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COPING

Children of Prisoners, Interventions and Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health

Kathryn Sharratt, University of Huddersfield
Lesley Ward, Partners of Prisoners (POPS)



The COPING project has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement no 241988



- European Union Seventh Framework
- 3 year project
- UK, Romania, Germany, Sweden
- Ten partner organisations
- UK = University of Huddersfield & Partners of Prisoners (POPs)
- Two pan-European “umbrella” organisations



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- Estimated 700,000 children affected by parental imprisonment in the EU
- Aim: to explore characteristics of children with imprisoned parents, their resilience, and their vulnerability to mental health problems
- Positivist approach
- Child-centred methodology



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Work Package 1

Questionnaire based survey

- 250 children & non-imprisoned parent/carer
- Age 7-17
- Recruited via visitors centres



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- Demographic information
- Support received/ desired support
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
- Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Kidscreen Questionnaire
- WHO Quality of Life Questionnaire (parent)



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Work Package 2

In-depth Interviews

- 40 family units:
 - child
 - Non-imprisoned parent/carer
 - Imprisoned parent/carer



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Work Package 3

Stakeholder Consultations

- Prison staff
- NGO staff
- Social workers
- Care givers
- Staff at children's homes



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Work Package 4

Mapping of Services & Interventions

- Services/ interventions targeting:
 - a) the child
 - b) the imprisoned parent/ carer
 - c) the non-imprisoned parent/ carer
- Four categories:
 - a) Prison-based specialised interventions
 - b) Community-based specialised services
 - c) Community-based non-specialised services
 - d) Mental health services for children & young people



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Prison-based Interventions

	UK	Germany	Romania	Sweden
No. of prisons	135	143	32	83
Response rate	84 (62%)	137 (96%)	17 (53%)	
With interventions	82	81	17	
No. of interventions	198	189	42	8



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Community-based Specialised Interventions

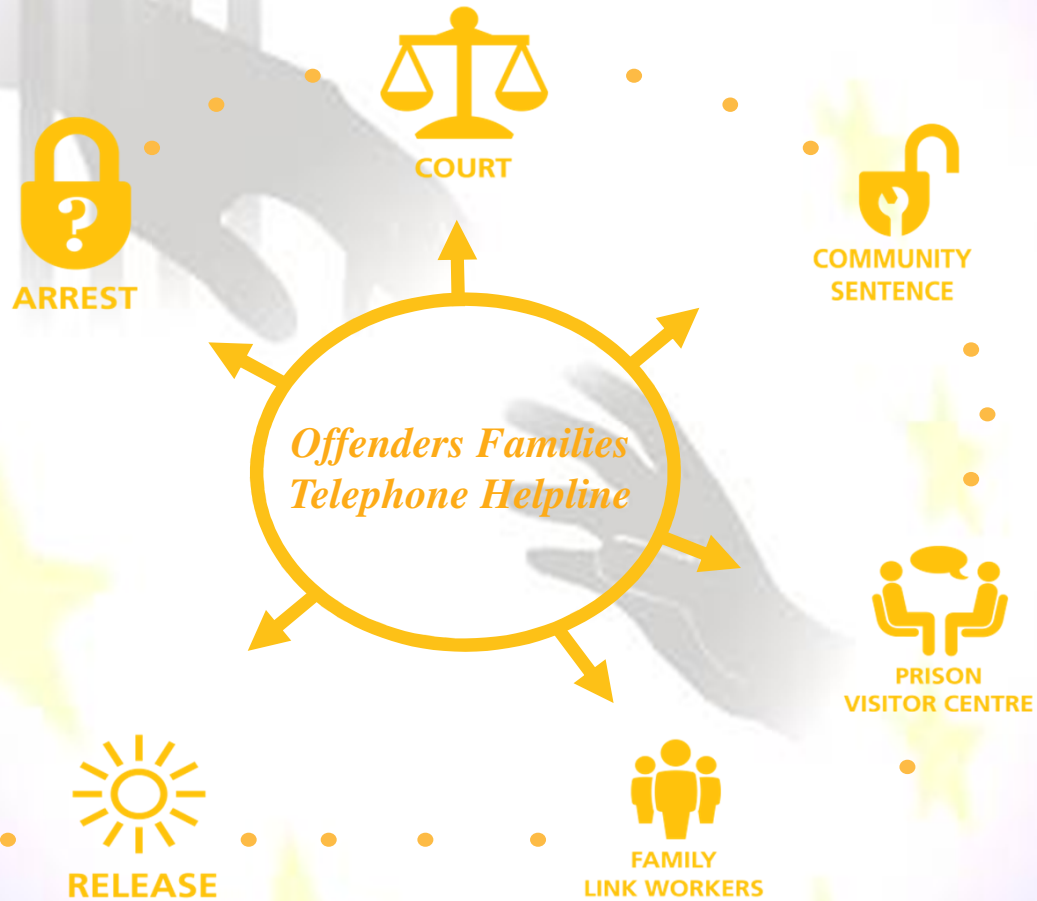
	UK	Germany	Romania	Sweden
No. of services	30	41	0	11
No. of interventions	421	59	0	32



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NGO Role in the Research



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- POPS bring our expertise of working with offenders families for over 20 years
- Our knowledge of working with the prison service
- Our 'needs led ethos' and our ability to engage with families



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- POPS have been involved in all Work Packages
- WP1 has been the most time consuming
- We were actively involved in the pilots for WP1 and WP2
- University of Huddersfield trained POPS staff to complete the questionnaires
- The families trust and feel comfortable with POPS staff
- They take the time to talk to children and carers about the issues that they have raised



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- Children have raised issues about being bullied in the interviews and POPS staff have been able to offer support to the family
- We have identified different issues for children depending on the category of prison
- We are able to positively challenge families, for instance the £10 voucher alone could not be the incentive
- Completing the questionnaires has enabled our staff to work more closely with families who may not have previously engaged



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- POPS have played an active role in the child centred approach of COPING
- We have engaged and facilitated a child focused group with University of Huddersfield
- We have advised on all other Work Packages:
 - WP3 – Stakeholder Consultation
 - WP4 – Mapping of Services and Interventions
- Attending Conferences and workshops with European Partners
- Management Activities



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