

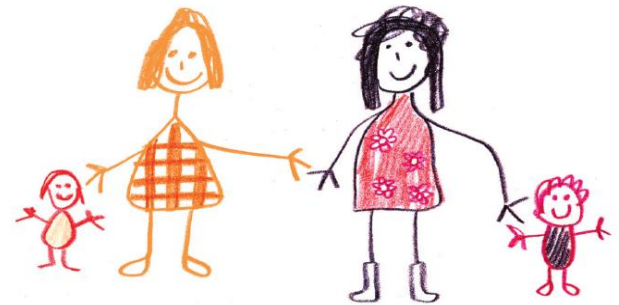


UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Dads Inside and Out

Risk and protective factors in the
resettlement of imprisoned fathers
with their families



The Research Team

Partnership between Ormiston Children & Families Trust
and the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

Principal Investigator Professor Friedrich Lösel (Cambridge)

Project Manager Gillian Pugh (Ormiston)

**Research Assistants
(Cambridge)** Dr. Caroline Lanskey
Lucy Markson
Karen Souza

Acknowledgements

Funding

The Big Lottery Fund

Research Support

Hilary Bagshaw, Sue Clifton, Naomi Young

Advisory Group

Professor Gwyneth Boswell, 'Boswell Research Fellows & University of East Anglia

Dr Adrian Grounds, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

Veronica Hollis, Ministry of Justice

Giles McCathie, NOMS

Richard Nicholls, Clinks

Sarah Salmon, Action for Prisoners' Families

Why this research?

Children and families of prisoners are a highly vulnerable group with multiple risk factors for adverse outcomes (Murray & Farrington, 2005).

MoJ/DCSF Children of Offenders Review (2007):

- “We need to act now to reap the short and long-term gains that better supporting this group may bring.”
 - The Criminal Justice System needs to see families as a resource which are part of the solution.
 - Little provision aimed at supporting prisoners and their families around the time of release.
 - There is a lack of knowledge, evidence and understanding about “what works.”
-

What are we aiming to find out?

- 1) What are families' experiences of **imprisonment** and their expectations and experiences of **release and resettlement**?
 - 2) What **post-release difficulties** do fathers and their families face?
 - 3) What factors **protect** against these problems?
 - 4) What **services support** coping by the families and reductions in reoffending?
-

Investigating risk and protective factors related to resettlement

Risk factors

- Longer prison sentences
- Differences between prisoners' and families' expectations of release
- Perceived stigma and shame about imprisonment
- Poor employment history

Protective factors

- Frequency of contact maintained between prisoners and family
 - Home leave during the imprisonment
 - High level of community social support
 - Participation in offending behaviour programmes
 - Fixed accommodation
-

Investigating resettlement outcomes

Resettlement outcomes

- Quality of family relationships
 - Child adjustment
 - Employment/Income
 - Ex-prisoner and partner's mental health
 - Substance use
 - Reoffending behaviour
-

Methodology

Eligibility

- Imprisoned fathers and their partners (or ex-partners) and children
- Sentences between 8 months and 6 years
- Due for release within 4 months
- Planning to have contact with one or more children/step-children aged 0-18
- Prisoner *and* partner consent to participate in the research

Design

- Longitudinal study: Interviews conducted within 4 months before release (**Time 1**) and within 6 months after release (**Time 2**)
 - Semi-structured interviews with fathers, partners, children 4 – 18 years
 - Use of standardised measures (e.g., General Health Questionnaire, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
 - Quantitative and qualitative analysis
-

Recruitment of participants

Our sample was drawn from 8 prisons in Eastern region and 1 London prison.

Recruitment methods

- Access to keys and lists of potentially eligible men
- Ormiston services in prisons (e.g., parenting courses, children's visits, crèche, Storybook Dads)
- "Family Man" course
- Association
- Visitors' centres
- 'Inside Time' newspaper advertisement

Majority of first contact made via prisoners; consent was then sought from their partners/ex-partners.

Our sample

- 53 “families” (150 interviews conducted at Time 1)
 - 53 father & 53 partners/ex-partners
 - 89 children including stepchildren (44 interviewed)
 - 81% of parents were ‘in a relationship’
 - 53% were living together before prison
 - 64% of fathers (62% mothers) were planning to live with their partner after release
 - 66% of children were going to be living with the father after release
-

Who are the family members?

At Time 1:

Fathers
(53)

- 19 – 56 yrs Average age: 31 yrs.
- 70% White British, 23% Black/BAME, 4% Mixed Race

Partners /
Ex-partners
(53)

- 19 to 45 years Average age: 29 years.
- 81% White British, 13% BAME, 2% Mixed Race

Children
(89)

- 0 – 18 yrs Average age: 6 years
- 46% female, 54% male
- 75% White British, 14% BAME, 8% Mixed Race

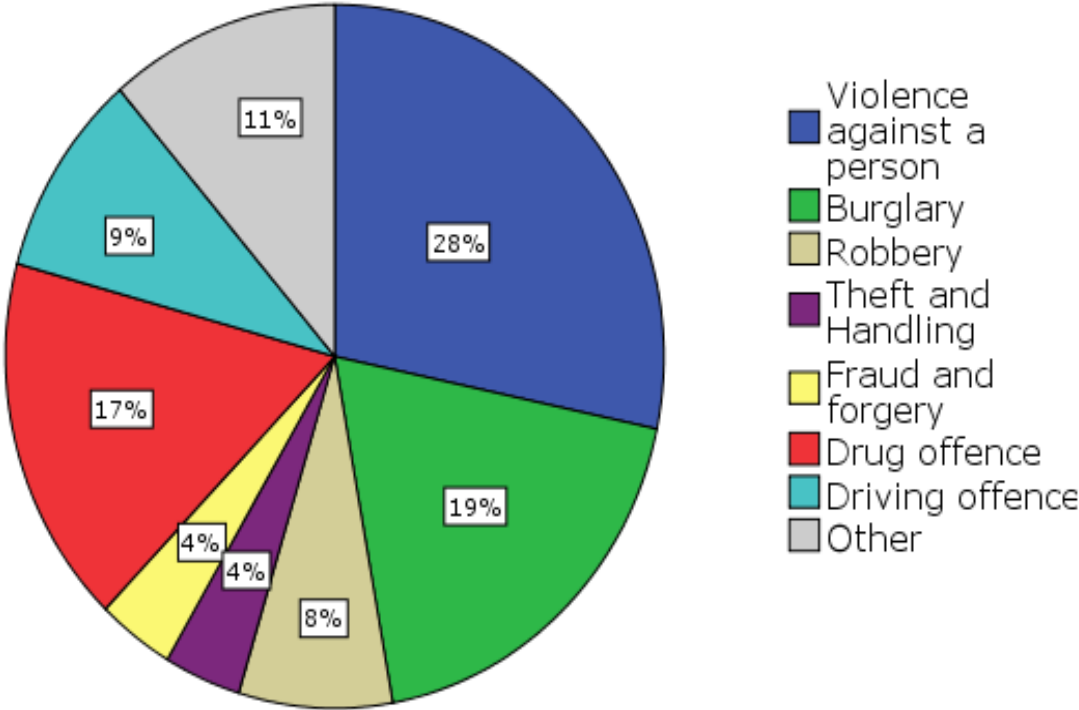
44 interviewed:

- *4 – 18 years. Average age: 9 years.*
- *48% female, 52% male*
- *75% White British, 11% BAME, 9% Mixed Race*

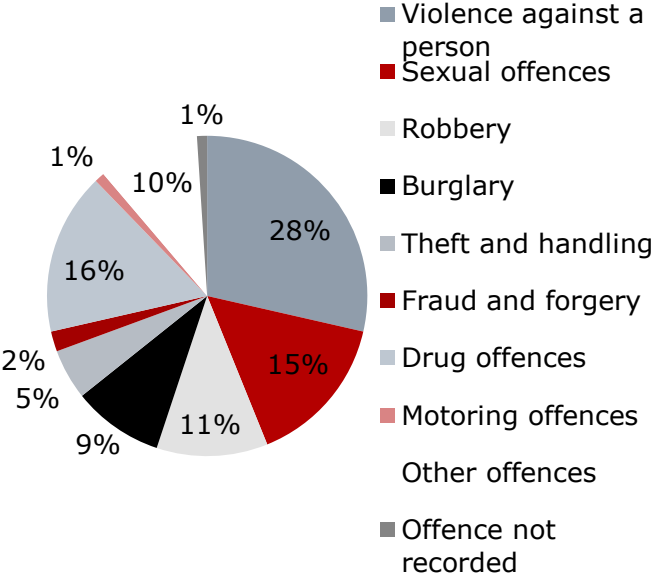
Income and employment

- Majority were low income families:
 - average household income £250pw (ex/partners' self-reported data)
 - 94% partners/ex-partners & 54% fathers receiving benefits before father's imprisonment
 - Employed before fathers' imprisonment:
 - 51% fathers
 - 23% partners/ex-partners
 - 72% partners current primary caregiver
-

Fathers' main offence



All adult male prisoners by offence type (immediate custodial sentences including recalls)



Source: Ministry of Justice, Aug 2010

Fathers' sentences

- Average sentence length = 2.2 years
(range from 6 months to 5.5 years)
 - 45% first custodial sentence
-

Children's knowledge of father's imprisonment

- Partners reported that 45% of children knew of fathers' imprisonment.
 - Of the 44 children interviewed:
 - 68% knew their father was in prison
 - 11% said he was at work or working away
 - 4% did not know
-

Partners' responses to father's imprisonment

- Partners reported 28% decline in average weekly income (reduced to £179 per week)
 - 83% of partners reported feeling lonely and lacking support
 - 72% of partners were not receiving support from any outside agencies or organisations
-

Partners' responses to father's imprisonment (continued)

- 38% partners reported mental health conditions; 75% said condition had been affected by father's imprisonment
 - 28% partners reported physical health problems; 60% said condition had been affected by father's imprisonment
 - 47% of partners reported feeling stronger and greater sense of independence/freedom
 - 21% partners reported that their lives had become less stressful
-

Children's responses to father's imprisonment

"Really really sad."

"A bit worried, a bit ashamed – sometimes I think it's my fault that Dad's away."

"I was really angry at first."

"A bit bored because we don't have tickle nights any more."

"Not too good. I like it when he's with my Mum because it makes her happy."

"Happy."

"Partly good about him being away."

"Everything is different."

51% of partners reported their children had experienced behavioural or emotional difficulties.

Fathers' perspectives on imprisonment

Negative

- 72% fathers and 74% (ex)partners reported **emotional difficulties** (e.g., stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression)
- 66% of children reported **"missing Dad"** and had **behavioural issues**
- 57% reported **practical difficulties**
- 32% reported **financial difficulties**

Positive

- 72% stated that imprisonment gave time for **reflection** and/or **personal development**
 - 52% had positive comments regarding **family** (e.g., improved family relationships, partners and children stronger, more independent, experiencing less stress)
-

83% of fathers had attended programmes in prison:

Education	55%
Vocational training	36%
Family programmes	32%
Drug courses	24%
Alcohol courses	20%
'Offending Behaviour' programmes	19%

Family contact

Partners/Ex-partners:

- 98% talk on the phone (38% = daily)
- 87% write letters (57% = once a week or more)
- 76% visit

Of the 44 children interviewed:

- 89% talk on the phone
 - 74% visit their Dad (53.5% for children 11+)
-

Children's "likes" about prison visits

64% of children who visit Dad had positive comments about their experiences:

"I like talking to him, catching up and letting him know what I've been doing."

"Seeing him made me feel really happy."

Children's visits were particularly liked:

"We get to (play)fight with Dad."

"He let's me sit on his lap."

"He plays with me. He plays football."

"Like it when he doesn't have to wear the red vest because he is like my dad, not like a prisoner."

Children's "dislikes" about prison visits

53% of children who visited Dad had negative comments about their experiences.

"Bit tired when I get there coz it's a long way."

"On ordinary visits Dad can't get up. We have to sit at the table."

"Feel bored when it's a normal visit and I have to wait a long time."

"Don't like being watched closely."

"Don't like it when he and Mum don't get along."

"I don't like having a limit on the time you spend."

"I'm sad when I have to go, when it's finished."

Barriers to family contact

Telephone calls

- access, cost

Letters

- length of time to deliver

Visits

- only 16% of fathers remained in same prison
 - each prison had different visiting procedures and rules
 - distance from family/travel costs
-

What helps?

	Fathers	Partners
Support from family/friends	92%	38%
Routine e.g. keeping busy	45%	23%
Faith	43%	28%
Counselling	23%	2%
Medication	6%	2%
Attitude	13%	0%
Education, courses	9%	0%

45% of children interviewed said they spoke to someone as a way of coping when they were sad.

How do parents see the future?

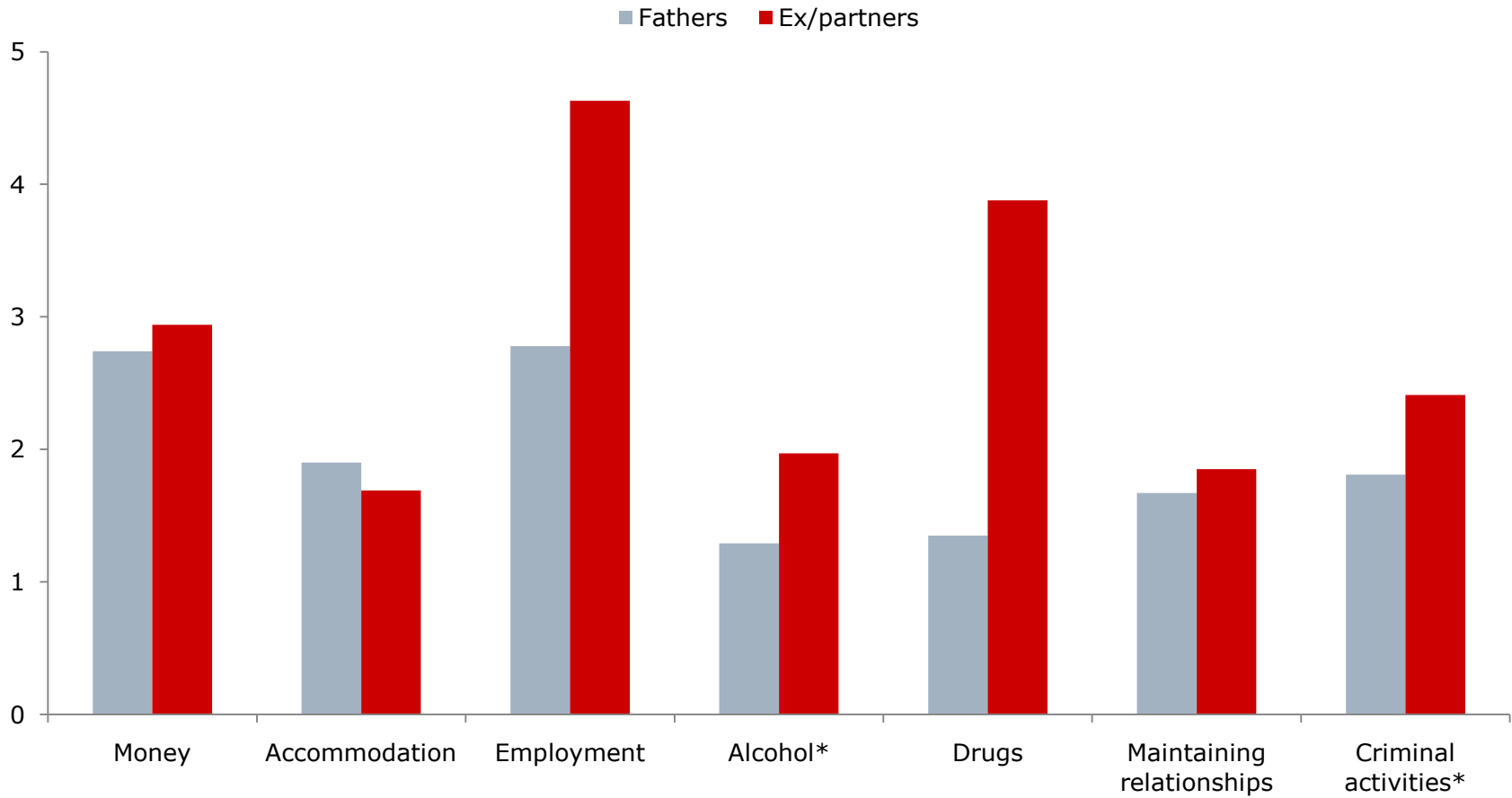


Figure 1. Expectations of problems for fathers after prison (1= "Not at all difficult," 5 = "Extremely difficult").

* Denotes statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) between partners' and fathers' responses

Fathers' attitudes towards re-offending

- No significant difference between attitudes of fathers who had attended “offending behaviour” programmes and those who had not.
 - No significant difference between attitudes of fathers with drug/alcohol related offences and others in the sample.
-

How do parents see the future?

Partners

"I want to get back to being a 'normal' family after this – but worried about work and money, support for children."

"I'm concerned as I have changed a little and that's good. Also concerned as his girls may try to get away with murder as Daddy's back - he may be more lenient."

"As long as he sticks to what he says he's going to do...."

Fathers

"Not scared what's going to happen, just that world has changed."

"Told at serious risk of harm, but no accommodation or job, no support."

"No - can't see anything coming. I expect it to slip back to normal. No reason to think that it won't."

"No. I'll find a job, but not going to look straightaway - need 6 weeks to adjust."

How do children see the future?

Positive (73% of children interviewed)

"A really good life. Playing again."

"Happy, but difficult to get used to."

"I will be happy and cuddly - I will cuddle him every day."

"Back to normal, no time restrictions."

Some reservations

"Worried about whether he loves me."

"Worried about what it will be like."

"Will be different, have to be more careful, less free because he's back."

Next steps

- Completion of Time 2 (post-release) interviews
 - Data analysis
 - What are the experiences of “families” post-release?
 - How do they compare to experiences before prison?
 - What supports or prevents resettlement?
 - Final report and conference
 - Action group to take findings forward
-

Research Team's Contact Details

Principal Investigator Professor Friedrich Lösel (Cambridge)
fal23@cam.ac.uk

Project Manager Gillian Pugh (Ormiston)
gill.pugh@ormiston.org, 01223 418006

Research Assistants (Cambridge)

Dr. Caroline Lanskey cml29@cam.ac.uk, 01223 762917

Lucy Markson lm473@cam.ac.uk, 01223 767369

Karen Souza ks467@cam.ac.uk, 01223 335368
