

## Useful contacts for families



- **Prisoners' Families Helpline**  
Offers information and support to anyone with a friend or relative in prison  
Mon-Fri 9.00am-8.00pm  
Sat-Sun 10.00am-3.00pm  
Call free on 0808 808 2003
- **Action for Prisoners' Families**  
Unit 21, Carlson Court, 116 Putney Bridge Road  
London SW15 2NQ  
Tel: 0207 384 1987  
[www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)  
Can give details of support groups and visitors centres throughout the UK
- **Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU)**  
APVU, PO Box 2152, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 1SD  
Tel: 0121 626 2797  
Can provide help with the cost of visiting. Contact them for more information or visit HM Prison Service website at [www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk](http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk)
- **H.M. Prison Service website**  
Gives information on prisons in England and Wales  
[www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk](http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk)
- **Parentline Plus**  
Offers support and information to parents  
Helpline: 0808 800 2222  
[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)
- **Childline**  
Provides a free confidential phone counselling service for any child with any problem, 24 hours a day, every day  
Helpline: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



## About Ormiston

Ormiston Children & Families Trust is one of the largest charities supporting children, young people and their families in the East of England.

### Central office contact details:

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A photocopying pack for the complete leaflet series of My Dad's/Mum's in Prison is available from the address above, or download them free from [www.ormiston.org](http://www.ormiston.org)  
Leaflets are free to families.

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 [www.ormiston.org](http://www.ormiston.org)  
Registered Charity No: 1015716



What Ormiston means to me...

## Being a carer

A leaflet for anyone caring for a child with a parent in prison

## Being a carer

When a parent goes to prison things can change for everyone in the family. We can't cover everything that might happen, but this leaflet will explain some of the ways that things might be helped.

It talks about a single child because even when there are a number of children in a family, it is important to think about how each one is being affected.

If you are caring for a child whose parent is in prison, you have an important part to play in their lives.

Being apart is hard for the child and their parent. There can be lots of different feelings. The child might behave differently. They might be upset or very quiet and not want to talk about things.

They will need you to talk to them. Try and understand what they are feeling. This can be hard as you may be trying to deal with other things in your life at the same time.

## Dealing with change

Life for the child may change. Often children find that people, even friends, treat them differently. If they are at school things might get difficult there. Talk about letting the school know about what is happening.

If the child has had to move home or school they might be missing friends or family. Try and help them to keep in touch with people who are special to them.

## Supporting the child

They will need lots of support. They might have all sorts of different fears and worries. They might be frightened that other things are going to happen. Some children might even feel relieved but are afraid to say so.

Younger children are often comforted by familiar things—favourite toys, contact with relatives or friends, even a particular routine.

Older children can react in many different ways. They may not want to talk about things. They might feel that they have to care for others in the family. Try to keep talking to them and think about the things which will comfort them.

You might find it useful to use “My Special Book” (for younger children) or the “I Need to Talk” leaflet (for older children) which are part of this series. These can be used to help children begin to understand what has happened and to explore their feelings and worries.

## Keeping in touch

Make sure that the child can keep in touch with their parent through visits, letters and telephone calls.

If the parent's time in prison is likely to be short, you will need to prepare the child for their return home. Talk to them about what will happen.

A longer term will mean helping the parent to be involved in the child's life. Keep them up to date with what is happening at home. It is often the everyday things which everyone misses most.

## Coping with your feelings

You may be feeling different things. If you feel angry about what has happened try to keep that from the child. It can confuse them and may make them think they are to blame.

It is important for the child that your relationship with their parent is as good as possible. Try to find a way to agree on things so the child isn't caused extra upset.

It won't be easy to balance the needs of the child, parent and other people in your life. If you would like to talk to someone or want to find out more about other help please see the details overleaf.