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COPING: Children of Prisoners, Interventions and Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health. Perspectives of Children, Parents and Carers – Sweden Report

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# D02.7 Sweden Interview intermediate Summary Report

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## WP2 Interim Report

### 1. Introduction

WP2 requires each country to complete 40 in-depth interviews with children; 40 interviews with their parent / carer; and 40 interviews with their imprisoned parent.

The purpose of the interviews is to explore the impact of having a parent in prison on the child(ren) and their family. This includes the impact of imprisonment on all aspects of the child's life, including their welfare and development; family relationships; education; and social life. Contact with the imprisoned parent is explored. The child's wishes for the future are included.

Wherever possible complete triads (interviews with the child, the parent/carer and the imprisoned parent) should be achieved. The imprisoned parent should be interviewed at the prison if possible; or as soon after release from prison as possible.

The four countries have agreed that it may be necessary to interview more than 40 families in order to achieve high quality data.

### 2. Methodology

#### 2.1 Interview schedule

Detailed interview schedules for the child, the parent/carer and the imprisoned parent were developed in Year 1 jointly by the four countries. The schedules include protocols to ensure that participants are fully informed about the scope of the interviews and are able to give informed consent. The importance of confidentiality is stressed. The content of the interviews is explained in advance.

Interview schedules include questions about family, school and social life; about changes since the parent has been in prison; about the child's experience of visiting prison, and other ways of keeping in contact. Help available from NGOs and other organisations is covered. Children's views about future plans are discussed.

The main focus of interviews with parents/carers and the imprisoned parent is also on the impact of parental imprisonment on the child.

Each interview schedule includes a number of questions with scaled (numerical) answers. Separate score sheets are provided for each interview.

Interview schedules and score sheets have all been translated into the appropriate languages.

## 2.2 Sampling

WP2 participants are mainly drawn from families who complete the WP1 questionnaire, and who agree to take part in the in-depth interviews.

The Delivery of Work Programme anticipated that sampling would include equal numbers of children drawn from the four quartiles of results from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which is included in the WP1 survey. This was to ensure that equal numbers of more and less resilient children were included. Following advice from Huddersfield's consultant psychologist, this guideline has been amended. Each country has been tasked with obtaining equal numbers of children in the *normal*, *borderline* and *abnormal* score ranges from S&D questionnaires, as far as this can be achieved.

In Sweden it has been a severe challenge to recruit the originally envisaged number of participants in WP1. The expected "quota" was reduced to 125 in March, 2011. However, calculations of the proportion of children in the UK sample, based on 250 children divided by an estimated number of 88000 children in total, indicates that 0.3% of the imprisoned children in the UK constitute the sample. The corresponding 0.3% figure for Sweden, where an estimated number of 10000 children of imprisoned parents live, is 30 WP1 interviews, a target which was achieved in June 2011. The intention in Sweden is to continue to recruit up to 125 children, but it is unlikely that we will reach that target. The implication for WP2 is that the goal of achieving equal numbers of children in the different SDQ categories is unlikely, unless the entire WP1 sample is evenly distributed between these categories.

For children under 11 the parent S&D score must be used. For children aged 11+ both the child's and the parents' S&D scores are considered, and the more negative score is used. Each country is using its own normative range for S&DQs.

The target for WP2 is to achieve equivalent numbers of boys and girls; a spread of children across the eligible age range (7-17); and inclusion of a smaller number of looked after children. Children from different minority ethnic groups will have important contributions.

More than one child from each family can be interviewed. However, the target remains to achieve interviews with 40 families.

The aim is also to include a significant proportion of imprisoned parents who are mothers, recognising that maternal imprisonment can have even greater impact on children than paternal imprisonment.

### 2.3 Participants

Numbers interviewed so far –

*Note. the number of children interviewed may exceed the number of families if more than one child in the family has been interviewed.*

Families interviewed	Child/ren interviews completed	Interviews with non-imprisoned parent/cares completed	Interviews with imprisoned parent completed
5	5	2	0

Number of interviews where summaries have been completed (sum of child, non-imprisoned parent carer and imprisoned parent carer summaries)	0
Number of interviews which have been transcribed (sum of child, non-imprisoned parent carer and imprisoned parent carer scripts)	2 have been started on but not yet finalized.

#### S&DQ Categories -

Normal.	Borderline	Abnormal	Total
2	3	-	5

*Please note that, as stated above, each country has responsibility for assessing the S&DQ categories (normal, borderline and abnormal) in relation to the country's S&DQ norms; and that for children under 11, the parents' rating must be used.*

	Count
Children interviewed alone	5
Children interviewed with a parent present	0

## 2.4 Demographic data

The tables below present data from Sweden. Two of the children that have been interviewed participated alone in WP1. Therefore we do not have data from the parent questionnaire for these children. In tables 3 and 4 data for these children are missing.

Table 1: age and gender of children interviewed

Age (years)	Girls	Boys	Total
7			Enter total for each age
8			Enter total for each age
9		1	1
10			Enter total for each age
11			Enter total for each age
12	2		2
13			Enter total for each age
14			Enter total for each age
15			Enter total for each age
16	1		1
17	1		1
Total	4	1	5

Table 2: Country of birth of children interviewed

All the interviewed children were born in Sweden (No table).

Table 3: relationship of non-imprisoned and imprisoned parent/carer to child

	Non-imprisoned parent/ carer	Imprisoned parent/carer
Mother	2	1
Father		2
Stepmother		
Stepfather		
Grandmother		
Grandfather		
Great grandmother		
Great grandfather		
Sister		
Brother		
Aunt		
Uncle		
Female friend of family	1 (mother in foster family)	
Male friend of family		

(add others as required)

Table 4: status of imprisoned parent/carer

	Count
On remand/ unconvicted/ convicted but not yet sentenced	-
Sentenced	-
For those who have been sentenced indicate sentence lengths	1 x 3 years 1 x 1,5 years 1 x 4 years



## 2.5 Procedure

Location of interviews	One at informants' (child + parent) home and four at Bryggan
Describe how access to prisons has been negotiated	Access to prison was not necessary for the performed WP2 interviews. No imprisoned parent has been interviewed yet. Ethical permission to interview the imprisoned parents was granted in May of 2011.
Who has conducted the interviews	University staff – 3 interviews MSc Clinical Psychology Student – 3 interviews NGO staff – 1 interview
Role played by NGO in facilitating interviews	Most of the interviews were performed at the NGO Bryggan's local office, which has a child friendly environment. Three of the interviews were performed during open house hours at Bryggan (every Tuesday 3-7 pm).
Additional comments on methodology: e.g. use of drawings for younger children	Younger children were asked to draw their families. Also smiley faces were used when the children were asked to estimate responses on a scale.
Techniques for involving children less able to talk or with learning disabilities	<i>n/a</i>

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1 Coding Framework**

A draft coding framework was developed by the four countries in January/February 2011. this will be further developed in the light of experience. A copy is attached (Appendix i).

#### **3.2 Analysis**

Summaries of all interviews are to be completed to aid data analysis.

The four countries have agreed to use the N.Vivo software package to analyse transcript data.

Training in the use of N.Vivo was provided by the University of Huddersfield for representatives of all four countries in January 2011. Furthermore, two research interviewers from Karolinska Institutet, who will be involved in WP2 interviewing and coding, attended an N.vivo course in May 2011 in Sweden. Analysis will commence while interviews are being completed, and will be finalised in November/December 2011.

Each country will produce a report on WP2 (end of Year 2 / early Year 3). An overview report will be compiled bringing together key findings and recommendations.

#### **3.3 Emerging findings**

We have not yet completed transcripts and analysis of the performed interviews and therefore refrain from drawing any conclusions regarding emerging findings.

**WP2 - NVivo****Appendix i)****First steps towards developing a Coding Framework***Introduction*

*Following the WP2 training in Huddersfield on 20<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011, GG and MM have given further thought to the development of an initial coding framework for WP2. We have tried to keep a balance between developing a starting point while not going into too much detail. We have drawn on the productive discussion on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January in Huddersfield.*

*We have come up with about a dozen main headings which, in NVivo terms can be described as parent nodes. We have mostly tried to avoid specifying child nodes. An exception is the parent code for 'family relationships'. Here, we have developed some child nodes.*

*We have included 'stigma' and 'bullying' as a joint parent node. These are both substantial topics in their own right. For the purposes of our research, their relevance is how far they have potential to impact adversely on children's resilience.*

*We are aware that there is considerable overlap between some of the parent nodes identified. One example is the overlap between 'Communication' and 'Family relationships'. This kind of overlap seems unavoidable; and indeed, all the themes are interlocking, as they all bear on the main focus of the research (i.e. children's resilience).*

*We also gave some thought about how to deal with ML's and RS' suggestion that all the data obtained could be related to a theme about time: i.e. past or present or future. This idea is helpful and relevant. However, we decided that coding all the data under one of these three headings would be too cumbersome and time consuming. Instead, we have opted for a theme about significant past events, where these have a bearing on participants current view of the world. We have also included a parent code for future plans / changes.*

*We would welcome responses and comments on this framework, and would ask to receive these by the end of February 2011. We will need to continue the development of the coding framework beyond that, as new data and findings emerge.*

*This first exercise will enable GG to start putting parent codes into NVivo.*

*One further thought. We will need to consider how to record and analyse evidence about participants', particularly children's, attitudes, including non verbal responses and body language. This may include recording questions where children exercise their right not to answer. Or where their answer is a silence, or hesitating. Or where they appear troubled in some way. Children's responses could be related to learning or behavioural difficulties. Our suggestions at this stage include recording this kind of evidence in interview summaries; or annotations could be included in transcripts (perhaps using the tracking tool on the computer). We may need to come back to this subject.*

***Parent nodes: (a starting point for interviews with children and young people; parents / carers and imprisoned parents).***

**1. Resilience**

Covers indicators / signs of resilience or stress.

Indicators can include: courage / bravery / heroism. Stress factors e.g. isolation withdrawal / low mood / behavioural problems. Sleep habits / sleep patterns. Undisturbed sleep / nightmares / night terrors

**2. Change**

Stability / healthy change / unhealthy change.

Change in family structure and roles following parental imprisonment.

Family relationships will change following a parent's imprisonment.

**3. Communication**

Quality of communication and conversation; language and terminology used.

**4. Honesty / disclosure**

Information shared openly, or not. Could be a feature of conversation between adults; between adults and children; and of children's interaction with peers.

**5. Family relationships**

*Protective factors* e.g. positive relationships within family / extended family / school support / friendships; positive self esteem linked to attainment at school / sports / hobbies.

*COPING strategies* e.g. being able to talk with parents / talk with others / talk with adults e.g. schools or professionals.

*Risk factors* e.g. breakdown of relationships / experience of witnessing family or domestic violence.

Quality of support for children; conflict (e.g. between parents); ambivalence; idealisation; fantasy.

Fair treatment: setting boundaries; spoiling.

Some of the above could be developed as child nodes.

**6. School**

Support; parent's communication with school; role of teachers and other staff.

Impact of imprisonment on child's attendance / behaviour / attainment.

**7. Friends / friendships**

Support; impact of imprisonment on; school friends / other friends.

**8. Achievements / special interest / sports / hobbies**

These will need to be part of the coding framework in order to develop a holistic picture of participants.

**9. Bullying / stigma**

*Bullying*: Child's experience / school / how dealt with / how resolved / policy implications.

*Stigma*: Child's experience / family's experience / policy implications.

Impact of media; perceptions of wider society.

**10. Practical arrangements**

Impact of imprisonment on finance / income / domestic arrangements (who does the work) / moving home / changes in care givers.

**11. Contact between child and imprisoned parent**

Visits; travel arrangements; telephone calls; text messages (if permitted); factors promoting positive contact; factors working against positive contact; policy implications.

**12. Significant past events**

Exploring significant past events for participants impacting on present perceptions and situation.

**13. Future changes**

Talk about the future / need for adjustments, adaptations / date of release / aspirations.

**14. Services**

Experience of support services / interventions / family visiting services / POPs, NGOs. Views about accessing support / talking to professionals. Opportunities to meet children of other prisoners.

**15. Practice or policy issues**

Children and other participants' views about practice / improvements / policy issues. Role of courts / police / prison staff.