

## **Cross Party Group on Children and Young People**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

**13.00-14.30**

**Committee Room 3, The Scottish Parliament**

**Chair: Kezia Dugdale MSP**

### **Babies and Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment**

#### **Attendees**

Kezia Dugdale, MSP

Alison McInnes, MSP

Julie-Ann Alexander, Barnardo's

Mark Cooper, NSPCC

Sally Cowburn, Office of Alison Johnstone, MSP

Maura Daly, Circle Scotland

Lisa Dreyer-Larsen, Enable

Fee Ferguson, Children in Scotland

Helen Ford, Scottish Prison Service

Susan Galloway, NSPCC

Douglas Gray, Cornerstone

Graeme Hay, Action for Children Scotland

Lydia House, SPTC

Patricia Hutchinson, CLIC Sargent

Claire Jamieson, Scottish Government

Eliza Lofthouse, Enable

Nancy Loucks, Families Outside

Carol Maltman, Scottish Prison Service

Rebecca Marek, Scottish Youth Parliament

Rosemary McCabe, Barnardo's

Garry McGregor, Befriending Networks

Rebecca Middlemiss, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Sarah Paterson, YouthLink

Sam Patterson, Cornerstone

Sam Petrie, Couples Counselling Lothian

Tanya Rhodes, Child Protection Research Centre

Lewis Ritchie, Enquire

Joanne Smith, NSPCC

Terri Smith, MSYP

Kay Steven, Scottish Women's Aid

Nicola Wray, Barnardo's

#### **Apologies**

Alison Johnstone, MSP

David Ashford

Fiona Barlow, Samaritans

Salena Begley, Family Fund

Mig Coupe, Mindroom  
Lorna Goodwin, Carers Trust  
Kim Hartley, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists  
Fiona Jones, Clan Childlaw  
Georgina Lyttle, Circle Scotland  
Dr Kirsteen Mackay, University of Edinburgh/NSPCC  
Brian Magee, COSCA  
Louise Morgan, Carers Trust  
Linda Whitmore, Enable

## **Intro**

This CPG meeting coincided with the publication of the NSPCC and Barnardo's report: "All Babies Count: spotlight on the criminal justice system - an unfair sentence". The meeting also coincided with Mary Fee MSP's consultation on the Proposed Support for Children (Impact of Parental Imprisonment) (Scotland) Bill. This proposal is for a Bill to require a court (at the time of sentencing) to have regard to the impact of parental custody upon the welfare and wellbeing of the offender's children; and to ensure that children affected by parental imprisonment receive additional support as appropriate.

## **Panel**

- Susan Galloway, NSPCC
- Julie-Ann Alexander, Barnardo's
- Nancy Loucks, Families Outside
- Carol Maltman, Scottish Prison Service

## **Susan Galloway, NSPCC**

- Susan Galloway is lead author of the report *An Unfair Sentence*. She has been a Senior Policy Researcher with NSPCC Scotland since 2011 and prior to that worked in policy research roles in academia, local government and in public bodies
- Susan highlighted that babies can be affected from either parent being in prison, not just mums. The smallest category of affected babies is babies in prison units with their mothers
- The emotional needs of babies are underestimated - if we're serious about early intervention and getting in right, this group of babies is key

- A striking finding that has come out of the report is how little attention has been paid to this group of babies, there are huge gaps in research and knowledge with missing data that is not routinely collected
- Two things that babies need that are compromised are maternal physical and mental health and anti-natal care. This could be done with women in prison who might not access this support in the community

#### Key issues from the research

- Separation and loss – we know little about how this affects babies' development and mothers (e.g. mental health problems)
- Reunification – where this is in the child's interest, post-release, need joined up parent support
- There is no evidence base for the outcomes of babies in mother and baby units
- Perinatal health care in prisons – wide variations in care discovered in England

#### What we want to see/practical steps

- Formal recognition of babies affected by imprisonment as a vulnerable group
- Child impact assessment after sentencing - supporting Mary Fee's Proposed Support for Children (Impact of Parental Imprisonment) Bill
- Need a more comprehensive and systematic approach to this group – a national action plan, multi agency – set out steps for what is needed to achieve outcomes for babies and meet their needs
- Need to have focus on infant attachment

#### **Julie-Ann Alexander, Barnardo's**

- Julie-Anne is Children's Service Manager for Barnardo's Scotland. Julie-Anne manages the Thrive service which is a

## Public Social Partnership in Perth & Kinross and Angus local authorities

- In partnership with the local authorities, Crossreach, Enable, NHS Tayside and the Scottish Prison Service, Thrive works with children (aged 5 years or under) and families who are affected by the imprisonment of one or both parents. Thrive facilitates bonding sessions for families within the prison setting as well as providing support to children and partners in the community
- Julie-Ann told the group that they have identified more than 70 families through court outreach, before sentencing
- Within Perth prison, they run attachment sessions for dads and babies – support doesn't stop when dad is released, Thrive can support supervised contact, transition, change in routine etc.
- Julie-Ann shared a case study with the group: Dad aged 35 had been in and out of prison since he was 16 and now has an 18 month old son. Released 1 month ago and whole attitude has changed - he can see a future outside of prison. Mum is a care-leaver who has also been in prison and has been in vulnerable positions. The support she's received has helped. Now both parents believe this will make all the difference

## **Professor Nancy Loucks, Families Outside**

- Prof. Nancy Loucks is the Chief Executive of Families Outside, a Scottish voluntary organisation that works on behalf of families affected by imprisonment
- Nancy told the group that 27000 children and young people are affected by parental imprisonment in Scotland each year. We want to know who they are and what they need. This is just an estimate as they tend not to identify themselves
- We think a child impact assessment should be done at key stages throughout, starting with arrest. Need to know impact so we can mitigate the consequence
- Focus on community planning partnership and early years collaborative – early intervention, attachment and parental involvement
- Nancy encouraged the group to respond to Mary Fee's Bill

## **Carol Maltman, Scottish Prison Service**

- Carol has worked for 23 years in the prison service and has been fully involved in supporting Susan in this report which the Scottish Prison Service welcome
- SPS are looking at ways that they can gather more appropriate information from parents in custody, actively developing a method to systematically gather this information
- In 2014 SPS commissioned Barnardo's to deliver a range of Parenting Intervention Programmes in partnership with SPS staff. The first of these programmes designed around the parenting needs of young fathers was delivered in HM YOI Polmont in July 2014, and as of January 2015 is on its third intake
- Carol shared the story of a 19 year old prisoner from Polmont who has a 2 year old. He wanted to share his story with the CPG, before doing the course he didn't feel like he had good parenting skills but now he feels like he'll be "the best dad" and is hopeful for the community support when he is released
- The SPS are currently developing a new holistic family strategy which will give particular attention to the conditions and ways in which a child is welcomed when visiting their parent in prison.
- Family Time Project within Children's Visits in HMP Shotts - activities orientated around health, wellbeing and positive relationships of families and children. Feedback from pilot of the Family Time Project has been positive - aware of children becoming increasingly confident and outgoing and children looking forward to visiting
- Worked in Cornton Vale mother and baby unit – consistent, fantastic support from NHS, has been incredible support from them at start of babies lives which they wouldn't have got out in the community

## **Group Discussion**

### **Linda Whitmore, Enable**

Asked if there were any statistics available around parents in prison who have additional support needs.

**Helen Ford, Scottish Prison Service**

Replied that the SPS use profiler, screening tool to identify how we can best support people with additional support needs. Also developing a research project with NHS and Napier University on this issue.

**Professor Nancy Loucks, Families Outside**

Added that the Prison Reform Trust did a series of research reports, they estimate prisoners with formal learning disability or difficulty is 5 – 10%.

**Patricia Hutchinson, CLIC Sargent**

Britain has biggest prison population and highest teenage pregnancies - is there a correlation? How long can new mums stay with baby in the unit?

**Carol Maltman, Scottish Prison Service**

18 months is NHS recommendation, almost all mothers at Cornton Vale progress to independent living houses outside the prison.

It's a cultural issue, we see SPS as opportunity, we are looking at how we can support young people. Under 18s are not coming to custody anymore, 46 young people under 18 in custody, only 2 are women. Alternatives to custody appear to be working.

**CPG Attendee – no record of name**

Joining up of strategic approaches – integration of perspectives at a local level is recognised as something we need to work on. Given some family are in some care unit of jail – there's a need for continuity there – strategic planning should be more joined up, across LA, NHS and SPS. Would be good to have leadership at a national level.

**Joanne Smith, NSPCC**

Children's rights need to be at the heart of children's services. The Bill is great, it allows us to have a debate and shine a light on this issue.

**Julie-Ann Alexander, Barnardo's**

80% of service users have had some experience of domestic abuse. Very aware and work very closely with partners in women's aid.

**Lewis Ritchie, Enquire**

Acknowledged the importance of introducing measures to better serve the families of those affected by imprisonment and welcomed the opportunity to debate the issues and raise awareness.

However, have concerns over proposals to amend the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act. The Act represents a move away from the historic approach of categorisation and segregation of children and young people into special groups. The Act succeeds because it recognises that any child at any time may require additional support, and legislation that aims to alter this approach must be considered carefully.

**Professor Nancy Loucks, Families Outside**

Training needs around what needs to be done for child impact assessment. When there is awareness of impact we have a good response, when there isn't people overlook or assume. It's important for systematic questions to be asked so we know.

**Susan Galloway, NSPCC**

It's important with babies so we can stop issues developing - early intervention is key for this group.

**Further Actions**

**Kezia Dugdale MSP**

The CPG agreed that they would be happy to submit a joint letter response to Mary Fee's Bill. The draft letter is to be circulated before the next meeting of the CPG, which will be Wednesday 29 April on the topic of Children's Rights. This meeting will also be our AGM.

As Marco Biagi has now become a Minister, he will no longer be able to continue his role as Co-Covener of the CPG. Mark MacDonald MSP has volunteered to take over from Marco. This information will be shared with the membership in advance of the next meeting, if there are no objections this appointment will be formalised at the AGM.