

Child Impact Assessment Toolkit for children with a parent/carer in the criminal justice system

The Prison Reform Trust (funded by the Churchill Fellowship) worked with a number of organisations supporting children, young people and families impacted by the criminal justice system, including Families Outside, to create a Child Impact Assessment Toolkit for children with a parent/carer in the criminal justice system.

Creating the Toolkit

The Toolkit was created with 28 children and young people with lived experience of having a mother in the criminal justice system. They shared their views and experiences through focus groups, one to one interviews, and surveys. The children and young people were clear in their asks; they want to be seen, listened to, and considered at all stages of their mother's journey through the criminal justice system: arrest, court and sentencing, prison or community sentence, and release. They want to be supported, and they want to be included in decisions about that support.

Using the Toolkit

The Toolkit can be used by a wide range of workers as a means of listening to the voices of children and young people with a parent/carer in the criminal justice system, to better understand and support their needs. It contains a range of case studies to demonstrate the use of Child Impact Assessments in practice and highlight the difference a Child Impact Assessment can make.

Workers at each stage of the criminal justice process have an important role in identifying that there may be children and young people impacted. The police at arrest; criminal justice social workers and sentencers at court or when a community sentence is imposed; prison visitor centre staff and prison staff when a custodial sentence is imposed; and criminal justice social workers at the stage of release. These workers often do not work directly with children and young people, so engagement with the Toolkit is important to ensure they are considering children and young people's views. This does not mean that these workers will be directly carrying out Child Impact Assessments. As the Toolkit makes clear, it is for each child or young person to decide who they would like to complete the Child Impact Assessment with them. Children and young people reported that this will ideally be someone they know and trust.

“Would have been a huge difference if we all got one of them [a Child Impact Assessment] because...we all feel different, we all want different things. We all had different experiences, and if we had one of them, we'd know who to help us because we kind of got pawned off just like a group as well, like a group of kids...like we weren't our own individual person so the impact forms would be to understand what we need as our own person.” Layla

Children's rights learning outcomes

The rights of children with a parent/carer in the criminal justice system are at risk. In providing them with a meaningful opportunity to express their views and have them taken into account in decisions that affect them, the Toolkit contributes towards workers supporting children and young people to access their rights equally.



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