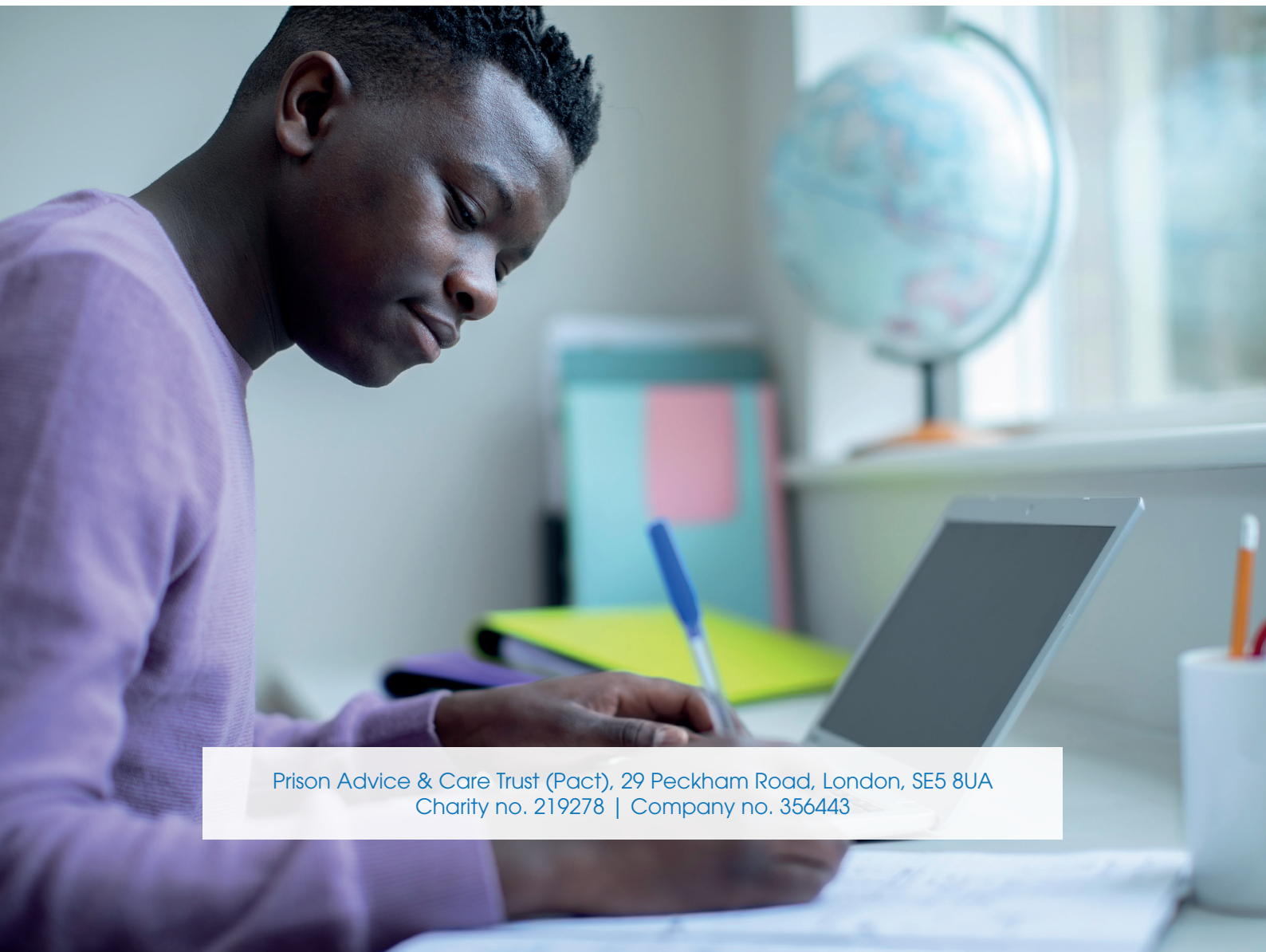




Children affected by imprisonment

Schools Toolkit - Secondary



Prison Advice & Care Trust (Pact), 29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA
Charity no. 219278 | Company no. 356443

Around 100,000 children and young people have a parent in prison on any given day in England and Wales. There is no statutory recording of children impacted when someone they love, including a parent, is sent to prison. Estimates for the number of children affected by parental imprisonment in the UK in a year vary, with the most recent being as high as 312,000. These children have never found their way into being adequately represented in government policy.

Every day, there are children in the UK who wake up and go to school after having their homes raided or witnessing their parents arrested.

Every day, some children sit in class worrying about the outcome of a day in court and whether or not their loved one will be there when they get home.

Every day, there are children missing school to go and visit someone they love in prison.

Every day, children have to leave their family home to go to kinship or foster care while their parents are in prison. This can often mean changing schools – affecting their routines, friendships and relationships with teachers and other trusted adults. Due to social stigma, some children may keep secrets about where mum or dad are.

At Pact, we believe these children and young people deserve to be heard. This toolkit aims to support teachers in empowering children and young people to overcome the stigma, shame, and embarrassment surrounding familial imprisonment while supporting the Welsh curriculum's four purposes and supporting students in becoming ethically informed citizens.

The toolkit contains:

- PSHE Lesson Plans from ages 11 to 16.
- An animated short film to support lesson plans for older children. It shows the journey of a child and young person as they see their mum arrested, sent to prison, and then released.
- A school policy framework.
- A discussion slide deck for use during form time over the course of a week.
- A six-week session plan for schools to run their own young person's peer support group for children affected by imprisonment.

We are calling on school practitioners to use these lesson plans to introduce the topic of imprisonment to all children.

We believe these resources will:

- Give practitioners the confidence to talk about imprisonment.
- Create space for a whole class to discuss who might be affected by imprisonment and how.
- Ensure children who are affected know that family imprisonment is not a shameful subject, and some people want to listen to how they feel.
- Allow students to understand, empathise and find ways to support their peers affected by imprisonment.

Safeguarding children and young people

Children experience the loss of a parent or loved one to imprisonment in different ways. Some may have been aware of the criminal activity or behaviour. Some may have witnessed a traumatic arrest. Some may have been shielded from arrests and court proceedings and only told once the person was sentenced. Feelings of grief, guilt and shame are common, as are relief.

When talking about imprisonment in your classroom or setting, you may be aware of children or young people affected. In this case, it is advisable to prepare the child or young person for the lesson in advance so they can decide whether they feel ready to participate and make a plan for them in case they need to leave the room. You can discuss with them how they might like to be supported afterwards and who they feel it is best to do this. For young children and Early Years, circle time activities can be one-to-one if preferred.

Children's level of understanding can differ by age and emotional maturity, depending on what they know about the situation. Some parents or carers may choose not to fully explain where the loved one is or why they are there. With younger children you know are affected by imprisonment, it is helpful to speak to the parent or carer to find out what level of knowledge the child has to avoid contradicting what they have been told at home.

Due to the stigma and shame around imprisonment, it is also quite possible that you do not know everyone in your class who is affected. Having a teaching assistant or other support staff member in the classroom with you may be helpful in case a child becomes distressed and needs support. Make space following the lesson for anyone who may need to talk further.

For follow-up one-to-one sessions, there is a board game or jigsaw, which can be used as a talking tool to encourage children and young people to talk about visiting prison and, in turn, open up about how imprisonment impacts them.

Further resources for discussion and support

- Pact's website offers a range of videos, animations and access to our book 'Locked Out: helping children cope with the imprisonment of a loved one' - www.prisonadvice.org.uk
- The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) website is a resource directory for families and professionals - www.nicco.org.uk
- Prisoner Families Helpline and website:
 - 0808 808 2003 (freephone, including most mobiles)
 - The website includes videos for families showing realities of life in UK prisons - www.prisonersfamilies.org

For further advice and training, please contact us at cyp@prisonadvice.org.uk

We are grateful to Porticus for their generous support for the Routes 2 Change Programme, and to HMP Brixton, HMP YO1 Isis, and the London Prisons Group Directorate, for making this work possible.

Thank you to Jo Ebrey, Ysgol Bryn Alyn; Jacquie O'Toole, Gwersyllt CP School; and June, Cheryl, Bobbi-Jo and all the team at London Early Years Foundation (LEYF).



Who is affected by imprisonment?

PSHE Lesson Plan | 11 - 14 Years

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Learning outcomes

- Students will consider how they would feel if someone they loved went to prison, including the questions they would have and what their worries would be.
- They will identify how those worries might translate into behaviour.
- They will identify how they could support a friend going through this experience.
- Students will consider whether information on the internet or social media can be relied on and where to find factual information about complex issues from trusted adults.
- Students will develop awareness about the “hidden victims” of crime, including children affected by their family member’s imprisonment.

Teacher guidance

The videos and conversations in this session cover themes of imprisonment, loss and family trauma. Please consider children for whom this may be a current or recent issue and how you will manage this. If a child is affected by imprisonment, you may not know. Offer an opportunity for any young person to speak to someone one-on-one after the session.



Resources

- Video: 'Zac's Story'
- Flipchart and pens or smartboard
- Worksheet: feelings and behaviours

Activity 1 - setting the scene

Ask the class what words they think of when they think about prison. Write these on the board. Then, ask where their impressions of prison come from (TV, films, books, music etc)

Activity 2 - Zac's Story

Watch 'Zac's Story' until 'sentence'.

Discuss what has happened so far.

Ask, "What questions might Zac have about his mum, her offence and prison?" Write these on the board.

Then discuss the following:

- Why do you think Grandma isn't answering his questions?
- What are the potential dangers of searching online for the prison his mum has gone to?
- Can we trust the things we read online?
- Where could Zac turn to have his questions answered? (Include key figures in school)

Activity 3 - Zac's emotions

Watch the video from start to finish again. Ask the class to consider how Zac might be feeling and how that might show in his behaviour.

Complete the worksheet in pairs.

Activity 4 - Being a friend

Imagine Zac is your friend. Write him an email to show him you support him. Try to include the following:

- How you think he might be feeling
- Where he could go to get truthful advice and answers to his questions
- Who could he talk to
- How you can support him

Recap/Close

Show the class Pact's online resources so they know where to find more information. Identify who they can talk to in school if anything discussed today has affected them.



Worksheet - feelings and behaviours

What Happened?	How might Zac be feeling?	How would that show in his behaviour?
Zac saw his mum being arrested	Panicked, scared, upset, angry	Crying, shouting, aggression
Zac's grandma tells him not to tell anyone	Ashamed, embarrassed, worried	
People at school are whispering about his mum		
Seeing stories on the internet about his mum's court case		
Going to visit the prison		
Listening to Mum and Grandma argue		
Waiting for Mum on release		



Who is affected by imprisonment?

PSHE Lesson Plan | 14 - 16 Years



Learning outcomes

- Students will develop awareness about the “hidden victims” of crime, including children affected by their family member’s imprisonment.
- Students will be able to discuss and challenge the stigma attached to imprisonment critically and reflect that family members of people in prison are innocent and may require additional support.
- Students will consider if and when imprisonment is a just punishment and consider whether a person who has committed an offence can also be a victim.
- Students will reflect on the role of media and social media in the criminal justice system.

Teacher guidance

The videos and conversations in this session cover themes of imprisonment, loss and family trauma. Please consider young people for whom this may be a current or recent issue and how you will manage this. If a young person is affected by imprisonment, you may not know. Offer an opportunity for any young person to speak to someone one-on-one after the session.



Resources

- 'Stages of the criminal justice system' cut-outs
- Video: 'Zac's Story'
- Flipchart and pens or smartboard
- News article and Worksheet: The Daily News

Activity 1 - setting the scene

Put the class into groups of three or four. Give each group a set of the 'Stages of the criminal justice system' cut-outs. Ask them to put them in the order they think they take place, then show the correct order. Additionally, you can show the journey through the criminal justice system using Pact's video: 'A Journey into Prison'.

Activity 2 - Zac's Story

Watch the video, then repeat, but pause it at each criminal justice stage to ask the group to identify what they see happening and discuss the impact on those involved and how they might feel.

Additional discussion questions:

- Why does Grandma want Zac to keep things a secret?
- What impact will the house move have had on Zac and his sister?
- Zac has taken on a caring role for his sister; how do you think that makes him feel?
- How do you think Zac felt after the prison visit?
- Grandma doesn't want Zac's school to know what is happening. How would the teachers or his friends help Zac if they knew?
- When Zac's mum leaves prison, we are unsure what will happen. What support do you think the family need?
- How you can support him?

Activity 3 - the internet and social media

This activity can be done as a pair discussion or a written task.

What role has the internet and social media played in this story and how has it impacted Zac?

Activity 4 - the news

Give out the news story handout. Encourage the young people to read each version and pause before reading the next. Once they have them all, ask them to answer the following questions in writing or pairs.

- How did your feelings change as you were given more information?
- How do you feel about the case now?
- Do you believe the woman in this case should go to prison? If not, what do you think would be a better alternative?

Recap/Close

Show the class the resources worksheet (or the sites online) so they know where to find more information. Identify who they can talk to in school if anything discussed today has affected them.



Stages of the criminal justice system

Cut out and mix up - allow students to order

Arrest

Court (initial hearing)

Remand or bail

Court (trial)

Court (sentencing)

Imprisonment

Resettlement planning

Release

Licence / supervision in the community

The Daily News

1. A woman with a history of offending was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing.

2. A young woman with previous convictions for theft was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing food items from a shop.

3. A young mother with previous convictions for theft was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing baby formula from a large supermarket.

4. A young mother of two small children and a baby, who had previously been in court for shoplifting, was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing baby milk from Tesco. Her solicitor argued that the rising cost of food and utilities had pushed the mother to steal out of desperation.

5. A young mother of two small children and a baby, who had previously been in court for shoplifting, was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing baby milk from Tesco. Her solicitor argued that the rising cost of food and utilities had pushed the mother to steal repeatedly out of desperation. The court heard evidence that the defendant had been to the foodbank that morning asking for support, but they had run out of baby formula. The food bank manager, giving evidence as a witness for the defence, said that the young mother was a regular at the foodbank, engaged well with the support offered, and had completed budgeting courses with them.

6. A young mother of two small children and a baby, who had previously been in court for shoplifting, was sentenced to six months in prison today for stealing baby milk from Tesco. Her solicitor argued that the rising cost of food and utilities had pushed the mother to steal out of desperation. The court heard evidence that the defendant had been to the foodbank that morning asking for support, but they had run out of baby formula.

The food bank manager, giving evidence as a witness for the defence, said that the young mother was a regular at the foodbank, engaged well with the support offered, and had completed budgeting courses with them. The court heard that the young mother had experienced benefit delays through no fault of her own and had been left in an impossible situation.

The judge said although he “felt saddened by the case, due to the number of previous shoplifting offences, he was left no choice but to apply the law”.

Worksheet - The Daily News

Write your thoughts below after a discussion with your partner:

1. How did your feelings change as you were given more information?

2. How do you feel about the case now?

3. Do you believe the woman should go to prison? If not, what do you think would be a better alternative?