

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN OF IMPRISONED PARENTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Department of Communities and Justice

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The Hon Matthew Mason-Cox, MLC
Chair
Committee on Children and Young People
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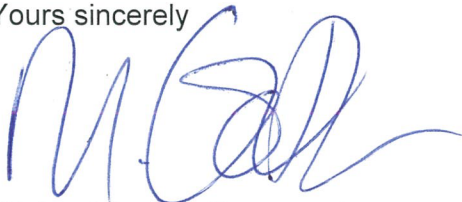
Dear Mr Mason-Cox

Inquiry into the Support for the children of imprisoned parents in New South Wales

Please find attached a Department of Communities and Justice submission to the Committee on Children and Young People Inquiry.

If you would like more information, please contact [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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Yours sincerely



Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary

- 3 MAR 2020

Department of Communities and Justice Submission to the Committee on Children and Young People's Inquiry into the support for the children of imprisoned parents in NSW

The Department of Communities and Justice (**DCJ**) acknowledges that supporting young and adult offenders to maintain relationships with families and friends can contribute to their successful reintegration into community life. DCJ recognises separation through incarceration can put enormous strain on family relationships that may already be under social and economic pressure.

Within DCJ, Corrective Services NSW (**CSNSW**) and Youth Justice NSW (**YJNSW**) are responsible for administering sentences and legal orders through custodial and community-based management of offenders. Child Protection and Permanency (former Family and Community Services), is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and protecting them from risk of harm, abuse and neglect.

Both CSNSW and YJNSW are downstream agencies within the Stronger Communities cluster and must deliver services against a background where support for family relationships is balanced with the need for safety, welfare and the well-being of children and young people, other family members and the community at large.

This submission outlines existing CSNSW and YJNSW policies and services that support the children of imprisoned parents, as well as Child Protection and Permanency policies and services that intersect with this space.

DCJ recognises that children can be the silent victims of a parent's sentence.

The creation of the Stronger Communities Cluster provides opportunities for cross cluster support and services to people transitioning from prison and better support in court for people on remand, particularly women with children.

The Premier's Priorities such as Reducing Recidivism and Reducing Domestic Violence Reoffending will support further initiatives which may have a positive impact on children of imprisoned parents.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW

Overview of CSNSW Services to Families of Inmates and Offenders

CSNSW provides a number of services to families of inmates in correctional centres and families of offenders in the community.

For inmates in correctional centres, CSNSW facilitates contact via mail, visits, telephone and/or video link. CSNSW may also provide travel and accommodation assistance to family members who want to visit an inmate. When offenders are under supervision in the community, their family environment is the context within which much of this supervision occurs.

Recent CSNSW initiatives, including the implementation of Case Management Units and High Intensity Program Units in correctional centres, share a common objective of reducing reoffending. Importantly, these reforms are also providing greater opportunities for offenders to improve their relationships with family and friends.

CSNSW also funds non-government organisations to provide direct support for families of inmates and advice on how to navigate the justice system.

Meaningful contact between offenders and their families has a range of benefits:

- An inmate's pro-social support network is critical in helping the inmate stay connected with family and friends and assist with their transition from custody to the community,
- Regular contact with children and family members decreases stress for inmates resulting in better management outcomes for correctional centres.
- Helps children to maintain a connection with their parent.

Data on Inmate Parents and Children

Inmate Screening Questionnaire

The Inmate Screening Questionnaire (**ISQ**) asks a series of questions upon reception to custody relating to children. It is important to note that all responses are self-reported on reception and often require clarification and/or verification with Child Protection and Permanency.

The statistics shown in Table 1 and Table 2 are based on the inmate population entering NSW prison custody as new receptions during the 2019 calendar year and who also answered the ISQ relating to whether the inmate is a parent or guardian to children up to 18 years of age.

Of the women imprisoned during 2019 (and their ISQ/parent-guardian status is shown), almost 30 per cent of women had dependent children under 5 years of age (29.7%) and over 60 percent of women had dependent children up to 10 years of age (62.1%).

Table 1: Number of imprisoned parents with children (up to 18 years old) in CSNSW during 2019

Gender	Number of Inmate with children	Percentage of Inmate with children	Inmate population*
Female	1158	61.6%	1881
Male	4734	50.8%	9322
Total	5892	52.6%	11203

Note: * Inmate population was counted on the number of offenders entered into CSNSW and answered the ISQ in 2019.

Table 2: Number of imprisoned women with dependent children in CSNSW during 2019

	Number	Percentage of female inmate population
With children under 5	558	29.7%
With children 6 - 10 years	609	32.4%
With children 11 - 15 years	498	26.5%
With children 16 up to 18 years	245	13.0%

Note: * One inmate may have children in multiple ages.

Children and Families of Offenders Steering Committee

The CSNSW Children and Families of Offenders Steering Committee (**CFOSC**) aims to achieve better outcomes for children and families of offenders by addressing issues and concerns that have been raised by staff, families, and friends. The CFOSC draws support from all sections of CSNSW which are directly involved in service delivery to visitors in correctional centres.

CFOSC was established to:

- be a focal point for policy and project co-ordination for services regarding contact between people under CSNSW supervision/duty of care and their families;
- liaise with community agencies interested in the well-being of families and children of offenders in the development of practical solutions;
- provide expert advice to the CSNSW Executive to inform decisions; and
- offer information to staff and members of the public, raising awareness of the importance of the relationship between offenders and their families and communities.

The CFOSC meets every two months and is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner. Its membership includes external stakeholders such as the Chief Executive Officer SHINE For Kids and the Executive Officer, Community Restorative Centre.

2018-2021 Family Matters Strategy

One of the priority areas in the 2018-2021 CSNSW Family Matters Strategy is supporting parents and children. The Strategy highlights the need to address factors that relate to intergenerational incarceration and provide practical opportunities for incarcerated parents to be positively involved in their children's lives.

The Women's Advisory Council

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) works to improve the outcomes and experience of women in all stages of the criminal justice system – in custody and in the community, including those at risk of entering the system.

The objectives of the WAC are to devise strategies, provide advice and advocacy to:

- reduce incarceration and recidivism rates, particularly for Aboriginal women;
- influence and promote the interests of women offenders;
- improve health and wellbeing of women in the criminal justice system, especially vulnerable populations such as those with disabilities;
- increase housing and social supports to women exiting the criminal justice system; and
- change community attitudes by raising awareness of the social determinants of women in the criminal justice system.

The WAC has listed women with children as a special interest topic for the 2020 work plan and are in the process of identifying ways to improve outcomes for this cohort.

The WAC meets bi-monthly and the secretariat is managed by the Principal Advisor Women Offenders.

Forums on Women as Parents

CSNSW recently hosted two forums, with representatives from across the government, non-government and academic sector, to examine the current landscape for women in custody who have children. The overall aim of these forums was to inform and shape future policy and practice, as well as improve outcomes for women and children impacted by the criminal justice system.

Visits to Correctional Centres

CSNSW recognises that visits to inmates in correctional centres are important to strengthen and maintain family and other personal relationships. CSNSW is committed to providing child and family friendly visits areas, facilitating regular visits of families to

correctional centres, and where possible, providing access to video conferencing facilities to enable meaningful contact between inmates and their families and friends.

Similarly, contact with parents is both an important part of a child's development and an integral part in the parent's rehabilitation. CSNSW aims to ensure that where it is in the best interest of the child, visits will be facilitated between children and their parents in NSW correctional centres.

In providing family and children's visitor support services, CSNSW understand the challenges some families may encounter with making arrangements to visit an inmate. This may include travel or financial difficulties. Families and friends of inmates who experience financial or travel difficulties are advised of the Community Restorative Centre (**CRC**), which has been funded to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants.

Information is available on the CSNSW website about visiting times, booking details, public transport details and conditions for visits at each correctional centre. Other online resources include:

- A booklet developed by CSNSW and the CRC: *The Families Handbook – A Guide for Families and Friends of Prisoners*.
- A *Visiting a Correctional Centre* Booklet which is available in Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese.
- A *Visiting an Inmate* Fact Sheet about the visiting process.

The CSNSW Visits App provides useful information about visiting correctional centres, including phone numbers, addresses (linked to maps), transport options, visiting times and conditions and other relevant information. The App is also available in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Child Visiting Days

In addition to ordinary visiting hours, centres have special child visit days to help enhance the parent/child relationship. Each centre has its own child visit schedule and inmates are given the details of those as they arrive at the centre via induction material so they can inform their families and the carers of their children.

Emu Plains Correctional Centre Repurposing

The planned repurposing of Emu Plains Correctional Centre with a primary focus on the Mothers and Children's Program (see the Parenting Program section of this submission for more information) will mean greater opportunities for enhancement of the relationships already established within DCJ.

Court Ordered Contact Visits

CSNSW and Child Protection and Permanency work in partnership to facilitate access where there are Court Ordered Contact arrangements in place.

Custodial Corrections Operations Policy and Procedures

CSNSW is currently developing a number of policies and procedures relating to the management of female inmates in custody. These policies will include information regarding the mothers and children's program, as well as managing pregnant women in custody.

The Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures (COPP) manual contains the following policies of relevance to children of incarcerated parents:

10.11 Managing child visitors

This section outlines CSNSW's aim to provide appropriate visiting facilities for children to maintain positive contact with adults who they have a significant relationship with that are currently in CSNSW custody. This includes policy and procedures for general visiting arrangements, as well as policy regarding child-parent activity days that are facilitated by SHINE for kids.

The policy also outlines CSNSW's responsibility for the safety of visitors under 18 years of age and our requirement to ensure that children are not placed at risk of harm when they visit a correctional centre. This includes procedures regarding child-contact assessments and restrictions applied, where required.

21.10 Child protection

This section outlines CSNSW policy regarding our shared responsibility for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people including reporting obligations where possible Risk of Significant Harm issues are identified by staff.

Private Operators of NSW Correctional Centres

CSNSW's recognition and ongoing commitment to support family and children of imprisoned parents is reflected in the contracts with the private operators of Parklea Correctional Centre, Junee Correctional Centre and the new Clarence Correctional Centre (operational from mid-2020). There is a requirement that these operators comply with the relevant CSNSW COPP and provide appropriate services in visits for children.

The design of the new Clarence Correctional Centre incorporates ten video conferencing booths (in addition to the nine private, secure court audio-visual link conferencing booths) to help inmates maintain links to family and community if distance, lack of funds, disability or other factors inhibit contact.

Funded Partnership Initiative

The CSNSW Funded Partnership Initiative (FPI) was established in September 2014 to provide funding to not-for-profit, non-government organisations to deliver a range of services in three main areas: Transitional Support, Offenders' Children and Family, and Victim Support.

Family, Friends and Children's Visitor Support Service

The Family, Friends and Children's Visitor Support Service operates three days per week at the following metropolitan and regional correctional centres:

- Silverwater Correctional Complex
- John Morony Correctional Complex
- Long Bay Correctional Complex In reach Services
- Bathurst Correctional Centre
- Cessnock Correctional Centre
- Goulburn Correctional Centre
- Mid North Coast Correctional Centre*
- South Coast Correctional Centre
- Wellington Correctional Centre

*SHINE for Kids "A program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents inside" is specifically available in Mid North Coast Correctional Centre.

Children are also supported during inmate-parent visits. Up to 26 Child/Parent Activity Days are facilitated per annum, which enable children to have a higher quality visit with the inmate-parent.

The organisation funded to provide this service is SHINE for Kids, a community organisation providing services for families and in particular children who have a parent in custody.

Contact Coordination and Support Service

The Contact Coordination and Support Service is a flexible and responsive service to assist people in maintaining contact with a loved one in custody, including providing financial assistance via brokerage funds. Family casework and referral services are also funded.

The CRC is funded to provide this service.

CSNSW Child Protection Coordination and Support Unit

Child Contact Assessment Policy

CSNSW acknowledges that the best interests of children can be prioritised when a loved one is in custody, provided this can be done safely. However, if an offender has offended against a child, CSNSW must balance the need to maintain positive relationships with the need to protect a child from risk of harm. This is particularly important when children are visiting inmates in correctional centres.

The Child Contact Assessment Policy (**CCAP**) requires inmates who have current or prior child-related offences, or those currently on remand for child-related offences, to be assessed prior to receiving visits with children.

Identifying child related offenders

Inmates are identified as child related offenders at the point of custodial intake. At this time the offender is asked if they would like to complete an application to be assessed for child visits under the CCAP. The completed CCAP forms are forwarded to the Child Protection Coordination and Support Unit (**CPCSU**) for processing.

Child related offenders that will be subject to the CCAP are those who are or have been charged, convicted or subject to any of the following:

- a sexual or sexually motivated offence against a person aged under 18 years (including offences related to child abuse material, child prostitution and offences with an intent to commit a sexual offence against a child);
- violent offence/s against a person aged under 18 years;
- an intent to commit a violent offence against a child;
- abuse or neglect against a person under the age of 18 years;
- significant domestic violence in the presence of a child;
- prior conviction/s for child related offence/s; and
- anyone who is a registrable person in accordance with the *Child Protection (Offender Registration) Act 2000*.

The CCAP assessment process

The CPCSU is responsible for the CCAP assessment process. The CCAP assessment process involves gathering relevant information (from CSNSW records, Child Protection and Permanency, NSW Police Force and the Courts); conducting a phone interview with the carer; and preparing an assessment report with a recommendation to either approve or decline child visits. The assessment report is prepared by a Child Protection Coordinator and a decision is made by the CPCSU Manager.

The relevant information from government agencies informs a child focused decision regarding child visits to an inmate. CSNSW records provide information regarding the inmate's offences and participation in rehabilitation programs, as well as whether there is an Apprehended Violence Order in place or any additional offences committed whilst in custody.

DCJ records provide information regarding relevant child protection concerns, including if the inmate or carer are known as a person causing harm (to children) or if the children are currently or have recently been the subject of a child protection case plan. Records from NSW Police Force and the Courts provide context to the inmate's offending behaviour with regards to harm caused to children.

A phone interview with the carer (parent/guardian of the children) is conducted to ascertain their awareness and knowledge of the nature of the inmate's child related offences. In order to provide adequate supervision of the children during the visits, the accompanying adult must be able to demonstrate some awareness of the child-related offences and be able to take necessary steps to reduce any risk to the child.

Factors supporting a decision to approve child visits include: a longstanding and strong bond between the inmate and the child; the wishes of the child to visit the inmate; and the capacity of the carer both to understand the needs of the child and act to protect the child as needed.

Where the CCAP assessment raises significant child protection concerns for the child if visiting the inmate, the application is declined. Factors supporting a decision to decline child visits include: where the inmate is convicted of child sexual assault and the applicant children are in the offender's victim target group (same gender, age and type of relationship); and where the carer is not able to demonstrate awareness of the child related offences and the impact on the child.

Where DCJ or an out-of-home-care agency are actively working with the family and are able to provide a recommendation regarding child visits, their input is given significant weighting in the decision making process.

Where a CCAP application for child visits is declined, the inmate is provided with a letter detailing the reasons for the decision and the process for requesting a review. If the inmate would like to request a review of the decision they are required to write to the CPCSU addressing the child protection concerns detailed in the letter.

A review involves convening a panel with a Forensic Psychologist to discuss the specific case, consider the issues and make a decision regarding approval or decline of child visits.

If the application is again declined, the inmate has an additional avenue of appeal where the application is considered and a final decision made by a designated Director within CSNSW.

CSNSW Parenting Programs

CSNSW parenting programs are designed to build and improve the parenting skills of inmates and the relationship between parents and children during the period of incarceration. These programs focus on enhancing parents' understanding of the development needs of their child, communication skills as well as promoting self-confidence.

Research suggests that improving parenting skills and promoting more positive relationships between inmates and children can reduce risks associated with reoffending. Evidence has also shown that active participation in parenting can be a strong motivator for change in male offenders.

Mothers and Children's Program

The Corrective Services NSW Mothers and Children's Program at Emu Plains Correctional Centre offers a range of options to eligible women who wish to assume an active parenting role while serving a custodial sentence. Eligible women can have their children reside with them full-time up to 6 years old (school age) and on an occasional basis (weekends and school holidays) up to 12 years of age.

The purpose of the Program is to reduce the impact of maternal incarceration on dependent children by maintaining continuity of care and relationship maintenance. It works to foster the mother-and-child relationship and to break the intergenerational cycle of crime, while developing the mother's pro-social skills that contribute to reducing reoffending.

Under the Program, women can access all programs and services available within the main Correctional Centre, as well as participating in Program-specific activities facilitated in-house and in the community. Examples include: Area Health Services (internal baby clinic), Wesley Family Support Services and Playgroup, Parent Infant Family Playgroup and Mothers group.

Children access all medical care in mainstream public and private health care provider settings, attend community pre-school, swimming lessons, kindy gym PCYC and participate in routine excursions and activities such as supermarket shopping, outings to local parks, cinema and library.

Referrals are generated using data captured electronically at key points in the reception process as well as a dedicated electronic referral and more informal methods from internal and external sources by email or phone contact. The multilayered and flexible pathways ensures referrals are generated for all women eligible to apply at the earliest opportunity.

The Mothers and Children's Placement Committee reviews applications for recommendation of placement to be determined by the Commissioner. This Committee continuously monitors and balances the interests of child with the requirements of the mother to meet rehabilitation requirements, as well as the correctional centre routine, safety and security.

In comparison to other Australian and International jurisdictions, the Mothers and Children's Program maintains children with their mothers until transition to school rather than transition at a determinate number of weeks or months (as this can have a significant impact on attachment to the primary care giver).

Additionally, the occasional residence program incorporates extended and overnight stays every weekend and for the duration of school holidays and includes a schedule of in-house and external activities for school holidays. Share care arrangements for pre-school aged children can also be customised to individual family circumstances.

Caring and Working Program – Work Readiness for Aboriginal Mothers

The Caring and Working Program works with Aboriginal mothers in custody to prepare them for release, and provide them with job readiness skills. Women on the program may reside at the Mothers and Children's Program or participate in the program while their children are cared for in the community.

Parramatta Transitional Centre

The Parramatta Transitional Centre provides support for women who are serving longer sentences and preparing for release. Women are supported in their transition back into the community through access to courses, education, medical appointments and works release. Women applying for and who are eligible can also have their children reside with them at the centre while they transition back into the community following a period in custody.

Mothering at a Distance

Mothering at a Distance (MAAD) is an educational program that was written as a joint initiative between CSNSW and the Tresillian Family Care centres, Mothers and Children Program and the National Crime Prevention Program. MAAD is provided under the "Their Futures Matter" reforms.

MAAD aims to enhance the mother-and-child relationship, increase the participant's maternal sensitivity and reduce trauma during separation caused by incarceration.

MAAD aims to break the intergenerational cycle of crime by:

- enhancing the mother-and-child relationship,
- increasing the mother's ability to reflect on their own and their infants' behaviours, thoughts and feelings in regard to attachment,
- building on maternal strengths,
- increasing the mother's knowledge and skills to care for her infant,
- enhancing the positive impact of the mother's current caregiving patterns, and
- reducing negative (punitive) parenting practices.

The program sessions cover the following topics: Celebrating children, Parenting strengths, Impacts of safety, Building stronger connections, Limits Setting, Discipline, Craft activities, and Self-reliance strategies.

CSNSW recently developed Mini Mothering at a Distance which can be delivered to women on remand, during shorter stays in custody.

Dads and Family (Aboriginal Babiin-Miyagang) Program

The Dads and Family (Aboriginal Babiin-Miyagang) Program is for Aboriginal men only. It aims to help participants to:

- understand the changing role of Aboriginal dads in society,
- understand kids' needs and how dads can take care of their kids,
- understand grief, loss and anger (for the child, the dad and the mum),
- develop new communication skills necessary for improved relationships,
- understand the needs of the kids' mum and form more supportive ways of managing kids' issues,
- develop new coping skills for dealing with life's stress,
- develop new child management skills (both in families that live together and apart), and
- recognise ways Aboriginal dads can protect their kids.

Victims Services Counselling

Approved Counselling Services are funded and managed by Victims Services and delivered across all correctional centres where women are housed (with the exception of Bathurst and Broken Hill Correctional Centres).

Independent trained counsellors provide free counselling sessions for women while in custody if they have been a primary or secondary victim of violent crime in NSW.

Women are eligible for 20 sessions per incident and their treatment can continue in the community.

YOUTH JUSTICE NSW

Prevalence of young people in Youth Justice who are parents

The 2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey (YPICHS)¹ stated that 11% of survey participants (22 males; 1 female) were a parent prior to entering youth custody. In the majority (75%) of cases, participants had one child only. The average age at which participants first had a child was 16.1 years (range: 14–18 years).

Participants and/or their partners were usually the primary carer(s) for their children before detention (79.2%), while their partners were most commonly the primary carer (75.0%) during the participant's time in detention.

Prevalence of young people in Youth Justice with incarcerated parents

The 2015 YPICHHS found that 54% of the young people surveyed reported that at least one of their parents (i.e. mother, father or step-parent) had been incarcerated in the past, and 7.1% stated that both parents had been incarcerated.

Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to have a parent that had been in prison (67% vs 37%).

Supporting young people in Youth Justice who identify as Aboriginal

The Youth Justice Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2018-2022 aims to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal young people in contact with Youth Justice, their families and communities and to break the cycle of reoffending and over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

As part of the plan YJNSW has increased Aboriginal recruitment in identified roles and promoted a renewed focus on connecting Aboriginal young people with culture and identify, including greater Aboriginal specific program development.

Youth Justice Personal Visits and Contact Policy

The Youth Justice Personal Visits and Contact Policy provides a framework for the facilitation, management and supervision of personal visits at a Youth Justice Centre and/or a Youth Justice Community Office, including visits conducted via Audio Visual Link (AVL).

Young people involved in the criminal justice system are some of the most disadvantaged and at-risk people in the community. They frequently present with multiple risk factors including, mental health concerns, abuse, disabilities, family violence, socio-economic disadvantage, geographical separation from their families and poor levels of education. Parents, family members, kinship ties or community

¹ 2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey: Full Report, Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network and Juvenile Justice NSW.

support networks provide significant protective factors emotionally and socially for young people.

These protective factors can reduce the sense of isolation, reduce symptoms of depression, and maintain emotional wellbeing, particularly while in custody. YJNSW visits system and processes aim to be flexible, visitor-friendly and allow for relaxed communication.

Proactive steps are taken by YJNSW to enhance contact between young people and family or significant others as appropriate and required.

The financial and or geographical hardships for some families to visit Youth Justice Centres are considered and proactive measures are taken to increase visitors for young people. Financial assistance must be offered for travel and accommodation at least once every three months for family or significant others.

Information regarding financial assistance for families to visit must be readily available, and details must be included in the admission letter, sent to family or significant others at the time of the young person's admission.

Visits may take place between a young person and family via AVL technology located at a Youth Justice Community Office and Youth Justice Centre. YJNSW visits processes must be flexible, visitor-friendly and allow for relaxed communication.

Young people under the age of 16 who are visiting the centre must always be supervised by a carer. However, a young person under the age of 16 can be approved for independent visit contact, if they can show they legally live independently from parents or carers. Therefore the occurrence of visits by children of young parents in custody usually relies on the carer facilitating the visit.

Parenting programs

In recognition of the needs of parents in the Youth Justice system, YJNSW provides funding to Karitane to deliver the "Family Matters" program at Reiby Youth Justice Centre for both girls and boys at the Centre and is available to those who also have an interest in parenting.

This program provides information and support to enhance parenting skills. The program contains information about attachment, early childhood, parenting and tips about communicating with babies and young children.

Services can be initiated whilst a young person is in custody and upon transition to the community such as:

- Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network's Antenatal Care and Parenting Program
- Cultural mentors for delivery of programs, such as Respectful Promises – where young men discuss the role of powerful women in their lives, which includes

parental aspects

Youth Justice caseworkers make referrals to support services, such as legal assistance, Child Protection and non-government services to help the young person have access to the child or have the child returned to their care if appropriate, once the young parent is released from custody.

The creation of the Department of Communities and Justice provides an opportunity to work more collaboratively to support shared clients in child protection, out of home care and youth justice, to improve their individual circumstances and life trajectory.

Support for young people with parents in custody

Young people in Youth Justice custody are supported to maintain contact with a parent or carer who is incarcerated in adult custody, when assessed as suitable, through letter writing and where possible telephone contact.

Youth Justice also works with SHINE for Kids who provide a mentoring relationship for young people in custody. The program focuses on young people that have disruptive parenting through incarceration. The program offers a supportive adult to provide consistency and stability through meeting with the child or young person on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

Youth Justice Community Offices assist with transporting young people under supervision to visit family members in custody.

Although Youth Justice provides support to children and young people with an incarcerated parent or who are parents themselves, these young people continue to be at a higher risk of psychosocial impairment, emotional deregulation, physical and financial hardship.

The incarceration of a parent significantly increases the risk of antisocial behaviour and criminality in their children. Incarceration of a parent can also increase the risk of the young person being placed in out-of-home care.

One in five of the young people surveyed in the 2015 YPICHHS (21.1%) reported that they had been placed in care before the age of 16 years. This may mean that a young person who was in care prior to entering custody may also have a child that is placed in care following the young person's incarceration.

Parents, family members, kinship ties or community support networks provide significant protective factors emotionally and socially for young people. These protective factors can reduce the sense of isolation, reduce symptoms of depression, and maintain emotional wellbeing, particularly while in custody.

CHILD PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY (FORMERLY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES)

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (2017) lists criminal behaviour as a parental risk factor correlated with the entry of children into out-of-home care (OOHC).

Imprisonment of a parent is associated with poor outcomes across a range of health and wellbeing domains (SHINE for Kids, 2017).

This issue could relate to children and young people supported through any of DCJ's program areas, including: prevention and early intervention, child protection, and OOHC programs.

Children with an imprisoned parent, who are also a DCJ client, would be eligible to receive services through any program appropriate to their circumstances. Work conducted by case workers would take into account the individual needs of each child or young person, and address these accordingly.

The Casework Practice mandate regarding connections and contact for children in care provides some information and guidance to practitioners about contact arrangements between children and young people in out-of-home care and their imprisoned parent.

Child and Family, Design and Stewardship

Policies and services available to children and young people, through DCJ or its funded service providers, may include:

- Family preservation programs, including Brighter Futures, Permanency Support Program (PSP) Preservation packages, Intensive Family Based Services, Intensive Family Preservation, Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) and Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW).
- Foster and kinship care services and case work.
- Programs and services for children in OOHC, such as those that focus on education and health and services to respond to trauma and sustain placements such as the OurSpace therapeutic program, LINKS Trauma Healing Service and Treatment Foster Care Oregon.
- Leaving and after care support.
- Intensive Therapeutic Care programs.

Child and Family, Implementation & Performance

DCJ's Permanency Support Program (**PSP**) supports a child-and-family-centred service system that is flexible to address the needs of children. PSP provides out-of-home care (**OOHC**) to children (assessed as in need of care and protection) whilst their parent is incarcerated and restoration of children to their parent's care when released (where assessed as safe to do so).

The PSP aims to:

- maintain children and young people at home and minimise re/entries into OOHC
- find permanent homes for children and young people currently in OOHC through restoration, guardianship and adoption
- invest in higher quality support and provide more targeted and therapeutic support to address individual needs.

The PSP provides access to holistic services for children and young people in OOHC. It includes targeted support packages with a flexible approach to meeting a child's needs through a 'build up' approach. For children in OOHC whose parents are imprisoned, DCJ and funded service providers will provide higher intensity therapeutic service to children where needed. This helps to deal with trauma and maintain contact with birth parents, or to support restoration casework that works toward returning the child to their parent's care after release (where it is safe to do so).

Rural and regional perspective

Specific cultural sensitivities must be applied to children who have an Aboriginal parent in custody due to a degree of mistrust and anxiety regarding incarceration. DCJ funds an innovative program in Wellington Correctional Centre (Beyond Barbed Wire) in partnership with Barnardo's that supports women in prison – most of whom are Aboriginal.

Women with children are matched with a local community volunteer mentor who supports them while incarcerated by providing individualised access to parenting, work release and mentoring sessions.

On leaving custody, the women are given tailored support to help re-establish relationships with their children, gain parenting and general living skills, as well as access to transitional accommodation so they can successfully integrate back into the community with their children if safe and appropriate to do so.