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# D02.1 UK 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 can be achieved.

### 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 asked to aim to achieve equal numbers of children in the *normal*, *borderline* and *abnormal* score ranges from S&D questionnaires, as far as this can be achieved.

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. Men outweigh women in the prison population in each of the four countries. Proportions of female prisoners are lower in some European partner countries.

In the UK links with three female prisons have been established. Numbers of imprisoned mothers and fathers in WP2 cases in the UK are about equal so far.

### 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
16	25	16  (parent/carer interviewed in 15 families, in one family two were interviewed).	10

Number of interviews where summaries have been completed (sum of child, non-imprisoned parent carer and imprisoned parent carer summaries)	41  <i>Note: Child interviews counted as one even if more than one child was interviewed.</i>
Number of interviews which have been transcribed (sum of child, non-imprisoned parent carer and imprisoned parent carer scripts)	41  <i>Note: Child interviews counted as one even if more than one child was interviewed.</i>

#### S&DQ Categories -

Normal.	Borderline	Abnormal	Total
11	7	7	25

*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	6 (4 families)
Children interviewed with a parent/carer present	12 (9 families)
Children interviewed with sibling	7 (3 families)
TOTAL	25 children (16 families)

## 2.4 Demographic data

Table 1: age and gender of children interviewed

Age (years)	Girls	Boys	Total
7			
8	1	1	2
9	2	1	3
10	3	1	4
11		5	5
12	1	2	3
13			
14	2	1	3
15	2		
16		1	1
17	1	1	2
Total	12	13	25

Table 2: ethnicity of children interviewed

	Count
White	22
Asian	0
Black	0
Mixed	3
Other (please specify)	0

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

	Non-imprisoned parent/ carer	Imprisoned parent/carer
Mother	7	8
Father	3	6
Stepmother		
Stepfather		1
Grandmother	3	
Grandfather		
Step grandmother		
Step grandfather	1	1
Great grandmother	1	
Great grandfather		
Sister	1	
Brother		



Aunt		
Uncle		
Female friend of family		
Male friend of family		

Table 4: status of imprisoned parent/carer

	Count
On remand/ unconvicted/ convicted but not yet sentenced	2
Sentenced	14
For those who have been sentenced indicate sentence lengths	1 x 7 months 1 x 8 months 1 x 11 months 1 x 12 months 1 x 16 months 2 x 18 months 1 x 27 months 1 x 39 months 1 x 48 months 1 x 56 months 1 x 66 months 1 x 116 months 1 x 168 months

## 2.5 Procedure

Location of interviews	All 16 families have been interviewed in their own homes.
Describe how access to prisons has been negotiated	Prison access has been negotiated via a letter to the imprisoned parent to obtain consent for the interview. Also, a letter has been sent to the prison requesting authorisation for the interview to be held and agreement for this to be tape recorded. Contact has been via a named senior officer or prison security.
Who has conducted the interviews	All interviews have been conducted by the University of Huddersfield WP2 team (three female; two male).
Role played by NGO in facilitating interviews	Initial contacts have been made by POPS with families visiting prisons to complete WP1 questionnaires. Families have indicated on the questionnaires whether they wish to take part in WP2 interviews. POPS have used very experienced staff to undertake additional recruitment in prisons across the North West. Plans have been made for POPS staff to contribute directly to a smaller number of interviews. In some cases POPS have established positive relationships with families which has made recruitment easier. Other voluntary organisations responsible for managing family visits, particularly in HMP Styal and HMP New Hall, have contributed significantly as well.
Additional comments on methodology: e.g. use of drawings for younger children	
Techniques for involving children less able to talk or with learning disabilities	Interviewers have provided children with learning disabilities with additional reassurance about the interview process. Parental involvement in these interviews has been helpful in facilitating involvement by these children.

### 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. 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

Attempts are being made to recruit equal numbers of children with normal, borderline, and abnormal scores for the strengths in difficulties questionnaires to take part in WP2. Children with borderline and abnormal scores have been prioritised for interview. Numbers of normal children are higher than the other two categories so far.

Numbers of imprisoned mothers and fathers are about equal so far. In some cases it has not been possible to interview imprisoned parents. Reasons have included the imprisoned parent refusing permission; or permission being refused by a prison located outside the north west region. At least 2 parents have been interviewed following discharge from prison.

It is early for us to produce preliminary findings. We have booked time to start the N- VIVO analysis in July and September, so we will know more then. Interview summaries are proving to be useful.

Bearing in mind the comments from the International Advisory Board in Paris (March 2011) about the dangers of reaching conclusions before all relevant data has been collated, the following comments should be treated with circumspection.

1. The role of schools seems likely to emerge as very important for most families. Parents/carers mostly recognise children's need to know about the imprisoned parent, and some parents and children have looked to school staff, including class teachers, for support. Confidentiality is important in the school setting. Schools have so far been mentioned more frequently than other agencies as being well placed to support both children and parents. Some parents have said that the only agency they would wish to involve, outside the family, has been school.

A number of parents have commented on how helpful schools have been. Some schools have considerable experience and understanding to offer families with an imprisoned parent.

In two or three interviews, where boys aged 10 -11 have been interviewed, liaison with school has been complicated by the boy moving on to a much larger, and less familiar, secondary school, while their parent is in prison.

This area has been notified to the WP6 Lead as an "early finding". The role of schools as stakeholders (WP 3) seems important.

2. Some parents, particularly mothers, in prison, appear to manage to keep in very regular - in a few cases almost daily -contact with their children. Telephone contact is crucial, as are letters and visits. Family days and family visits seem to work well, and provide qualitatively "better" contact than normal visits.

3. The length of the prison sentence seems likely to emerge as a key variable. Where parents are in prison for shorter periods, children and parents often seem able to think about the future. We have interviewed two families where mothers are serving very long sentences. For their children, the prospect of family re-unification is a very distant one.

4. For some of the families we have interviewed, including ones where the imprisoned parent is the mother, grandparents have played a key role as care givers. Grand parents can step in where the relationship between the parents is strained, or has broken down. We may want to explore how tensions can develop between the two sets of grandparents / extended families.

So far, children in foster homes or in local authority care have not been interviewed for WP2.

5. We will want to learn more about the concept of resilience. Some children seem to cope optimally with a parent being in prison. This seems likely always to be related to the quality of care they receive from their carer. For other children, including ones in the SDQ "normal " range, having a parent in prison has a profound impact, even where they can manage to keep their family and school life going well. Children's age will probably be an important variable here.

6. Most children we have interviewed have known their parent is in prison, although their level of understanding about this may vary.

**Appendix i)****WP2 - NVivo****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.