

Strangeways

1990

2010

20 years on — what has
changed for prisoners' families?

Contents

Spring 2010

- 3 **Editorial** – Our guest columnist Dame Anne Owers reviews eight years as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- 4–7 **APF News** – A round up of developments, events and new publications.
- 8–9 **Members' News** – a quick look at some of the fantastic work of our members.
- 10–11 **Feature** – The Strangeways riot was 20 years ago - what happened next?
- 12–13 **Feature** – The POPS team talk about how their work has changed since the Woolf Report.
- 14–15 **Feature** – Two prisoners' family members describe their lives outside when a family member is inside.
- 16 **The Way We Were** – Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Stephen Shaw, reflects on developments since the Woolf Report.

APF wins an award
See page 4



Editors : Diana Ruthven and Jessica Berens
Contributors: Lucy Gampell, Harriet Deane, Rosemary Cooney, Sam Hart, Charlotte Samuel, Andy Aitchison, Ged Murray, Helen Attewell, Lynne Starkie, Farida Anderson, Zoe Gan-Rankin, Diane Curry, Lesley Ward, Dame Anne Owers, Stephen Shaw, Anna Loughrey

Produced by APF: Unit 21, Carlson Court, 116 Putney Bridge Rd, SW15 2NQ.
T: 0208 812 3600
E: info@actionpf.org.uk
www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk
ISSN: 1751-2247

Registered Charity No.267879. Company Limited by Guarantee No.1168459

Cover

The photograph on the left was taken by Ged Murray who took the iconic images of the Strangeways riots in 1990 and contributed to the book about the subject 'A Serious Disturbance,' by Eric Allison and Nicki Jameson. The photograph on the right was taken by Andy Aitchison, photographer, at a family day at HMP Parc.

Editorial

This year Dame Anne Owers steps down from her post as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. Here, as our guest columnist, she discusses the progress that has been made and the challenges that are on the horizon.

“Organisations working with prisoners’ families have been hugely influential in changing views and attitudes.”

I have just published my eighth and last annual report as Chief Inspector of Prisons. When I look back, there has been some considerable progress since 2001. Prison healthcare and education are delivered to much more professional standards; support in the early days of imprisonment, including detoxification, has improved; and, importantly, prisons know that they need to focus on resettlement, not just containment.

But no-one would say that this is ‘job done’. There is not enough support for the many prisoners who are mentally ill, and not enough education and training to provide much-needed activity and skills. The most important changes have come when prisons let the outside in – but many prisons still struggle to make and keep effective links between the insider and the outside.

That adds to the concern about the budget cuts that have already happened, and those that are inevitably on the horizon. They will directly affect the Prison Service, but

they will also affect the funding of organisations, including voluntary organisations, which now provide services in prisons. Prisons are setting out the way that key services should be provided within restricted funding. I am extremely concerned that we could lose hard-won progress, and that the innovative work that can really make a difference will be the first casualty.

Work with and about families is a prime example. When I began as Chief Inspector, families and visits were usually viewed as at best an add-on and at worst an annoyance. It was a major step forward when children and families were recognised as one of the seven key resettlement pathways, alongside accommodation and employment. This has led to a renewed focus on maintaining, repairing and creating the relationships that are at the heart of change and rehabilitation.

It has resulted in some of the best work I have seen in prisons: parenting courses, like Family Man, the homework club at Parc, ‘through the gate’ family support work, relaxed family visits, the involvement of families in sentence planning and suicide prevention work, and of course the sterling work done in and by visitors’ centres. Almost all of this is provided through or with the help of the voluntary sector – at best in partnership with prison staff, and of course with families themselves.

In spite of that, there is still much more to be done. We still inspect too many prisons where booking lines are permanently engaged, where visits routinely start late (as they did in all the women’s prisons we inspected last year),



Dame Anne Owers

where prisoners have to wear demeaning bibs or overalls, and of course where prisoners are too far from home to have regular visits. In too many prisons, full access to visits is conditional on a prisoner’s good behaviour – without any consideration of the effect on his or her children. It was also disappointing that the largest women’s prison, Holloway, had no strategy to address the family support needs it had identified.

There are already signs that governors, struggling to meet targets, are beginning to divide the work into ‘must have’ and ‘nice to do’ and that some of the most innovative family work falls into the latter category. That is both short-sighted and wrong. Rehabilitation is not just about formal qualifications or cognitive behaviour programmes – it is about people deciding, and being supported, to change the narrative of their lives. Families and relationships are central to that. Action for Prisoners’ Families, and all those individuals and organisations working with prisoners’ families, recognised this long before the Prison Service did. You have been hugely influential in changing views and attitudes, and it is vital that the initiatives and innovative work that have now started is able to grow and become the norm, not the exception.

Winning Ways

The winter months have been lightened by some good news for APF and friends. Former director Lucy Gampell (pictured right) was awarded a well deserved OBE in the New Year's Honours List. Meanwhile Diana Ruthven, Head of Communications and Information, represented APF at a ceremony in London for the International Visual Communications Association (IVCA). A gold commendation for best drama was awarded to the production company Knifedge for their work on APF's 'Missing Out' DVD. Mary Cooper, who wrote the screenplay, was also at the event to receive the award.



APF Forums

APF forums continue to provide excellent opportunities for our members to share experience about good practice and learn about new developments in the sector. 'What you should know', held in London, featured presentations on the subjects of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), sentence calculation, and the impact of the Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP) sentence. **Vetting and Barring** is also causing concern and a forum, held in February, in collaboration with CLINKS, provided practical information about the new Vetting and Barring Scheme, and the role of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The scheme will affect all APF and CLINKS members who are working with children and vulnerable adults either as staff or volunteers. Presentations from the Department of Children, Schools and Families

(DCSF), the ISA and the charity UNLOCK were made at this forum and are available from APF.

A discussion and information group has also been set up for members at www.navcaboodle.org.uk

A forum on 'Showcasing Good Practice' was held in Birmingham on 29 April with presentations from Derek Jones of Email a Prisoner, Patricia Anderson from Basic Caring Communities - a pact resettlement project, Birth Companions - who work mainly in Holloway Prison with pregnant women, and HMP Shrewsbury Family Days.

For more information on forums contact Lucy Keenan (lucykeenana@actionpf.org.uk).

Prisoners' Families Helpline

This will be a NOMS service from July 2010. APF members POPS (Partners of Prisoners and Families support group) in Manchester have been awarded the contract to deliver the service for NOMS.



The Prisoners' Families Helpline is an invaluable service.

New research

A big thank you to AMIMB (Association of Members of Independent Monitoring Boards) for encouraging its members to participate in a recent APF survey into prison visitors' centres. Over 50 questionnaires were returned to APF and will be used to inform a report. Many responses were extremely positive; 94% of visitors' centres were described as having approachable members of staff, with the IMB member at one YOI saying: **"Staff in the visitors' centre are fantastic – welcoming, friendly, sensitive and full of information"**.

Mothers' rights

APF, pact and NOMS are highlighting issues that affect mothers who are caught up in the criminal justice system. A conference was held in March for practitioners who work with families and children in womens'

**£1000
could be
yours!**

prisons and several specialised briefings were launched by APF and pact. The APF/Rights of Women series - Your Children, Your Rights – includes subjects such as ‘adoption’, ‘parental responsibility’, and ‘public law – when social services get involved.’ A further briefing on ‘private law – when families can’t agree’ will be published in May. These will be distributed in women’s prisons and available to download from the APF website. If you would like copies or have any queries please contact Diana Ruthven (Diana@actionpf.org.uk).



There are seven mother and baby units in England.

Family Friendly Prisons Challenge

This event challenges prisons to hold family visits designed to improve the time prisoners spend with their families. This year the theme will be, ‘family visits on a shoe string’ and it will be held in collaboration with the Big Draw - a month-long season of drawing events for people of all ages and abilities. Publicity will be sent to prisons in June while the events themselves will be held in October. Registration and confirmation will be available on-line. For further information contact Sarah Salmon (sarah@actionpf.org.uk).



[www.thebigdraw.org/
bigdraw/publicity](http://www.thebigdraw.org/bigdraw/publicity)

Setting up support groups

APF receives many inquiries asking how to set up local support groups for prisoners’ families and is now updating our popular guides - which will also be available online. We would very much welcome members’ expertise on the contents and a survey will be sent out to gather opinions. If you are a non-member and have experience to share about setting up local support groups for prisoners’ families please contact Diana Ruthven (Diana@actionpf.org.uk).

Save the date!

The APF AGM and conference will be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in Russell Square, WC1 on 18 November. The working title for the day is ‘Impact and Good Practice’. We will be looking at how best to assess and promote the value of working with prisoners’ families.

**Nominate someone
for The Marsh
Award for
Volunteers**



Volunteers rarely get the recognition that they deserve, but they support prisoners’ families all over the country. APF and the Marsh Christian Trust have now set up The Marsh Award for Volunteers. This will acknowledge groups of volunteers or a volunteer from the APF membership who have made a difference. The winner/s will be awarded £1000 which will be presented at the APF AGM on 18 November. Any member (from the statutory, private or voluntary sector) of APF may nominate a volunteer or group of up to 10 volunteers. They must have worked directly with prisoners’ families over the past year. For more information please contact Lucy Keenan (lucykeenana@actionpf.org.uk) or go to our website: www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk.

News from the North

Rosemary Cooney is APF's Training and Development Manager. She delivers training, supports members and works with prisons and a wide range of organisations in the north to help them become more 'family friendly' - that is, more aware of the hidden sentence that a prisoner's family so often serves and how to support them when they are often experiencing isolation and trauma.

Last Autumn APF was awarded funding from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills under their '**Transformational Family Learning**' initiative. This has enabled productive partnerships with NOMS in the East Midlands and Children's Links, who are experts in the area of children's play and family learning in prisons and the community. The aims of the project are to give prisons the skills and resources to offer family visits focused around family learning activities. Staff from four East Midlands prisons including prison officers, librarians and learning and skills personnel, participated in the two-day training course (delivered by Children's Links) in play in prisons – with an emphasis on activities that included the whole family. Twenty members of prison staff have now undergone training and, having developed skills and confidence, are planning and implementing family visits that encourage family learning, support bonding, and help to break down the barriers within the family as well as between family members and prison staff.

The benefits of the training, equipment and resources have already taken well-run family visits to a new level of enjoyment; activities including crazy golf, parachutes, floor games, as well as painting, craft and junk modelling, are now available thanks to both capital and consumable resources acquired under the project.

For further information about the **Transformational Learning Project** please contact Rosemary Cooney (rosemary@actionpf.org.uk.)



Rosemary Cooney

As the Children and Families pathway 'champion' for the East Midlands, Rosemary helped to organise a conference near Leicester, '**Is there anybody out there? – working with offenders**'. The aim of the event was to celebrate the third and faith sectors' good practice in working with offenders both inside prisons and in the community. About 130 people – from prisons, funding bodies, the voluntary and statutory sector – attended to explore issues such as how to engage, funding, and so on. Evaluation has led to the planning of further, more locally-based activities, such as networking meetings and focus groups to enable more third sector and faith based organisations to engage with offenders and ex-offenders.

Enquiries about APF's training and resources are coming in regularly and it is very encouraging to note the increased awareness amongst practitioners about the specific impact of imprisonment on family members and particularly on children.

News from the South

Sam Hart is APF's Training and Development Officer. She delivers training, supports members and works with prisons and a wide range of organisations in the south.

APF members **Thames Valley Partnership (TVP)** have been working with an Oxford primary school to raise awareness of family and imprisonment. TVP were asked to contribute as part of Pegasus School's 'Behind Bars' programme. The school has adopted the theme of imprisonment for a term and included animals, refugees, asylum seekers and prisoners. TVP ran two awareness raising sessions aimed at parents and children, with guest speakers from HMP Bullingdon who portrayed a day in the life of a prisoner. Children were able to ask questions which ranged from 'Has anyone ever escaped prison?' to 'What do prisoners have for dinner?' The sessions also highlighted awareness of the Family Matters link worker who can provide community support for prisoners' families.

HMP Kingston governor Ian Telfer has taken the radical step of closing down his officers' social club in order to open a new visitors' and community centre for families. "Most of our families travel a considerable distance and we would like to give them somewhere decent to wait, have something to eat and get information," he explains. The prison is also keen for the centre to be seen as a resource by the local community. It is currently consulting with community groups and APF members 'Affect' about how the space can best be used.

Southampton City Council's Ross Hoar, has developed a toolkit for working with families of prisoners. The toolkit provides information about how families are affected at each stage of the criminal justice system and gives guidelines to professionals on how to support families at these difficult times.

Hampshire Sure Start Children's Centres, Parenting Commissioners, and Department for Works and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) have



Sam Hart

instigated 'meet and greet' sessions in **HMP Winchester**. In addition the You and Your Child parenting course will be delivered to prisoners serving less than twelve months on a rolling basis. For details of toolkit visit www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk.

New APF members **Brighton Hove Children's and Young People's Trust** are developing innovative support and services for families of prisoners. The Trust has set up a 'families of prisoners' steering group' and organises Family Days in **Lewes Prison** working alongside prison staff. After a recent Family Day at the prison one prisoner wrote: "Prison is not meant to be a good and enjoyable place - it isn't for me. But having the family visit has made me realise what life is all about and I want my kids to be loved." The trust also plans to develop parenting programmes and seminars for prisoners as well as support networks for families.

Gloucestershire County Council has developed a school's policy detailing good practice guidelines for supporting children and families of prisoners. The policy recommends a named person should be appointed with responsibility for prisoners' families within schools as well as providing advice for school staff about information sharing and disclosures. For more details www.gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Members' News

New Visitors' Centre at HMP Nottingham



Pact has been awarded a contract to run family support services at a recently refurbished centre at Nottingham Prison. This local prison, with most of its occupants from the surrounding area, is doubling in size from around 500 to over 1000 prisoners. The 'community and visitors' centre' will be staffed by pact workers, providing advice, support, information and guidance to visitors. They will also be offering healthy drinks and snacks for sale on prison visits.



Grant for Project Co-ordinator



In 2008 Family and Friends of Prisoners (FFOPS) received funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to employ a part-time project co-ordinator. They have just heard that they have received a grant from the Department of Work and Pensions via Swansea Council for Voluntary Services to enable them to keep this post going for another six months, possibly longer. This post will allow the project co-ordinator to pursue FFOPs' networking and promotional work.

Supporting offenders' children in Bristol



Barnardo's South West have launched a pilot project in Bristol to support offenders' children. The new service - ECHO (Empowering Children of Offenders) - will tackle the emotional impact of having a father in prison. This follows publication of its report, 'Every Night You Cry'. This highlighted research which showed that prisoners' children are three times more likely to be at risk of developing anti-social behaviour or mental health problems. They are also more likely to be living in poverty.

ECHO project workers will make contact with families during prison visits, or they might receive a referral from other organisations including social services and youth

offending teams. Staff will visit families in their own homes to help with improving relationships and contact with the imprisoned parent, boosting school attendance, reducing anti-social behaviour, and sign-posting to other services for advice on housing, health and debt. They will also work with local schools to encourage information sharing between teachers and parents. Similar work will take place with local children's centres.

For further information on ECHO call 0117 955 1703 or email Jendayi.servwah@barnardos.org.uk.



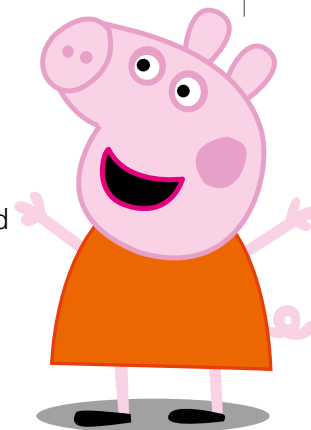
ECHO project's Duncan Stanway

New Toy Library



Helen Goodman MP launched a NEPACS Toy Library Scheme for HMYOI Deerbolt visitors' centre in January. Ms Goodman, who is Labour minister for the Bishop Auckland constituency, was Chief Executive of the Toy Library Association from 2002 until 2005. She provided the inspiration for the scheme when she visited the Durham prison last year. Now

children can look through the library catalogues and choose a toy to take home with them, returning it on their next visit. This is a simple way to make what can be a daunting experience more pleasurable for a child. NEPACS, meanwhile, say they are responding to consumer demand and stocking up on Peppa Pigs!



Shortlisted for award



String of Pearls was recently short-listed for the Guardian Public Services Award. Although they didn't win, the

project received a special mention by the judges. The organisation is based in the south west and raises awareness of the experience of prisoners' families through training, mentors and Home Run - a pre-release programme implemented in partnership with Relate for prisoners and their families at HMP Channings Wood.

New visitors' centre at HMP Doncaster



POPs have won the contract to run the new visitors' centre at HMP Doncaster. Vivien Wilde will be the project co-ordinator. Doncaster Prison is managed by Serco and accommodates 1,120 men.

New manifesto



Clinks are one of four charities who have launched the Making Every Child Matter (MEAM) manifesto. This campaign is designed to influence policy and services for adults with multiple needs and exclusions. Together the coalition represents over 1,600 organisations. www.meam.org.uk.

Lynne Starkie is a mentor on the Way Without Walls programme at HMP Nottingham. Here she writes about her experience.



Lynne Starkie

"When I was studying for my counselling and psychotherapy diploma I began looking for voluntary work and came across the Way Without Walls mentoring programme. It is a fantastic project which asserts that to have safer communities we need a reduction in crime, and, for that, we need to reduce the risk of people coming out of prison and re-offending.

As a mentor my role is to work with the service user before and on his release from prison. I provide help and motivation and practical advice with regard to accommodation, employment and health care.

My first service user was a guy who had just spent his 30th birthday in prison. He had been in and out for a large part of his adult life, mainly due to theft to fund his ever increasing drug and alcohol use. At our first meeting he made it clear that he wanted to change - he was sick of being in and out of prison - he wanted to stabilise his life. At our subsequent meetings, we talked about his plans and hopes for the future, He found this really motivating, and, on his release, he registered on a college course.

Chris and his partner were lucky enough to have accommodation when he left prison in June 2009; now, with support from Way Without Walls, as well as his drug and alcohol workers, he is enjoying a drug and crime free life.

The Way Without Walls programme has been such a success at Nottingham we are setting one up at HMP Ranby and branching out to other prisons. The numbers of service users on our books has increased dramatically, so we are always on the look out for new volunteers. I feel to be a good mentor you just need a few key attributes - to be non-judgemental, have excellent communication skills, be able to show empathy with the service users, and be able to motivate and uplift them.

I can honestly say that joining Way Without Walls has been one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences of my life, and I intend to carry on mentoring for as long as I am able."

If you would like to know more about the Way Without Walls programme please contact volunteer coordinator Judy Marlow on 0115 872 4185

RIOTS AND RIGHTS

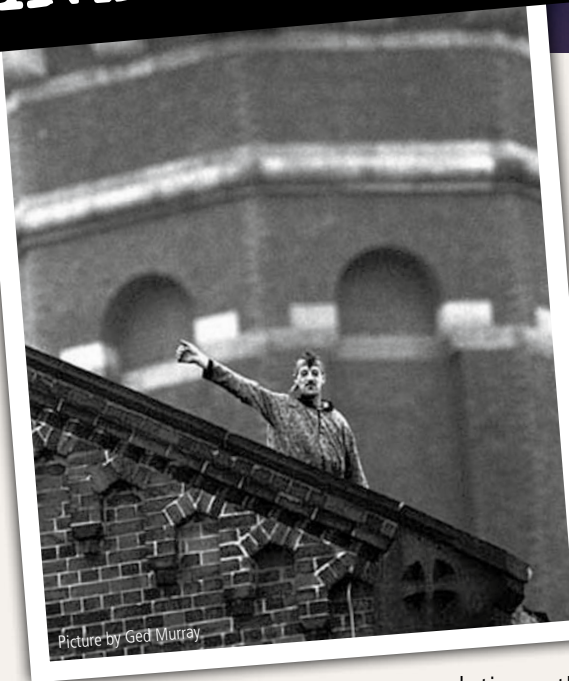
At 10 am on 1 April 1990 a disturbance at HMP Strangeways (now HMP Manchester) escalated into a month long protest and spread to five other prisons.

It all kicked off in the chapel. A sermon by an army scripture reader was greeted with catcalls; then there was jeering and hooting during the hymn. An inmate, Paul Taylor, grabbed the microphone away from the chaplain and somebody yelled, "get the bastards!" A hooded prisoner smashed a book case – hymn books and fire extinguishers were thrown. Prison officers were attacked and had their keys taken from them, upon which hundreds of prisoners were released from their cells and fires were started.

By the end of the day an obscure prison in Manchester was on the map and a hundred of its inmates were on the roof; by the end of the week the press were describing an 'explosion of evil' perpetrated by 'scum' in a 'hell hole jail'; by the end of the month seven protesters were still on the roof.

The dissidents at Manchester, the final few, held out for 25 days, 25 days of being sprayed with cold water and blasted with loud music. By the time the five men descended in the hydraulic cherry picker, triumphant fists raised for the gathered photographers, the families and friends tearful and looking on, they had made their point – their grievances had been effectively communicated, shouted down from their rooftop to the press. It was obvious that there was something seriously wrong at Strangeways, if not the whole British penal system.

The cost? Injuries caused to 147 members of staff and 47 prisoners, a traumatised 18 year old committed suicide, six men were



charged with the murder of a vulnerable prisoner, 51 men were committed for trial on charges of riot, and the tax payer faced a bill for £60 million.

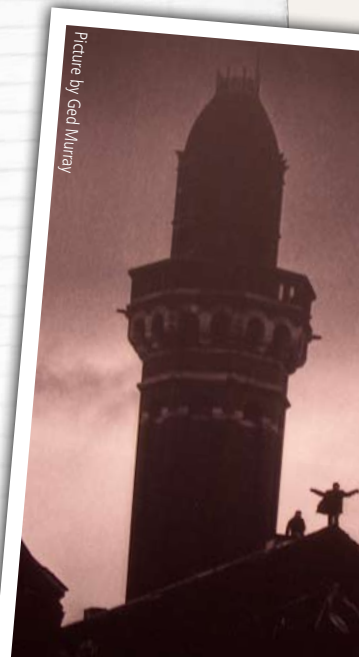
Employed to lead an inquiry, Lord Justice Woolf, a well respected and liberal minded judge, published his findings a year later. He made 12

recommendations, the ninth of which initiated the agenda that was to be taken up by those supporting families of prisoners.

“ Better prospects for prisoners to maintain their links with families and the community through more visits and home leaves and through being located in community prisons as near to their homes as possible. ”

The Woolf Report also commented:

“ It is highly desirable for the stable running of a prison and for the prisoner leading a law abiding life after release that whenever practicable he should be accommodated as near to his home and community as possible. The problem of holding prisoners remote from their homes and visitors was a very evident factor during the disturbance. We therefore recommend a system of community prisons. ”



What happened then?

Twenty years in the life of APF

1990: The Federation of Prisoners' Families Support Groups (FPFSG) was founded in March 'to act for organisations which provide assistance to the families of people in prison.' FPFSG was to become Action for Prisoners' Families.

FPFSG submits evidence to the Woolf inquiry.

1991: The Woolf report is published. The importance of family contact is established.

1992: FPFSG lobbies for second assisted prison visit payment.

1993: FPFSG appoints Lucy Gampell as first paid worker.

FPFSG and Ormiston Children and Families Trust organise a national conference on families of prisoners.

1994: Assisted Prisons Visits Unit introduces the second paid visit.

Prisons Ombudsman created - prisoners could make complaints if they were not receiving entitled visits.

1995: High profile escapes from HMPs Parkhurst and Whitemoor lead to the Learmont Report. "This triggered a massive reorientation towards security. Although some of the benefits flowing from Woolf survived, visitors came to be viewed primarily as risks, and became subject to an ever heavier volume of restriction and regulation." (Helen Attewell/ NEPACS)

1997: FPFSG launch the report 'Living in the Shadows' at the House of Commons to gain recognition of the difficulties faced by prisoners' families.

2000: FPFSG annual review notes that the number of visitors' centres have doubled from 40 in 1990 to 90 in 2000, though 40% of prisons are still without visitors' centres.

2002: Publication of the Social Exclusion Unit report into 'Reducing Re-offending' identifying the maintenance of family ties as a key factor (FPFSG on advisory group) 'Just Visiting,' a report by APF and Prison Reform Trust, is launched at HMP Holloway and leads to increased government recognition of the role of visitors' centres.

FPFSG becomes Action for Prisoners' Families

2003: Launch of Prisoners' Families Helpline

2004: 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family and APF's first Family Friendly Prisons Challenge.

The Home Office Reducing Re-offending Action Plan establishes the 6 resettlement pathways, including children & families, and leading to the establishment of NOMS.

2005: APF launches first ever books for the children of prisoners.

2007: APF, Clinks, pact and PRT launch 'Agenda for Action'

The Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) publish the 'Children of Offenders Review' to examine evidence of the extent to which children who have a parent in prison have poorer outcomes.

2008: The Corston Report - on vulnerable women prisoners is published. It stated that women tend to be located further from their homes than male prisoners, to the detriment of maintaining family ties.

2009: NOMS publishes a National Service Framework for Women Offenders (to align services to government response to the Corston Report) as well as Prison Service Order 4800 with Gender Specific Standards.

MoJ and DCSF publish 'Reducing re-offending supporting families creating better futures.'

APF and its Training Advisory Group work with the DCSF and NOMS to produce core awareness training to enable more professionals to support the needs of prisoners' families.

APF appoints new director, Deborah Cowley.

2010: Lucy Gampell, former director of APF, is awarded an OBE.

What has changed?

Helen Attewell

The provision of visitors' centres is essential to the improvement of conditions for visitors, and it is astonishing to think that as recently as 1995 there were only 28 centres among the 132 prisons in England and Wales. From this time, the government began to acknowledge their importance, and to require each new prison to be equipped with one. This was a big step forward - in spite of the tendency to view the centres more as security devices than as shelters to provide visitors with "a safe pleasant environment where all visitors are met with dignity and respect, provided with the facilities they need, and offered information, support and the opportunity to discuss the difficulties they may face with confidence". The conditions for visitors have also suffered from the overcrowding, which has forced them to travel long distances and to inconvenient places. The booking system can be very tyrannous; visitors are invariably held responsible for error, and experience the loss, not only of the visit, but also of the hard-earned cash which financed the journey.

Helen Attewell is the chief executive of NEPACS, a 128 year old charity that supports family services in seven prisons.

Looking Back at Anger



The Manchester based charity POPS (Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group) reflects on how the Strangeways riot affected both its work and the welfare of prisoners' families.

By Anna Loughrey

Do you believe that the Strangeways riot initiated change?

The issues of prisoners' living conditions and how families were being treated were catapulted into the media spotlight. It was the beginning of the awareness of offenders' families' issues.

Farida Anderson – POPS Founder and Chief Executive

Families felt like they were guilty by association and were often treated as though they were offenders too. The riot highlighted the need for improved conditions, decency and continued family contact.

Zoe Gan-Rankin – POPS Operational Manager

I believe that the riot made a massive impact on the legislation that underpins conditions for prisoners and their families. *Diane Curry – POPS Director*

Before the riot, prisoners were treated with no respect at all. *Service User*

Third sector agencies were providing families with support before the riots but these agencies were not as well known, or taken as seriously, until after the riots highlighted the issues.

Zoe Gan-Rankin – POPS Operational Manager

The riot was a life and work altering event. It forced political change to occur. It may have taken 20-30 years to get to this stage but it would have happened anyway. It was helped by Lord Woolf's Report, which was very fair and compassionate.

Farida Anderson – POPS Founder and Chief Executive

At the time of the riot the ethos for rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners was not apparent. I do not believe that you can consider providing support to a prisoner to help reduce re-offending when you treat him with no dignity, no respect and provide him with no alternative. *Diane Curry – POPS Director*

What has been achieved?

One of my main aims was to make the service provided to families so efficient that POPS was no longer needed; so not yet as we are still here! *Farida Anderson – POPS Founder and Chief Executive*

Visiting a prisoner is a much more humane, decent process. We have crèche areas, play workers, refreshment areas, family days - all an improvement on the experience of visiting at the time of the riots. However public spending cuts may encourage a backward step... *Diane Curry – POPS Director*

Have Third Sector groups been accepted by the Criminal Justice System?

NOMS acknowledges the service third sector agencies provide. NOMS also does a significant amount of joint work with voluntary and community sector agencies. However, there is a danger of killing the third sector if it is no longer driven by a desire for improvements but for profit. *Farida Anderson – POPS Founder and Chief Executive*



Diane Curry

What changes have been made?

Prior to the riot the criminal justice service processes were only done to you not with you. It is now recognized that those who have experience of an issue can provide a good insight and perspective on it. *Farida Anderson – POPS Founder and Chief Executive*

Visitors' centres and amenities for families are now seen as important. The Children and Families pathway in the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan is a step forward.

Zoe Gan-Rankin – POPS Operational Manager

Did the riot provide an avenue for third sector agencies to work within the criminal justice system? Would this work have been possible without the disturbances?



There is a belief that all people working in voluntary and community agencies are volunteers and not professionals and therefore there is less respect for the work that these support agencies accomplish. This can hinder progress and achievement.

Zoe Gan-Rankin – POPS Operational Manager

This largely depends on the prison. One prison governor wants support for families accessed through the prison and therefore there can be good relationships built. However a new governor can come in and the relationship with the prison has to be built up all over

again. It's all based on relationship building.
Lesley Ward – POPS Operational Manager



Lesley Ward

Have your views on the riot and the Woolf Report changed over the last two decades?

The riot at HMP Manchester was a catalyst for change. It is unfortunate that it took a negative situation to prompt an acknowledgment of the notion of decency and how to treat people. The Woolf Report brought us to where we are today but we need to keep listening to the people who are

affected by imprisonment in order to avoid another riot situation.

Diane Curry – POPS Director

I read a copy of the Woolf Report whilst still inside prison and believe that it was written to please everyone. If you're trying to make changes you cannot keep everyone happy.
Service User C



Zoe Gan-Rankin

Is there any further work that needs to be done?

There needs to be a further joint working approach adopted. For example, NOMS and probation often fight on particular issues. There is not enough time spent on unity.

Farida Anderson - POPS Founder and Chief Executive

There is always scope for increased support of offenders' families. Statutory bodies need to accept more responsibility for improvements.

Zoe Gan-Rankin – POPS Operational Manager

Yes, there needs to be LOTS of further work.

- More user involvement (prisoners and their families)
- More partnership working
- Better use of third sector
- Sharing of the load – acknowledgement of the role of the third sector can play and what skills they have
- Promotion of rehabilitation.

Diane Curry – POPS Director

The Prison Service sees families as visits only but there needs to be some work done on the fact that families are a protective factor to reduce or limit offending. The Prison Service needs to acknowledge how positively family support can influence all of the pathways on the reducing re-offending action plan.
Lesley Ward – POPS Operational Manager

Anna Loughrey is currently undertaking an internship at POPS, made possible through the Vodafone Foundation. The aim of the internship is to publicise the status of charities in the UK. For more information on the Vodafone World of Difference Programme visit http://www.vodafone.com/world_of_difference.html.



Life outside when they're inside

Charlotte's story

Visiting my boyfriend in HMP Lindholme

I live at home with my parents. My Mum understands how I feel about my boyfriend and is supportive. She has never tried to talk me out of supporting him. My father is aware that my boyfriend is in prison but he doesn't talk about it.

On Saturdays I wake up between 5am and 6am. It is dark outside - and cold - so I usually wear a comfortable tracksuit with trainers or a warm jacket and jeans to the prison. I like being comfy when I travel, but I know he likes to see that I've made an effort, so I take a spare change of clothes with me in a small holdall to change into once I get to the prison - usually some heels and a dress or leggings, no matter what the weather is like!

I walk to my local station to catch the train to London Kings Cross in time to board the 8:36 am train to Doncaster which arrives at 10:11am. From Doncaster Station I walk for about five minutes to catch the 67 bus. The bus arrives at HMP Lindholme at 11:45am, and the visit usually starts around 1:45pm, but the earlier you arrive, the sooner you get in.

The noise in the centre gets louder and louder as the time of the visit approaches - wives and girlfriends are all standing at the mirror applying make up, spraying perfume and fiddling about with their hair! It reminds me of being in a nightclub!

He always greets me with a firm hug. I try to let him know he's not missing out on anything special but I find it hard when every last part of me wants him home. We find comfort in speaking about our plans for the future: what we plan to do together when he gets out and what he wants to do with the qualifications he has gained whilst being in prison.

There is always a lump in my throat as I walk out after the two hours. I find it really, really difficult to leave him behind. I say to myself every day "It might be long, but it's not forever." I anticipate the day when he gets his first town visit or makes his parole in 2012 but, then there are the 'down moments'

where nothing seems to be going right and the days pass slowly.

My partner moans about the things like his post getting lost, even having to walk for five minutes to get to the visits hall! For the first year or so, it would upset me tremendously but now I have learned that for him to show me his bad side means that he trusts me enough to witness him at his lowest. At times I want to tell him to stop being so miserable but I have learned to be understanding.

He has been in prison since 2005 and will serve another 2 years until he is eligible for parole. He will be eligible for day release in six months. Although on the face of things it may seem bad, good things have come out of our situation. I think I have grown into a better person. I have learned what is important. I am back in education and I am studying law. I volunteer for several charities which to help prisoners and their families. I have started to save money. I am more focused on what I want out of life. My boyfriend has been really supportive of my decisions. He has convinced me to persevere when I want to give up. As a person I have become more patient and a lot more mature. I have learned who my true friends are and gained some new ones while I have been waiting in the visitors' centres. If it wasn't for him being where he is, I don't know whether or not I would have been able to challenge myself and do these things.

One thing I can say is that anyone who stands by someone who has been imprisoned is a truly amazing person. It takes the strength of a courageous individual to support them emotionally, mentally and financially. I urge other women who have partners in prison to never give up.

Charlotte Samuel is a law student based in North London. She founded the I Have A Loved One In Prison Facebook group which now has 1,050 members.



Tina's story



What happened when my brother was arrested

I remember the night I found out my brother had been arrested very clearly. It was the call I had been dreading and expecting in equal measures. At that time I couldn't bear the thought of him being locked up a single night let alone a week, a month, a year. As it turns out he will be away for six years.

We all knew my brother was involved in some heavy stuff but nobody could have prepared us for the extent of his crimes and the realisation that he was actually looking at a life sentence.

For the first week I was sick with worry. How is he coping? Is he cold? Is he hungry? Is he being bullied? It is all you can think about besides how are we gonna get him *out of there!!*

Those first few months can only be described as horrendous. We had a run of failed bail attempts which were soul destroying. My whole family were summoned to present the backdrop of a loving family in the hope it would have some effect on the judge when he was deciding whether my brother could come home, or not.

He was in HMP Birmingham which is probably one of the worst prisons in the country. We bombed down the M6 three times a week. The pressure was compounded by the fact that my brother demanded we were first through the visitors' gate. This entailed leaving home at the crack of dawn and entering into a huge bun fight once at the prison because everyone wants that all important first ticket. We would have to stand in the freezing cold for an hour and I nearly came to blows on several occasions.

Needless to say resentment soon set in. The stress for my parents was immense. It really knocked the stuffing out of them. My mum would talk about the agony of having a son and not being able to reach him. She would say, "you can't imagine what it is like to have a child and you can't get to him if he needs you and he can't get to you."

I was angry. How dare he put us in this position? how dare he upset the lives of his children when they need him? We were all pussy footing around him as though he had the raw deal.

You will hear time and again that it is not just the prisoner who is doing the time but the family too. In many ways it is much harder for the family – they have to struggle to get money together not only to help his wife and children, but for all of his needs - phone credit, clothes, visits and so on. All my brother has to think about is killing time.

Once the trial was over and he had been sentenced my sisters and I went to see him and let him know how much he had hurt us all. It was like a freak show. We were in the middle of the visits hall, four siblings all screaming and crying at each other and the next minute hugging!

The visit was shocking but it felt good to air our views. He is not changing as fast as we would like but he did hear what we had to say.

If I'm honest I think prison is the best place for him right now, not only was he doing bad things, his life was in danger. I hope he will see the light and take all that prison can offer him and help him turn his life around. But there is a danger that he will hook up with a new crowd of crims and the circle will continue.

I love my brother dearly but I don't think I could go through this again.

“ We were in the middle of the visits hall, four siblings all screaming and crying at each other... ”

THE WAY WE WERE

Stephen Shaw, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, applauds the radical proposals for prisoners' families in the 1991 Woolf Report

The Woolf Report is widely and rightly regarded as the most significant analysis of the state of the prisons to have been published in the last hundred years. I was present at each of the seminars the authors, Lord Woolf and Sir Stephen Tumim, held during the autumn of 1990 to inform their findings, and I had a real sense of watching history in the making. Happy days indeed.

The role of family in helping prisoners through their sentence and ensuring successful resettlement on release was at the heart of Woolf's thinking. Perhaps the most important proposal in the whole report (and it runs to nearly 600 pages) was that prisoners should be held close to family and friends in so-called 'community prisons'. It is an odd term if you think about it – the whole point of a prison is to keep people apart from the community. But the idea was a sound one: you don't equip prisoners for a crime-free life on release if you take them far from their homes, make it impossible for friends to visit, and break up their relationships with loved ones.

Thus, many of the other recommendations in the Woolf Report were designed to enhance family ties. Existing visits rooms were judged "tawdry, uncomfortable, cramped and oppressive" and Woolf said they should be better decorated, have more comfortable furnishings, and somewhere for the children to play. Indeed, children should be allowed to visit for much longer outside the normal visits periods. The Report also gave a strong push for visitors' centres. Such centres were not just somewhere to keep dry while you waited to be allowed into the prison. They should be properly furnished and "have facilities for addressing social and welfare problems".

Other parts of the Woolf Report reflect the state of the prisons at the time. Censorship of letters had already been reduced, but Woolf went further and said no prisoner's mail should be censored "except on reasonable suspicion

that they may contain objectionable material, or if the prisoner is placed in category A". Likewise, payphones were already installed in open and category C prisons, but Woolf wanted all prisoners to be able to use the telephone as a way of staying in touch.

Perhaps the only recommendation that read rather oddly at the time, and still does today, is that relating to conjugal visits:

"We propose that the Prison Service should make provision for private family visits, initially, at least, for prisoners serving long prison sentences who are not eligible for home leave."

Perhaps it's me getting old, but I no longer hear much talk about conjugal visits – and politically they are completely beyond the pale. In any event, I have never thought the idea was very respectful of prisoners' partners – nor am I a great fan of children being conceived behind bars.

Looking back, much of what Woolf wrote is a reminder of just how woefully prisoners' families were once treated: left standing in the rain before being herded into smoke-filled visits rooms; their needs either ignored – or treated with disrespect. But of course not everything is rosy now. Searching may be necessary to prevent drug smuggling – but it has become much more obtrusive, and is often greatly resented for that reason. Many booked visits telephone lines still ring unanswered. And I suspect many prisoners are held even further away from their homes now than was the case when Woolf reported in 1991.

No current jail can really be described as a community prison. But looking at the way things were pre-Woolf, can there be any doubt as to the hugely beneficial impact the Woolf Report has had?



Stephen Shaw will be stepping down at the end of April following his appointment as the inaugural Chief Executive of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator.