
Usage Guidelines:
Please refer to usage guidelines at contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk. or alternatively
Family Connections: a review of learning from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Prison Reform Fellowships – Part II

Helen Fair and Jessica Jacobson
Institute for Criminal Policy Research, Birkbeck, University of London

December 2016
Key Points

- This report is the second in a series of five briefings which present learning from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) Prison Reform Fellowships, and looks at the importance of family relationships.

- It is widely recognised that the maintenance of family contact is a key source of support for prisoners during their time in custody and on release. A 2014 Ministry of Justice report found that offenders who maintain family relationships and receive visits while in custody are 38% less likely to reoffend than those who do not receive visits.

- Efforts to maintain relationships between prisoners and their families should begin from the start of a prisoner’s sentence.

- The arts can be an effective tool to help prisoners maintain bonds with their children and wider family.

- The use of initiatives such as ‘graduations’ to mark the successful completion of programmes in prison can help prisoners demonstrate their self-worth and have their achievements recognised by their peers and family.

- Family visits are vital to the maintenance of family relationships, and extended visits of a few hours to a few days can provide opportunities for prisoners to spend quality time with their families.

- Maintaining family ties during a term in prison is not just important for the prisoner but also for the prisoner’s children and other family members. It is estimated that 200,000 children in England and Wales had a parent in prison at some point in 2009.

- Recognition should be given to the trauma that can be caused to a child through their parents’ involvement in the criminal justice system, and efforts to mitigate such trauma are to be welcomed.

- Initiatives that support children and their caregivers to maintain links with their imprisoned parents and which help to reduce the shame and stigma they face are valuable. Schools can play a vital part in supporting such children.
Introduction

This report is the second in a series of five briefings which present learning from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) Prison Reform Fellowships. The Fellowships, arranged in partnership with the Prison Reform Trust and conducted from 2010 to 2015, explored ways in which other countries respond to crime and whether similar approaches can be adapted in the UK. The backdrop to the Fellowships was a recognition of the limitations of conventional criminal justice responses to crime which, in England and Wales, have led to an imprisonment rate that is the highest in Western Europe,¹ stubbornly high reoffending rates, and prisons described by the Chief Inspector as ‘unacceptably violent and dangerous places’."²

The overarching theme of the briefings on the Churchill Fellowships is ‘connections’. This reflects the fact that many of the Fellows visited interventions seeking to forge strong, positive connections among and between individuals, groups and organisations as a means of tackling crime and its effects.

Within the overarching ‘connections’ theme, this report is concerned with family relationships. As the initial briefing in this series notes:

*It is within family groups of one kind or another that individuals tend to have their most elemental relationships. While the emotionally laden nature of family bonds can make them a significant catalyst for (or even the very locus of) offending, these bonds can, conversely, be a vital resource and form of protection against pressures to offend or reoffend.*

The first part of this report looks at initiatives studied by Churchill Fellows which aim to help people in prison to maintain their family relationships through specific programmes or facilities for family visits to prisons. The second part examines work being done to provide practical and emotional support to family members of prisoners, including through the mitigation of trauma and other difficulties faced by prisoners’ children.

Maintaining family connections from prison

It is widely recognised that the maintenance of family contact is a key source of support for prisoners during their time in custody and on release,³ with a 2014 joint thematic review undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted citing family and friends as “the most important ‘resettlement agency’ for prisoners on release.”⁴ A 2014 Ministry of Justice report found that offenders who maintain family relationships and receive visits while in custody are 38% less likely to reoffend than those who do not receive visits.⁵ In recognition of this, the Conservative Peer, Lord Farmer, working in partnership with the organisation Clinks, has been commissioned to chair an independent review to investigate how supporting men in prison in England and Wales to engage with their families can reduce reoffending and assist in addressing intergenerational crime.⁶
In 2004, a Children and Families Pathway was included in the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) National Reducing Re-offending Action Plan. This provided a framework for maintaining family relationships supported by better advice and guidance material for families and children, the integration of relationship and parenting skills into mainstream support and the engagement of the voluntary, community and faith sectors. However a 2014 review of the pathway found that while there are outstanding examples of best practice provision in family services both within the custodial estate and through the delivery of community sentences, there is also a gap between the national policy vision and execution at the front line. The report found that:

- Family services are often not seen as a priority or are limited in scale and ambition.
- Individual governors may lack the skills or motivation to link up with wider community services. This is far less true of the women’s estate however.
- There is little awareness among commissioners of the range of services available.
- There is also little structured targeting of family services to specific cohorts of prisoners or to family need, nor a systematic approach to focusing services where they are most likely to impact on reoffending.
- There appears to be little structured assessment of family need within sentence planning, and significant variation in the quality and scale of family service provision commissioned.

Churchill Fellows looked at work being done to maintain family connections throughout custodial sentences. Mark Goodfellow visited a men’s prison in Louisiana, USA where soon after a prisoner arrives the Director of Re-entry invites someone close to the prisoner, usually his wife or girlfriend, to come to the prison for an informal meeting at which the Director can learn about the prisoner’s background and how he can best be supported in prison. As Goodfellow notes, “Family members are uniquely placed to help authorities understand a person’s history, family and home situation and – critically – their behaviours and motivations.”

While Jess Thorpe studied the use of the arts in maintaining family relationships (see Fellowship observations 1), Mark Goodfellow also looked at the use of graduation ceremonies in a prison in Louisiana to which the prisoners’ families are invited (Fellowship observations 2).

Family visits are vital to the maintenance of relationships from within prison. In England and Wales, sentenced prisoners are entitled to a minimum of two one-hour visits in every four week period and unconvicted prisoners are entitled to a minimum of three one-hour visits per week. This is the basic legal requirement and any additional visits are dependent on the institution and on the prisoner’s incentives and earned privileges (IEP) level. Prisoners on the enhanced level normally receive more visits than prisoners on standard and basic levels. Family visit days (although not overnight visits) are available in some
prisons but where these are available demand is often higher than availability, and such visits are also linked to the IEP scheme, which inspectors consider inappropriate.\textsuperscript{11}

A number of Churchill Fellows visited different jurisdictions to see the range of approaches taken to family visits. Examples of extended family visits schemes in Sweden and Finland, as described by Angus Mulready-Jones and David Martin\textsuperscript{12}, can be seen below (\textit{Fellowship observations 3}). In addition, Churchill Fellow Eleanor Butt visited Portugal where extended family visits were available every three months, subject to risk assessment. These involved three to five hours in a private visiting suite equipped with a bed, television, kitchen and bathroom facilities. These were regarded as particularly important for long-term sentenced prisoners who needed to maintain quality family contact. Mulready-Jones also visited New York and California in the USA, where the Department of Corrections runs Family Reunion Programmes. These are overnight visits sometimes referred to as ‘trailer visits’, as the majority of them take place in mobile homes within the prisons, although in some establishments they have built facilities similar to the apartments in the Swedish system. These facilities, combined with prison-based relationship courses, provide families with some of the support they need to maintain their relationships. Currently these schemes are run in state prison systems in six states: California, Connecticut, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York and Washington.\textsuperscript{13}

Lucy Slade noted the importance of extended family visits for foreign nationals in prisons and found that only a third of Dutch prisoners abroad who responded to a questionnaire said they received visits. She also found that only 40\% of foreign prisoners in Spain reported receiving visits, but foreign prisoners in the prisons she looked at were granted extended or accumulated visits so that families travelling long distances could stay for longer, for example for 3 hours rather than 1 hour, and then again the next day.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Fellowship observations 1: The performing arts in a women’s prison in Connecticut, USA}

Each year the Judy Dworin Performance Project (JDPP) places a team of teaching artists into York Correctional Institution to work with a group of women on a creative project culminating in a performance in the summer. The process begins with the exploration of a central theme and the participating women (about 30 in total) come together over a period of months to share writing and thinking in response to that theme. A selection of this writing is then edited to form a script which the women then perform using spoken word, music and movement.

The JDPP was visited by Churchill Fellow, Jess Thorpe, who joined the project during the final stages of rehearsal for a theatre performance. The piece was titled ‘Journeys’ and was inspired by the real-life reflections and experiences of the women in the group and their personal relationship to this theme. The work was then performed for an audience of other prisoners, staff and invited guests, finally culminating in a special evening performance for their own families. As Thorpe observed these final stages of preparation she noted that it was clear to see just how significant the reality of a family
audience was to the group. Weekly visits were usually held across long trestle tables side by side with other prisoners, but on this occasion the women were permitted to mingle with their visitors after the performance and refreshments were provided. For many this type of ‘quality’ interaction was the biggest incentive for participation. At the end of the performance the women were instructed to change out of their costumes and back into their prison issued clothes before being permitted to spend a last hour with their family.

As Thorpe notes:

>This was an incredibly important part of the overall process as it offered a crucial opportunity for reflection and exchange. In this moment the women were able to receive positive affirmation from their families and recognition of their hard work and efforts. The value of this was perhaps the most evident in the response from the children who had been watching their mothers perform. It is vital for the emotional health and stability of these children that they are supported to have an active and developed relationship with their mothers and given the opportunity to share an experience that is more than just a few hours behind a table each month.

Jess Thorpe visited the Judy Dworin Performance Project in 2014

Fellowship observations 2:
Prisoner ‘graduation ceremonies’ in the USA

At a number of US prisons, ‘graduation ceremonies’, to which family members are invited, mark the completion of a re-entry programme. Re-entry programmes are designed to assist incarcerated individuals with a successful transition to their community after they are released. These ceremonies mark a transition to a new, more positive chapter in the prisoner’s life as they look forward to returning to their families and their communities.

Churchill Fellow Mark Goodfellow describes his experience of such a ceremony in a prison in New Orleans:

>It is a rare opportunity for graduates to demonstrate their self-worth by having achieved something – and to have this achievement recognised by their peers and authorities in the presence of their families. After the formal graduation ceremony, graduates get the chance to spend quality time with their families - all part of easing that transition back to the community and demonstrating to the families that their family member might have been incarcerated but they have shown an ability to achieve.

Mark Goodfellow visited New Orleans in 2014
Fellowship observations 3:  
Extended family visits in Sweden and Finland

In Sweden, normal family visits to prisons take place in private rooms that resemble sitting rooms. Churchill Fellow Angus Mulready-Jones reports that once the visit has started, children can play with their parents as they would at home, and the parent is free to move around as they please and interact more naturally with their child. Visits usually last for three or four hours compared to the one or two hours that is usual in England and Wales. In addition to this most prisons also have visiting apartments where children and the carer in the community can stay overnight or for a weekend. These apartments are fully furnished and equipped with kitchens to enable normal family life to proceed. As Mulready-Jones notes:

_In Sweden there is a real focus on the quality of visits rather than the frequency, made necessary given the sparse population density in Sweden. Sweden is twice the size of the UK and has only a sixth of the population leading to many prisoners being held a long way from home. This problem is made worse by the prison system that contains national and regional centres for offenders with particular offences (domestic violence, sex offenders, drug related crime and economic crime) which leads to offenders needing to be held further away from home in order to complete the programmes that relate to their specific offence._

Finland’s Vanaja prison, visited by Churchill Fellow David Martin, is an open prison for women. Within the prison is a house with four separate apartments which are used for family visits lasting up to four days. The prisoner is allowed to bring her partner and children, and in some cases this is also extended to her siblings or parents, the rationale being to maintain a support network that will be available for the prisoner on release. The apartments have two or three bedrooms, a living area and a kitchen. Visitors are allowed to bring one bag of food items while everything else is supplied by the prisoner, who also prepares and cleans the apartment ready for her guests. There is a play area outside as well as a barbecue and seating. The prisoners are free to move around outside and can go down to the lake where there is a sauna and a rowing boat which they can take out on the lake.

_Angus Mulready-Jones visited Sweden in 2010, and David Martin visited Finland in 2011_

Applying the learning:  
Supporting prisoners’ family connections in Northern Ireland

Churchill Fellow Mark Goodfellow, who worked for the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) at the time of his Fellowship, reports on developments in the service since his Fellowship in 2014. He notes:

_Graduation ceremonies are happening on an increasingly frequent basis now and the Minister of Justice has been personally involved in presenting awards to persons_
Supporting families of offenders

Maintaining family ties during a term in prison is not just important for the prisoner but also for the prisoner's children and other family members. According to HM Inspectorate of Prisons:

While the England and Wales prison service does not regularly record whether prisoners have children under the age of 18, half (52%) of the prisoners we surveyed in 2015-16 reported that they did, and it is estimated that 200,000 children had a parent in prison at some point in 2009. Maintaining contact with parents in prison is important for children in terms of their development, including educational attainment, social inclusion and mental health.  

A 2014 study by the Ministry of Justice reported that children of offenders are three times more likely to experience mental health problems, exhibit anti-social behaviour and are more likely also to end up ‘not in education, employment or training (NEET).’ The cycle of reoffending also transmits offending behaviour across generations. Almost two thirds of boys who have had a father in prison go on to offend themselves.  

The effect on a child of their parents’ involvement in the criminal justice system can be profound. As Churchill Fellow Sarah Roberts notes, “Children affected by imprisonment experience a range of emotions similar to those associated with bereavement: loss, shock, sadness, loneliness, anger and fear, for example.” Added to this can be feelings of shame and stigma attached to having a parent in prison. Sam Hart looked at trauma-informed arrests in San Francisco, which seek as far as possible to shield children from the effects of seeing their parent arrested (Fellowship observations 4), an issue which is also being studied in England. Angus Mulready-Jones and Owen Gill visited projects in Sweden and the USA which aim to support the children of imprisoned parents (Fellowship observations 5). Sarah Roberts’ Fellowship concentrated on how schools can help to alleviate the stigma of parental imprisonment (Fellowship observations 6).

Owen Gill also looked at projects helping children to visit parents in prison. He visited the
New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents which works with groups of children by bringing them together to travel to visit their parents in prison. The prisons are often many hours’ drive away and the New York Initiative takes large groups of children by plane to visit their parents who are in the same jail, helping the children to see that they are not alone in having a parent in prison. Where it is not possible for children to visit their parents in person regularly, the New York Initiative also facilitates televisiting whereby local children are able to book contact time with their imprisoned parents. The televisiting suite has a set of books and toys and the prisons they link with have the same set of toys and books so a parent can support their child to read. Staff are present at the sessions to support contact and help the parents to find ways to engage with their children.21

Owen Gill also attended a supper for families impacted by parental imprisonment which was arranged by Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind. A variety of family structures were evident, including lone parent families and families headed by grandparents directly caring for the children while their own sons or daughters were in prison. As Gill noted:

*What was evident was the support that each of the families received from others in the same situation. They had been coming together as a group for a number of years and it was clear that they each benefitted greatly from the group. Attending the group broke down the stigma and also supported the families to be positive about the children’s futures. At the supper, each family was given the space to describe the successes they had achieved and the challenges they faced. There were many descriptions of the children doing well at school and going on to achieve stability in adulthood.*22

**Fellowship observations 4:**

**Trauma-informed arrests in San Francisco, USA**

The San Francisco Police Department in the US – visited by Churchill Fellow, Sam Hart – provides training for police officers in ‘Trauma-informed arrests’ which recognises the fact that children may be damaged by the sight of their parents being taken away in handcuffs.

The approach covers eight key points:

- Attempting to arrest a parent when their child is not present
- Being alert to the presence of children in a dwelling where an arrest is taking place
- Giving adolescents face-saving time to avoid confrontation
- If children are present, trying to arrest the parent out of view
- Allowing time for the parent to reassure the child if this is possible
- Taking time to explain the process to children or allowing the care givers to do so when appropriate
- Asking about alternative care givers and staying with the child until those caregivers arrive
• Allowing parents to hand over teddy bears to their children as an extra means of reassurance (these are provided by police officers from a supply carried in the police car).

As Hart notes, ‘the SFPD views this approach as a way of building trust with the local community and believes that it will lead to changes the way in which the police are viewed by the public.’

*Sam Hart visited San Francisco in 2015*

---

**Applying the learning:**

**A trauma-informed approach to working with prisoners’ families in Sussex**

Sam Hart reports on how the projects she visited during her Fellowship have impacted the work she has done since her return. She comments:

*One of the key things I took from the trip was how in their dealings with the criminal justice system, families can lose their voice and the fact that trauma can lead to feelings of disempowerment. This idea has permeated the work I do for Sussex Prisoners’ Families and we aim to empower families and give them platforms to tell their stories wherever possible. As a result, families now attend multi-agency steering groups at the prison and are helping decide on changes to the visits area. Families have also attended the Lord Farmer inquiry on how families can reduce reoffending.*

---

**Fellowship observations 5:**

**Supporting children of prisoners in Sweden and the USA**

The RiksBryggan project in Sweden concentrates on improving outcomes for the children of prisoners and looks at the criminal justice system from the child’s perspective. Angus Mulready-Jones reports that RiksBryggan and its associations (called Bryggans) are financed predominantly through government funds and through a national fund that distributes unallocated inheritance money. There are some variations in the services run by the local associations, mainly due to differences in funding, but their core work, provided by all, is offering children a safe space in which to meet others experiencing the same situation. To achieve this local associations are based in buildings similar to children’s centres in the UK. From this base the families are offered meaningful activities, clubs, local outings and summer camps.

RiksBryggan have also developed a group programme specifically for children of prisoners which is delivered across the organisation, as well as in some local authorities where it is delivered by social services staff. Mulready-Jones participated in one of the
summer camps run by Bryggan Karlstad, attended by 20 families. Bryggan provides the families with accommodation, food, transport and structured activities for them to participate in together. Mulready-Jones spoke to the families about their experience of the prison system and of Bryggan services, and nearly all of the adults and children spoke of the importance of the sense of community provided by Bryggan, enabling children and carers to support each other.

There are similar projects in the USA – visited by Owen Gill – including one running after-school activity sessions in Brooklyn which combines recreational activities with therapeutic sessions for children affected by parental imprisonment. Gill also visited the Believe in Me project in Connecticut which aims to relieve the stress, stigma and isolation that children with incarcerated parents experience by bringing children together to share activities. One of the approaches places an emphasis on children exploring their lives together to understand the pressures that they and their families are under, and the courses of action that the imprisoned parent has taken which led to their incarceration. The project also addresses the particular challenges faced by African American children.

Angus Mulready-Jones visited the RiksBryggan project in 2010, and Owen Gill visited the US in 2014

**Fellowship observations 6:**

**Helping schools to support children of prisoners in the USA and Australia**

In New York, the Osborne Association, visited by WCMT Fellow Sarah Roberts has developed a training programme which is delivered to teachers and other staff working with children and young people (social workers, psychologists etc.). It aims to:

- Give an understanding of the impact of parental imprisonment on children and how this affects their education
- Help staff to talk sensitively with children about the issue
- Provide staff with tools to navigate the criminal justice system so that they can communicate with and involve imprisoned parents in their children’s education
- Inform staff about available resources.

Organisations which play similar roles in Australia – and also visited by Roberts – include VACRO in Melbourne and SHINE for Kids in New South Wales. VACRO invites agencies, including those working in schools, to attend half or full day training sessions looking at families and the criminal justice system. The training aims to equip staff with:

- Knowledge of the Victorian adult criminal justice system
- An understanding of the impacts of this system on the families
- Ways in which to identify and engage these families
• Strategies for assisting these families to navigate the justice system
• An awareness of the resources available in this area of work.

The SHINE for Kids Education Programme, which is part of the SHINE for Kids Breaking the Cycle initiative, seeks to help reduce recidivism as well as address the problem of intergenerational offending through:

• Improving engagement with education and learning
• Enhancing academic performance
• Building confidence and self-esteem
• Establishing bonds between families and schools
• Assisting pupils with homework and assignments.

In addition, SHINE for Kids runs in-school support groups for children affected by imprisonment. The groups are run over an 8 week period and right from the first session it is made clear to children that everyone in the group has been affected by imprisonment. This is seen as one of the main strengths of the programme, assuring children that they are not the only ones affected and therefore helping to reduce stigma. SHINE for Kids invites a member of school staff (usually the school counsellor or welfare officer) to assist with group work, and topics are age appropriate and include developing resilience and coping skills, identifying strengths and building confidence. A group trip rounds off the sessions, and this is seen as a further strength: giving children who often miss out on excursions a chance to have fun with each other, but equally importantly, with other adults who have become positive role models.

Sarah Roberts visited the USA and Australia in 2012

Applying the learning:

The role of schools in supporting families affected by imprisonment in Scotland

Sarah Roberts reports that her Fellowship report was the guiding framework for what became her role and responsibilities as Child and Family Support Manager with Families Outside, which offers support and advice to families affected by imprisonment, and as such, she was able to introduce almost every aspect of her learning into her work. This includes:

• developing and delivering an in-prison training programme (on the impact of imprisonment on children) for teachers
• supporting her team of Family Support Coordinators to reach out to family members, and specifically children and young people
• creating resources for children and young people, including a video and posters.
Looking ahead

We hope that the initiatives studied in this report will offer ideas and innovative avenues for those working in criminal justice in the UK, and that interested parties can take these forward and adapt them to their own context. This report only touches on certain specific aspects of the Fellowships covered here, and we would urge readers to read the full reports listed in the Appendix for more information, or to contact the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, the Prison Reform Trust or the Institute for Criminal Policy Research for more details.

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust http://www.wcmt.org.uk/
Prison Reform Trust http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/
Institute for Criminal Policy Research http://www.icpr.org.uk/
Endnotes

1 According to the Institute for Criminal Policy Research World Prison Brief database, the current prison population rate stands at 147 per 100,000 of the national population (http://prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=14, accessed 4 November 2016).


8 Ministry of Justice and Department for Business Innovation and Skills Parenting and relationship support programmes for offenders and their families: Executive summary https://policis.com/pdf/moj/MOJ_BIS_Parenting_Support_for_offenders_and_families_Executive_Summary_280114_FINAL.pdf


16 Ministry of Justice and Department for Business Innovation and Skills Parenting and relationship support programmes for offenders and their families: Executive summary https://policis.com/pdf/moj/MOJ_BIS_Parenting_Support_for_offenders_and_families_Executive_Summary_280114_FINAL.pdf


Appendix

The following is a list of the nine participating Fellows who contributed to this report, with a link to each online profile on the WCMT website. The profile includes the option to download the full report where available.

Jess Thorpe
*Placement with York correctional facility & Judy Dworin project*, in the USA, 2014
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/jessthorpe2014

Mark Goodfellow
*Role of family and community in supporting desistance from offending* in the USA, 2014
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/markgoodfellow2014

Angus Mulready-Jones
*Support services for prisoners’ children and families*, in Sweden and the USA, 2010
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/angusmulready-jones2010

Eleanor Butt
*Treatment and conditions for prisoners with very long sentences* in Canada, Netherlands and Portugal, 2015
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/eleanorbutt2015

Lucy Slade
*Foreign National prisoners: best practice and resettlement in Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden*, 2015
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/lucyslade2015

Sam Hart
*An investigation into trauma-informed responses in working with prisoners’ families in the USA*, 2015
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/samhart2015

Owen Gill
*Agencies working together to identify and support children of prisoners* in the USA, 2014
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/owengill2014

Sarah Beresford
*The role of schools in supporting families affected by imprisonment* in Australia and the USA, 2012

David Martin
*From custody to community: a more realistic & helpful approach*, in Canada and Finland, 2011
http://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/davidmartin2011
The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) was established in 1965 on the death of Sir Winston Churchill. The WCMT funds UK citizens from all backgrounds to travel overseas in pursuit of new and better ways of tackling a wide range of the current challenges facing the UK. For more information please visit www.wcmt.org.uk.

WCMT would like to thank the J P Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust and Lord Barnby’s Foundation for their generous support.

The Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) is based in the Law School of Birkbeck, University of London. ICPR conducts policy-oriented, academically-grounded research on all aspects of the criminal justice system. ICPR's work on this briefing was undertaken as part of the ICPR World Prison Research Programme, a new programme of international comparative research on prisons and the use of imprisonment. Further details of ICPR’s research are available at www.icpr.org.uk and www.prisonstudies.org. ICPR's new book, *Imprisonment Worldwide: The current situation and an alternative future* (Coyle, Fair, Jacobson and Walmsley) is available from Policy Press.

The Prison Reform Trust works to create a just, humane and effective penal system. We do this by inquiring into the workings of the system; informing prisoners, staff and the wider public; and by influencing Parliament, government, and officials towards reform: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

*The publication of this series of briefings has been made possible by the generous support of Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.*