romania. These activities are mediated by a social worker/psychologist. Parents and their children benefit from the support of specialists or collaborators, and will play or will carry out occupational activities together. In this regard, there have been diversified activities and programmes designed to develop parenting skills, strengthen the prisoner's relationship with family and build community support, such as "A Day with Dad" and "A Day with Mom".

Scotland: Encouraging Family Contact Policy: The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) recognises that children and families are huge motivating factors that can influence behavioural change and is committed to working with families, the community and voluntary sector partners in order to maintain meaningful family contact throughout a period of imprisonment. They want to strengthen the relationship between the SPS and families affected by imprisonment to ensure that both the prisoner and the family receive the best possible support during this difficult time. The Scottish Prison Service Family Strategy has key themes to achieve the desired outcomes for people in their care and their families. Each theme sets out SPS priorities together with associated actions that each establishment throughout Scotland must implement in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

These key themes are:

- Family contact

We will actively support and encourage family contact where possible

- Families feel included and engaged

We will actively encourage, facilitate and support family engagement throughout a relative's time in custody

- Families are safe and well

We will support wellbeing and positive life outcomes for people in our care and their families affected by imprisonment

- Children

We will actively promote the wellbeing and positive life outcomes for children affected by parental imprisonment

Each SPS establishment will have an improvement plan in place and a Family Strategy Group formed to drive improvement for people in their care and their families.

SPS will ensure families visiting a relative in prison do so in a safe and pleasant environment. Child Protection Policy - it is the responsibility of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to

protect from harm and abuse those children and young people who visit or make contact with a prison and with offenders. Child protection is the responsibility of all who interact with children and families, regardless of whether that work brings them into direct contact with children and young people. The SPS have procedures which set out the roles and responsibilities for staff, including non-SPS staff, working across the SPS estate. The policy has been brought into line with the Scottish Governments National Guidance and applies to SPS and its private sector partners. It focuses on child protection in a SPS context, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff and step-by-step guidance on the reporting procedure which must be followed. This policy is based on the following principles: that the welfare of the child or young person is always paramount; that all suspicions and allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; that all staff will be: able to recognise signs of potential abuse; aware of their obligations to protect children and young people from harm and abuse; and aware of the correct reporting procedures. They have implemented a Child Protection Policy which is in line with the National Guidance on Child Protection in Scotland and every establishment now has a Designated Child Protection coordinator.

Children and babies in Scotland are allowed prison visits. All Scottish prisons also provide additional Children's visits. HMP Low Moss, has introduced a unique and original family-driven visits policy through which the family is empowered. The new approach to visits and family contact in Low Moss has been viewed in positive terms by prisoners, families, staff and volunteers and is seen as consistent with the overall ethos being promoted in the establishment. The innovative visiting arrangements enable prisoners to maintain close relationships with their families and to be involved in their lives. It is evident that the children's visits have a positive impact on bonding between prisoners and their children, enabling parents to be involved in their children's growing up. Aspects of the new approach considered particularly positive are the opportunity, frequency and availability of family contact; flexibility in approach and the focus on enabling contact; pleasant surroundings and a relaxed atmosphere for the visits; and activities and events (particularly freedom of movement at children's visits).

Slovenia: Slovenian prison services have strong connections and good cooperation with Social Centres as well as some NGOs who work with families.

Sweden: The Swedish PPS, in cooperation with libraries in different counties, arranges study circles called Bedtime stories from inside. Within the study circle the client records themselves reading their child's favourite story on a CD.

Individual sentence-implementation-plans are based on an assessment of the clients' need for support, control measures and other measures that should be implemented to reduce the client's risk of relapsing into crime after release. In this work the PPS considers the client's network, for example family and friends, to assess in what way their contacts may have a good or bad effect on the client. Regarding support to maintaining contact the client may, after a risk assessment, be granted furlough regularly so that he or she can visit his or her family at home. When it comes to clients who has been abusing their partner it may be a risk if the partner/ex-partner and the client have visits. If the client participates in treatment, such as IDAP, shows progress and understand the consequences of their actions, the PPS might dissolve the restrictions regarding their contact. However, in most cases visits and phone calls will be supervised to ensure the partners safety.

Austria: In general, social workers and psychologists try to maintain and strengthen the relationships between the prisoners and their families.

One Austrian prison has organised a social conference for sexual offenders over the past several years. The conference works towards improving equal sharing of information and mutual understanding between the prisoner

and their family as well as in respect of the crime, and treatment programmes. With the foundation of the social conference, the prisoner together with their family and a multidisciplinary team work together on a plan for release and reintegration.

Staff Training

Gabriela Slovakova and Paula Arnold

General Observations

The responses provided demonstrate that approaches in place to foster family relations for prisoners vary internationally. A large proportion of respondents have some formal training in place; however this tends to be targeted at specific staff groups or staff carrying out specific roles. In some cases, duties related to promoting family relations and providing for the protection and safety of children are carried out by non-prison staff (e.g., social workers or psychologists).

Interestingly, a large proportion of the training available is limited to new recruits and is not a mandatory requirement for existing staff, either in relation to their day to day duties or their own personal/professional development.

Good Practice (2016 Survey)

Internationally, while many countries are making progress in bringing the needs of families affected by imprisonment to bear upon policy and strategy, there is no consistent approach or recognised method of quantifying outcomes. Little is being done in the way of systematic planning, service design, implementation or review in relation to policy in this area.

10 Participating countries:

Slovenia, Germany (Schleswig – Holstein), Germany (Mecklenburg – West Pomerania), Germany (Saxony), Latvia, Romania, Czech Republic, Denmark, Sweden, Scotland, Croatia and Norway.

Summary of Responses:

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ASKED	AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE RATE
Do you have any specific staff education/training focused on family relations provided to staff?	45%
Do you have any specific staff education/training focused on providing family visits (with small or teenage children)?	45%
Do you have any specific staff education/training focused on gender sensitive or specific issues?	64%

Is this training lifelong and renewed training?	45%
Do you have child protection training?	36%

As stated, the results above are based on self-reporting. From these results, we can conclude the following:

- Less than half of the countries included in the survey have specific staff training in place that is dedicated to supporting family relations for prisoners;
- Less than half of the countries who responded have staff training in place that is focused on the needs of small/teenage children in relation to family visits;
- Almost two thirds of respondents confirmed they have staff training in place to deal with sensitive and/or gender-specific issues;
- More than half of the training in place across the countries surveyed is limited to new recruits and available training is not based upon continuous professional development; and
- Slightly more than one-third of the respondents confirmed they have formal Child Protection training in place for staff.

Germany, Schleswig-Holstein: The Ministry of Justice provides staff training focused on family relations. The key aspects are: the new penal law, the importance of supporting the inmates to improve close links to their children, cooperation with NGOs, the organisation of family visits and creating the visit rooms.

The training on family relations is part of annual staff training (by choice) and part of the training for newly recruited members of staff.

Schleswig-Holstein is the first federal State in Germany with a family-oriented approach in the new penal law (the law came into force on 1 September 2016).

Norway: In Norway, prison officer education is a two-year programme at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Service (KRUS). In the training the students learn the importance of good family relations and non-criminal social networks.

There is cooperation with NGOs and governmental institutions (child welfare, child care); such as visiting collaborators, attending as auditors, etc. The coordinators have two days of courses and a two-day workshop to exchange experiences each year.

Latvia: The State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights in collaboration with the Local Governments Training Centre of Latvia trains Latvian Prison Administration staff on a regular basis on children's rights. Staff training is organised according to frequency and necessity that is determined in normative acts.

Czech Republic: The Staff Training Academy does not provide a unified training focused on family relations. However, in some prisons the training is organised directly; in the female prison there is broader cooperation with NGOs. (For example: the *Helsinki Committee programme for Children of Imprisoned Parents* works to organise prison visits, bringing children without family support to the prison; *Behind the Gate* offers programmes for families of prisoners, visits, support, financial counselling, aftercare planning, cooperation with the prison management

prison, etc.) The staff members are specially trained in the female prison largely in part because of the presence of the Mothers and Babies Unit.

According to the new 2025 Penitentiary Conception of the Czech Prison Service, a specific programme for Women Offenders should be established. This will include staff specific training, gender sensitive issues, family visits, children's visits and so on.

Denmark: Prison officers receive general training for the process of children's visits. The training is about getting to understand how to interact with and understand the children who come to visit. They are taught how to greet the child, how to talk to the child, and how to meet the family in the visiting situation.

The Danish Prison and Probation Service trains specially appointed prison officers to become "child officers". They have appointed "child officers" in every prison and remand prison. These officers are trained to be especially aware of the family relations of the prisoners. They are trained to be aware of the importance of having appropriate visiting facilities, and to provide information to the family. The "child officers" are trained to make special arrangements for the children, supporting the possibilities for the prisoners to maintain good and evolving relations with the children. The "child officer" provides colleagues with general knowledge of children of prisoners. The "child officers" are trained to cooperate with NGOs such as the Red Cross and SAVN, which are supporting the issues surrounding children of prisoners. Fifteen prisons and remand prisons have started Fathers Groups. The "child officers" are trained to give the fathers information and to motivate them to participate in the Groups. The "child officers" are trained to focus on the family visits and to consider special arrangements for children of all ages. They also deal with the decor of the visiting areas, making sure visits are held in family friendly areas with toys and activities for all ages. They are aware of child friendly considerations for children during searches prior to visits.

The training is continuous and renewing, as the Department tries to improve the consideration of children of prisoners as an ongoing issue. All prison officers are trained in how to protect children visiting in prison.

Sweden: In the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (PPS) there is an introductory children's perspective training for all staff which includes issues about family relations, especially focused on the needs of the children. The Swedish PPS have a Child Ombudsman who has adapted training for three days. Their assignment is to support children, staff and clients in prison or on probation in questions that are related to the children's perspective.

In the Swedish PPS, there is also training for the staff working as leaders of Parental Groups. The Parental Group aims to support parents in their parenting role to promote children's positive development. The training provides increased knowledge about children's development and what separation from the parent can do to a child. It also gives knowledge about protective and beneficiary factors that work against risk factors for child development, children's needs and how children can think and feel when a parent is convicted of a crime, the importance of the parent and how important it is that parents/adults can collaborate. The study material for the Parental Group has been developed by the NGO Buff (Children and Youth with Parent/Family member in Prison). The Swedish PPS, in cooperation with libraries in different counties, arranges study circles called Bedtime Stories from inside. Within the study circle prisoners can record a CD of himself or herself reading their child's favourite story. The staff who will work with this programme receive training about how to lead these study circles. There is cooperation with the NGO Buff (Children and Youth with Parent/Family member in Prison) and they are also included in the

introductory training either by providing information or by visiting the PPS educational centre. There is a new handbook for implementing the children's perspective that was released in the Swedish PPS in autumn 2016.

The education provided in the Parental Group and Child Ombudsman training is offered as a specialised training for the staff who work with these issues. In both of these programmes there is regularly renewed training. There is also a Web course about the children's perspective that is currently under construction, which will include both basic information for all staff as well as more specialised subjects. The web course is possible to retake when needed.

The training covers how to be aware of signs of mistreatment of the child and how children are affected by having a parent in prison. There is a new web course being designed which targets many child protection issues. The PPS will shortly release a new handbook about how the Swedish PPS should act and handle issues including children or children's needs, in order to protect the child. The Swedish PPS also provides education about the perspectives of victims of crime.

Scotland: Promoting Positive Relationships training is delivered to all new recruits. Key strands of the training package include families, parenting, children and young people and child protection. Course learning outcomes include: common issues for visitors when visiting a family member in prison; internal and external support networks available to prisoners and families to promote positive relationships; the role of the Family Contact Officer and Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people.

The new Scottish Prison Service Family Strategy guiding principles and key themes for encouraging family contact are included within the training package.

Child Protection training is incorporated within the Promoting Positive Relationships training and is delivered to all new recruits. Learning outcomes include; principles of SPS Child Protection Policy and Procedures; indicators of abuse and roles and responsibilities of staff.

The SPS Family Strategy has been developed to improve outcomes for offenders and their families affected by imprisonment. This strategy clearly sets out how the SPS will review, develop and deliver national and local policies and procedures relating to the care of children, young people and their families.

Germany, Saxony: In 2013, the Saxon State Ministry of Justice founded a working committee including one employee of each penal institution in Saxony in order to develop projects and standards of supporting contact between prisoners and their families. The members of the committee are also responsible for introducing family matters in their respective penal institution. Some Saxon prisons provide training for staff concerning this subject. It helps to understand the necessity of good and healthy family relations during imprisonment, especially for children affected by parental imprisonment. Since 2015, there has been training for NGOs concerning this subject as well. In addition, in 2015 employees in eight of ten Saxon penal institutions obtained training in order to offer an 'ability' course for incarcerated parents.

In 2016, Saxony started to provide training concerning family matters for newly recruited Officers at the end of their general education for penal systems. The training time for this subject is to be increased by 2018. The purpose

of this training is to raise awareness of the consequences of imprisonment for relatives and especially for children affected by imprisoned parents. The training entails part of sensitisation, aspects of family law, recommendations from the COPING study and concrete needs and appropriate offers of the penal institutions in Saxony.

Croatia: The Croatian prison system developed the "Prisoner as a parent" programme for prisoners in 2013. The programme is carried out by specially trained treatment and security staff in the prison system according to the "Handbook for implementation of the PaP programme". The staff training for the implementation of the "Prisoner as a Parent" programme is four days. The programme aims to promote parental competencies of prisoners who in the supportive environment of workshops through experiential and group work, share their parenting experiences, learn and acquire new skills and reinforce responsibility for their own parenting processes for the quality of the relationship with the child and for maintaining family ties. This programme rests on the fact that parental competence is largely based on a learned behaviour and that improvement is possible. The aim of the programme is to encourage the active, positive and responsible parenthood of prisoners, one that is in the best interests of the child. The programme also provides the necessary assistance and support to prisoners regarding separation from their children during the term of the sentence. In the Croatian prison system, there is good cooperation with NGOs. In addition, during the implementation of the "ma#me" project, the NGO Roda was provided with funding to support children's visits to their mothers in prison for families with lower income.

In cooperation with NGOs, especially with the NGO Parents in Action - RODA, in the activities of the project "ma#me", financed by the ESF, workshops were held with the staff of the prison system according to the manual, "Child of the prisoner as a motive for changing practices". The aim of the workshops is to train staff to support creative and purposeful use of time during children's visits to their parents in prison. The staff view education and interaction as crucial, especially regarding proposals of specific activities for spending time with a child, and templates and material for such activities are available. The manual, which is attached to this query, in the chapter "Child's visit to the parent in prison", deals with the following topics: Approach of the staff to the child; Quality time during a child's visit in prison - what this actually means; Drawing for communication; Accordion drawing; Island; Our picture book; Balloon of feelings; Gift for the child; Doll for communication; Fairy Tales for communication. The chapter "After the prison visit" considers the importance of journaling for self-assessment.

Prison Systems with Family Liaison Officers or Family Contact Officers (FLO/FCOs)

Among Prison Systems which answered the Query, Family Liaison Officers or Family Contact Officers (FLO/FCOs) are present in England & Wales, Finland, Scotland and Sweden.

FLO/FCO is member of staff that is responsible for encouraging and maintaining links with families and has a special assignment regarding the children of the prisoners. Each prison shall have at least one, depending on the size of the prison.

Sweden: The tasks for FLO/FCOs in Sweden are to:

- a) Give information to managers and colleagues about the Prison System's obligation to consider a Child's perspective as expressed in the UNCRC,
- b) Pay attention to issues regarding the visiting facilities and environment i.e. visiting rooms, visiting apartments, waiting rooms and outdoor environment, so that they are suitable for children to the extent possible while still complying to security demands,
- c) Provide support to colleagues in matters concerning a child of a client,

- d) Ensure that the prison has good routines regarding the notification requirement. (An employee is required to notify the Social Welfare Board if the employee becomes aware of or suspect that a child is in danger of being a victim of emotional or physical child abuse),
- e) Ensure that the prison staff treats visiting children with respect and in a way that is appropriate considering the child's age and maturity,
- f) Have knowledge about and communicate with NGOs that work to support children with relatives in prison.

Norway: The function of child coordinator at all prison and probation units is one of the methods that can be used to ensure that the Norwegian Correctional Service considers the perspective of the children.

The child coordinator has a coordinating role regarding matters relating to the consideration of children as next of kin in the Norwegian Correctional Service. The child coordinator has a particular responsibility for ensuring that good routines are established in the unit, based on how the needs of the target group can be attended to within the Norwegian Correctional Service's area of responsibility.

The child coordinator must have knowledge and expertise about the following areas:

- The child and family's situation when a family member is serving a sentence.
- Conversational and communication skills when interacting with children and their caregivers.
- Relevant regulations relating to children, child welfare, duty of confidentiality, exchange of information with the child welfare services etc.
- Applicable routines, procedures and guidelines for the work with children as next of kin.
- Provide information, advice and guidance to children who are affected by the serving of a sentence and imprisonment, convicted persons and the children's day-to-day caregivers.
- Ensure that relevant informative materials are available to convicted persons, children, children's next of kin and possibly others.
- Acquire and share knowledge relating to children and particularly children who are the next of kin of convicted persons and prisoners.
- Assist other employees when assessing matters relating to the best interests of the child in individual cases.
- Prepare and follow-up routines for coordination with internal and external cooperative partners, including both public bodies and voluntary organisations.
- Work to establish the best possible frameworks for visits to prisons and probation offices.

Scotland: The main role of the FCOs in Scotland is to offer support and advice for relatives who may have concerns about their loved ones. As well as liaising between the visitors and the prisoners, the FCO can also put visitors in touch with partner agencies who can provide advice, mutual support and understanding.

England and Wales: In England and Wales the role of the FLOs is something different. They are officers who link up with families in times of tragedy e.g. the death of a prisoner. With regard to general work with families, HMPPS do have experience of family engagement workers (FEW). There are specialist workers who work with prisoners and families competing casework and so on. However they do not exist in all establishments and where they do they are likely to be provided by partner organisations that specialise in family work. HMPPS have a long history of working with voluntary sector organisations who specialise in family work and who offer valuable partnerships.

Ireland: The Family Links programme takes a whole prison approach. The aim is to change the mindset of all of the Prison Community to the potential intervention that can be achieved through family relationships. FLO's are selected and trained to deliver a bespoke parenting programme both within the prison and also within the community.

Finland: FLOs in Finland speak with prisoners about their children, partnership and support prisoners to preserve healthy family relations. They also prepare family meetings in order to find out about a visitor's / family member's background before the meeting (safety matters) together with the official responsible for the safety of the prison.

Prison Systems without FLO/FCOs

Treatment staff (Social rehabilitation departments, social workers) and Multidisciplinary Treatment Teams from other countries cover most of the tasks related to Family Relations, but they do not have the same FLO/FCO job position. Among other tasks, they get to know the families and meet their needs, inform the administrative and legal authorities on the social environment of the inmate's families and their living conditions and coordinate with the network of community resources.

Catalonia's surveillance officers (2-3 of them in every shift per 1500 inmates) are assigned to the Communications Departments and they are responsible of informing families about the rules of operation of the prison (phones, communications, etc.).

The **Estonian** Prison System has contact officers assigned to each prisoner. They guide a prisoner to behave according to the law and arrange for other necessary social welfare assistance for a prisoner.

Slovenian prison staff also cover some tasks of FLO/FCOs, as does Croatian treatment staff.

In the **Croatian** Prison System, treatment staff deal with family issues of prisoners in the frame of an Individual Plan of Sentence Enforcement and in cooperation with Welfare Centres and Probation System. Treatment staff encourage prisoners to have contact with their family and provides support for the maintenance of family relationships.

The **Romanian** Prison System has specialised personnel employed (social workers), who are responsible for contacting family members/others under specific circumstances in particular spaces in the facility for visits or through written notification or telephone calls, for the purposes of social assessment, mitigation or in order to solve social problems of inmates.

Within the **Flemish Community**, some prisons offer family detention support at the request of the detainee. In this case, the care providers get in touch with the family members extramurally and offer adequate support.

Social workers in the **Czech Republic** establish contact with family members, deal with lost contacts, and help in family crisis situations.

Every prison and probation office in **Norway** has a child coordinator who also caters to family relations. Some prisons offer programmes in parenting.

In **Italy**, Article 4 of the Memorandum of Understanding outlines that Penitentiary Administration Staff and Juvenile Justice operators operating in institutes must be trained to understand the impact of a parent's imprisonment and the prison environment on children. Prison staff is expressly trained about age-appropriate security procedures and be prepared to support children and families during prison visits.

Training for staff operating the security scanner and to those officers supervising visits

Most Prison Systems ensure training for prison officers, which amongst other issues covers the areas of human rights, integrity, ethics and approaches, laws and regulations, and security management, such as security scanning, body searches and procedures for supervised visits.

The training is both theoretical and practical. This enables the employees to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice and thus develop their professional qualities needed for the duty.

A fundamental aspect of the training is the PS's ethical code, which includes a professional code of conduct. The employees shall treat the clients and their relatives with respect and no form of harassment or abasement is tolerated. Body searches of children shall always be conducted in the presence of an accompanying adult. The child should be prepared before the body search takes place and be informed how the procedure will be carried out, with reference to the child's age and maturity. It is also important that the body search is performed in a child-friendly way.

Belgium: In Belgium there is mandatory five-day training for prison officers. For three days, the participants learn how to work with the technical devices (e.g., RX machine and metal detector), while two days are devoted to reception and communication training. The basic training of all new prison officers contains a two-hour module concerning the detainee's visits.

Scotland: Scotland's security when visiting a prison is similar to what one would expect at an airport. For the visitor's safety and security they operate robust security measures. The purpose of security process is to ensure the safety of everyone visiting the prison. While security processes vary at different prisons depending on the facilities, generally speaking visitors will be asked to place their belongings in a locker and proceed through a walk through metal detector. They may be asked to remove a belt or shoes and there may also be ION scanners in place or dogs present. They will usually be in a waiting room before they are called through to the visits area.

Lithuania: In 2016 two trainings focused on children visiting prison were organised for prison officers supervising visits in Lithuania.

Slovenia: In Slovenia there are some associated topics in the basic training for staff operating the security scanner and also in some additional training in connection with the relation to visitors, especially communication.

England and Wales: There is no consistent training on children visiting prison across the prison system but some establishments have invested training and briefing of regular visits staff, often using their partner providers to assist in that training.

Sweden: During searches of children visiting prisons, if a portable detector is used in Sweden, it can be equipped with a "hand puppet that hopefully makes the body search more playful and less unpleasant.

Czech Republic: Standard training for new prison staff in the Czech Republic primarily includes communication skills. Supervision of visits is preferably done by experienced staff.

Norway: How to treat visitors is part of the education all prison officers receive at University College of Norwegian Correctional Service, and the Governor of a prison is responsible for ensuring that all visitors to that particular prison are treated in a correct and professional manner.

Croatia: The basic training for security staff in Croatia includes communication skills with one small topic on needs of children when visiting their parents with the aim of sensitisation of officers to contribute to the child friendly atmosphere during visits.

Finland: Finland's programme "Let's Talk about Children" is offered for everybody to improve the skills to family work in prison environment.

Supervising child visits

Catalonia: In Catalonia the guards should stand outside of the room to guarantee the surveillance and safety of the communications area during family visits. Volunteers from the NGO "Niños sin Barreras" take care of children in a play area and, if the family agrees, they can also stay with the family into the room during the visit in order to support them in case of necessity.

Belgium: The employees of the Flemish Community organise and accompany children's visits. They are trained to do this and do not wear a uniform. However, during these visits, the visiting room is supervised by uniformed prison officers, who are not specifically trained for children's visits.

Romania: Children's visits in prison in Romania are conducted under visual supervision of the prison staff, directly or through electronic systems, the interaction being adapted to the specifics of the person. The staff in the visits department wear uniforms. Training courses on interaction with children are attended by prison agents and officers in the education institutions and are designed to facilitate the interaction of staff in contact with people, developing communication, and the ability to adapt communication to the other party.

Scotland: Uniformed staff manage family visits in Scotland, while Voluntary Sector staff are present in the Hubs or Family Visits Centres. Children's Visits visits are additional to prisoner's statutory visiting entitlements and provide an opportunity for a prisoner in custody to interact and spend quality time with their child in a relaxed environment. The SPS position is clear: presumed inclusion for all, with a particular consideration for any child protection issues. All children and young people under the age of 18 should be able to access these visits; and prisoners who can demonstrate an established relationship with a child/young person should be able to access these visits (this is to ensure that grandparents, step-parents, etc., can access these visits).

Lithuania: Both short-term and long-term visits in Lithuania are supervised by officers dressed in uniform regardless of whether children are participating or not in the visit.

Slovenia: All officers on-duty in Slovenia are dressed in uniforms, as they have multiple tasks as part of their daily duties. If they are working in the visits area they have to show sensibility for all visitors, not just for children. For

now, Slovenia does not have any trained volunteers who would provide support for children during their visit to prison.

Estonia: Estonian prisons do not tend to differ whether the prisons are visited by adults with or without children. If the prison facilities are visited by children, the visits are supervised by prison guards. There is no additional training carried out for guards when it comes to children visiting the facilities. The guards are required to wear a uniform even if the prisoners are visited by children. There are volunteers in Estonian prisons. The purpose of having volunteers is to help with the resocialisation of detainees and persons under probation supervision. Religious volunteers, additionally, help the chaplain service to guarantee religious freedom of the detainees by allowing them to meet with representatives (i.e., clerics) of their particular denomination.

England and Wales: In England and Wales no standard training is offered for visits staff (though there is some initial basic coverage at Prison Officer training). Prison officers generally wear uniforms during visits although many prisons have working relationships with voluntary organisations/volunteers that offer support; for example by supervising a play area; or running a coffee bar, or offering initial welcome in a visitors reception centre. Most prisons have play areas with toys/books available for children and most prisons work with voluntary sector/volunteer support to offer regularly, or on occasion, staffed play facilities. Prisons in England and Wales are currently being encouraged to be more flexible with regard to children bringing in homework and their own reading books. Most prisons run Family Days or special children's visits which, with the support of partner providers and volunteers are a more flexible attempt to offer an opportunity for prisoners to engage freely with their families. They do not occur as frequently as ordinary visits and are only offered to a few prisoners at a time, but are often timed with school holidays.

Sweden: In Sweden the supervision of a visit is typically carried out by prison officers dressed in uniform. Sometimes the supervision does not require a physical presence but may, if necessary, be video or audio monitored from another room. Several clients have children who come visit, which requires that the PPS pay attention to the children's perspective and are aware of their needs. If physical supervision is required, it is important that the prison staff is calm, friendly and aware of their own body language. It is also important to treat children with understanding and if necessary explain why the visit has to be supervised. Basic knowledge regarding interaction with children and other relevant issues concerning children are included in the training described above. The person that has a special assignment regarding the children of clients is required to attend an additional training regarding children's issues. This training comprises basic knowledge of the UNCRC and legal framework of the Social Services, conversations with children, separation and reunion, signs of child abuse and knowledge of the notification requirement. The PPS has cooperation with volunteers from NGOs who are conducting activities in prisons (more below) but they do not participate in visits.

Czech Republic: Communication with children is a part of standard training in the Czech Republic, there are no special courses. Guards are dressed in uniforms, but not civilian staff (social workers might be present). There is no difference between visits with children and visits without children. There are prison guards present plus educators/social workers when the situation requires it.

Norway; Prison officers receive training in interaction with children as part of their education at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Service. Officers are normally dressed in uniform during the child visits. In Norway the Correctional Service does not train volunteers, but they cooperate with various NGOs that offer support measures to inmates and their relatives.

Germany, Schleswig-Holstein: Germany (Schleswig-Holstein) does not have special training for staff to supervise children's visits. The officers are dressed in uniform during the children's visits. There also aren't any trained volunteers for supervising the children.

Croatia: Security staff supervise all visits, including children's visits. There is no training provided to staff regarding interaction with children on a regular basis, but in the Project lead by the NGO Parents in action - Roda, there was training provided for treatment and security staff from the female penitentiary whose aim was to enable staff to facilitate children's visits through different activities among children and their parents (creative activities, social games and alike). During special celebrations, officers do not wear uniform in some prisons, but this is an exception rather than a rule. They do not have trained volunteers supervising children's visits but they consider having such an opportunity in the future through collaboration with NGOs.

Finland: The guards in Finland wear uniforms for family meetings. Senior instructors, counsellors and social workers are often in civilian clothes.

Italy: Memorandum of Understanding

Article 2 of the Memorandum of Understanding outlines a number of ways to ensure child-friendly prison visits, such as maintaining regular visits between the child and their imprisoned parent; waiting areas that are suitable for children, with toys and activities; buildings accessible for disabled children or those with special needs; visits organised six days a week, as well as during public holidays and Sundays; age-appropriate information is to be provided to children on visits procedures and rules; and security checks take into account child rights. Children are given information about their parent's life in prison; and children under the age of 12 are provided with options for accompaniment to prison, if they cannot be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Finally, children's expert groups are organised regularly to assess how children experience prison visits, to discuss how to promote contact with parents and to provide advice about eventual improvements to facilities and procedures.

Conclusion – Final Observations

Lucy Gampell, President, Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)

This Expert Group report provides evidence of many positive initiatives and interventions being implemented across Europe to strengthen and support the family ties of people in prison. It shows that prison services are generally motivated to improve child-parent relations in prisons with a willingness to share knowledge, experience and expertise in this field.

There is now widespread recognition that supporting the children and families of people in prison is both central to the rehabilitation of offenders and vital for the wellbeing and future of the family. It is particularly important for the children of prisoners who, without timely and appropriate support, may suffer adverse consequences as a result of parental imprisonment. Their rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet are frequently overlooked by Prison Authorities whose focus is more on security and the perspective and rights of the prisoner. Internationally, while many countries are making some progress in bringing the needs of families affected by imprisonment to bear upon policy and strategy, there is no consistent approach or recognised method of quantifying outcomes and little in the way of systematic planning, service design, implementation or review in relation to policy in this area.

This report highlights some of the areas where good practice exists and where improvements are most needed. These include:

- the collection of data on children with a parent in prison. The absence of reliable data is a significant barrier to putting the case to government for policy change and to identifying those children in need of support;
- child-centred, age-appropriate visits, as highlighted in the report, where children can interact in a meaningful way with their imprisoned parent. These work well where childcare specialists or NGOs are identified to facilitate the visits, working alongside prison staff;
- special family visits where all family members can spend more quality time with the prisoner. These visits can be particularly meaningful for long-term prisoners and can help build trusting relationships between family members and prison staff, as well as strengthening their relationship with the prisoner;
- greater use of overnight stays (be they in a prison setting or through temporary release in the community);
- staff training for all prison staff who come into contact with families (including over the telephone). The report also shows the benefit of having designated family/visits staff;
- making greater use of modern technology (such as Skype and email) for maintaining contact (which is particularly important for the increasing number of Foreign National Prisoners or where travelling distance or cost make visiting the prison problematic for families);
- the inclusion of parenting and family interventions work in resettlement planning. Such initiatives can include courses on parenting skills, relationships and projects that foster the bond between the prisoner and child – such as the Storybook Dads model which has been widely adopted across Europe;

- Increased community involvement, including working with local schools and developing opportunities for prisoners to undertake home leave to engage in important occasions with their children and family and to assist them in preparing for their reintegration;
- providing clear, accessible and consistent information to the family on visiting and prison life. The report references many good examples of information for children and adults which needs to be produced in appropriate language and formats to best assist families and children of different ages.

Above all, there is a need for countries to adopt standards or action plans and to have a mechanism for monitoring these. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in Italy in March 2014 between the Ministry of Justice, the National Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence and the non-governmental organisation Bambinisenzasbarre and extended in September 2016 is an important starting point in setting standards, incorporating the Rights of the Child and setting down expectations for child-centered services and approaches across the different agencies involved at each stage of the criminal justice system. The Memorandum itself is based on the 2013 findings of the Coping research and on the recommendations drafted in 2011 as part of the EU-funded study “Children of Imprisoned Parents,” piloted by the Danish Institute of Human Rights. It is a model of good practice that can be used as a guide for other countries. It has been translated into English, German, Dutch, Croatian, Norwegian, French and Spanish, and is currently being considered for adoption in a number of countries.

The Italian Memorandum also provides the starting point for the draft Recommendation to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on Children with Imprisoned Parents, (expected 2018). A report accompanying the Recommendation contextualises it, particularly for prison personnel, and offers some basic benchmarking data: the Council of Europe sent out a questionnaire about services for children of prisoners, including those living with their imprisoned parent to all relevant prison services and the report includes an overview of their responses.

The Council of Europe plans to develop in 2018 a comprehensive user-friendly implementation guidance for the Recommendation demonstrating options for implementation in different settings in the light of good practice from across Europe. This will include learning from COPE members, a report for the 2017 EU Forum on Child Rights and this EuroPris report.

In providing so many good examples of practice across Europe it is hoped that this report will encourage the fostering of shared learning and act as a stimulus for more to be done at both an individual prison and national level to improve the treatment of children and families of prisoners and reducing re-offending

Useful Links

<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/children-residing-with-parents-in-prison/foreign.php>

<http://childrenofprisoners.eu/>

<http://www.childrenofinmates.org/>

<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents>

<https://www.gov.uk/support-for-families-friends-of-prisoners>

<http://www.stnicholastrust.ie/>

<https://www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/support-friends-family-of-prisoners/>

<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/forum/e072/e072h-eng.shtml>

<http://insidan.kriminalvarden.se/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/importance-of-strengthening-prisoners-family-ties-to-prevent-reoffending-and-reduce-intergenerational-crime>

<http://childrenofprisoners.eu/about-us/memorandum>

(Italian Memorandum)

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/18019/>

(Coping research report)

<http://childrenofprisoners.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Full-report-Children-of-Imprisoned-parents.pdf>

(Study Danish Institute of Human Rights)

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