Involving Families, Partners and Children
"Use me or Lose Me"

Annual Reducing Re-offending

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Registered Charity No.: 1048152
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POPS
Partners of Prisoners & Families Support Group

Aims of the presentation…

- Overview of POPS.
- The impact of imprisonment on offenders' families.
- The role of the Offender Supporter.
- User Involvement – share experiences and good practice.

POPS History…

- POPS was **formed in 1988** by **offenders' families.**
- POPS is a **needs led** organisation.
- POPS is a growing organisation employing approximately **100 staff** and over 3**0 volunteers.**
- POPS receives **no** arrangements with the public/private sector.

POPS Mission statement…

"*POPS provides a variety of services to support anyone who has a link with someone in prison, offenders and other agencies. POPS provides assistance to these groups for the purpose of enabling families to cope with the stress of arrest, imprisonment and release.*"

Families…seen and not heard…

Film….

The impact of imprisonment…

- Imagine only seeing your loved one for one and a half days a year.
- Prisoners are on average located 53 miles away from home.
- 43% of prisoners say that they have lost contact with their families since entering the prison system.
- Offenders' families are often socially excluded, isolated and vulnerable.
- Offenders' families are often labelled as 'guilty by association'.
- Offenders' families are vulnerable to financial instability, poverty, debt and housing disruption.

What is the evidence?

- DCSF and MOJ Children of Offenders' Review, Ministry of Justice and Department for Children Schools and Families. (2007)
- The Social Exclusion Unit (2002). Identified how to reduce re-offending.
- Forgotten Victims, Matthew, J. (1989)
- Prisoners Families: The Forgotten Victims, Codd, H. (1989)

Every Child Matters…

BE HEALTHY	•Children of prisoners have about three times the risk of mental health problems compared to their peers[1]
STAY SAFE	•Parental imprisonment can lead children to experience stigma, bullying and teasing[3] •Children's caregivers often experience considerable distress during parental imprisonment[4], and children are often subject to unstable care arrangements[5]
ENJOY & ACHIEVE	•Children of prisoners also experience higher levels of social disadvantage than their peers[6]
MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	•Children of prisoners have three times the risk of anti-social/delinquent behaviour compared to their peers[1]
ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	•Imprisonment has a negative financial impact on families, leaving families vulnerable to financial instability, poverty and debt and potential housing disruption[8] •72% of prisoners were in receipt of benefits before coming into prison[7]
CRIME REDUCTION	•65% of boys with a convicted parent, go on to offend[7]

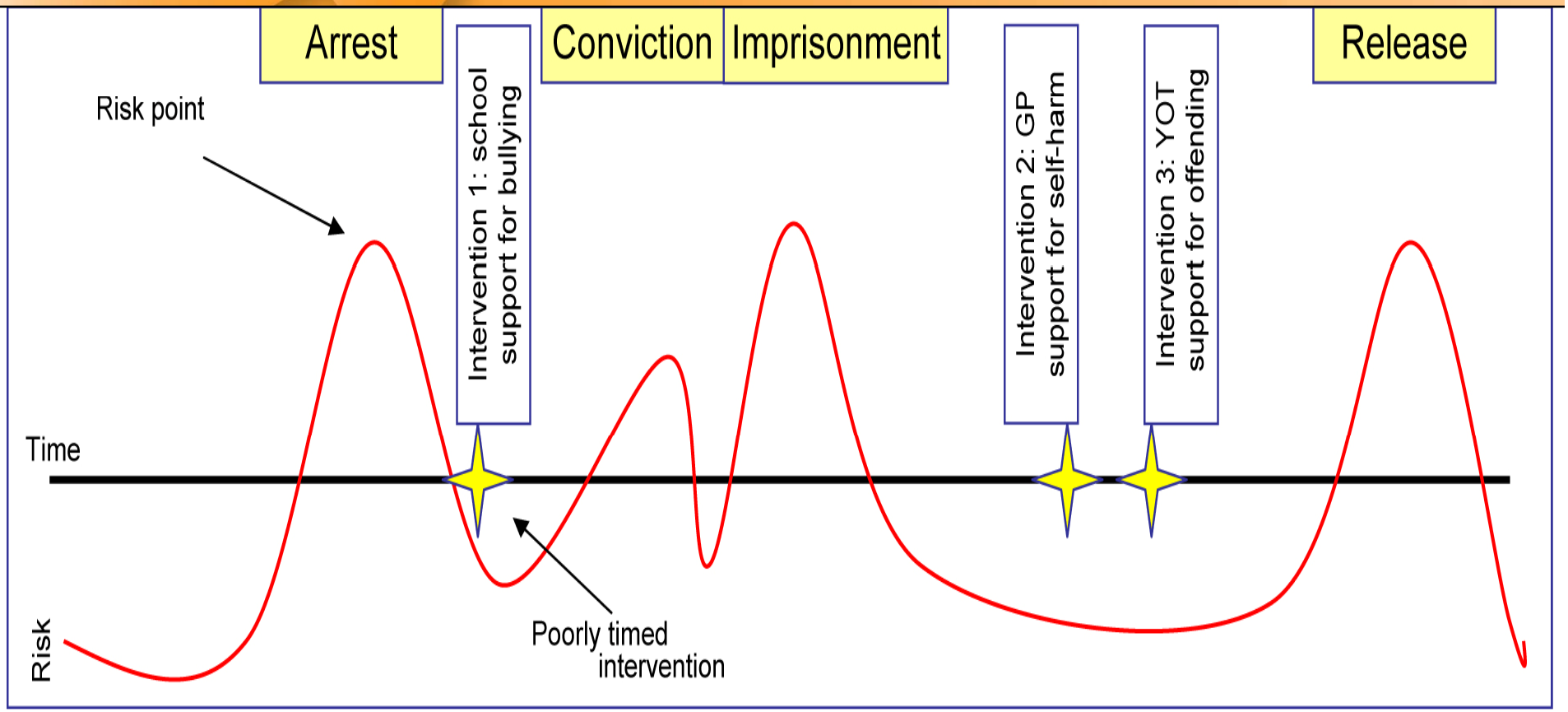
Children of Offenders Review: Department for Children, Schools and Families. June 2007

Every Child Matters…

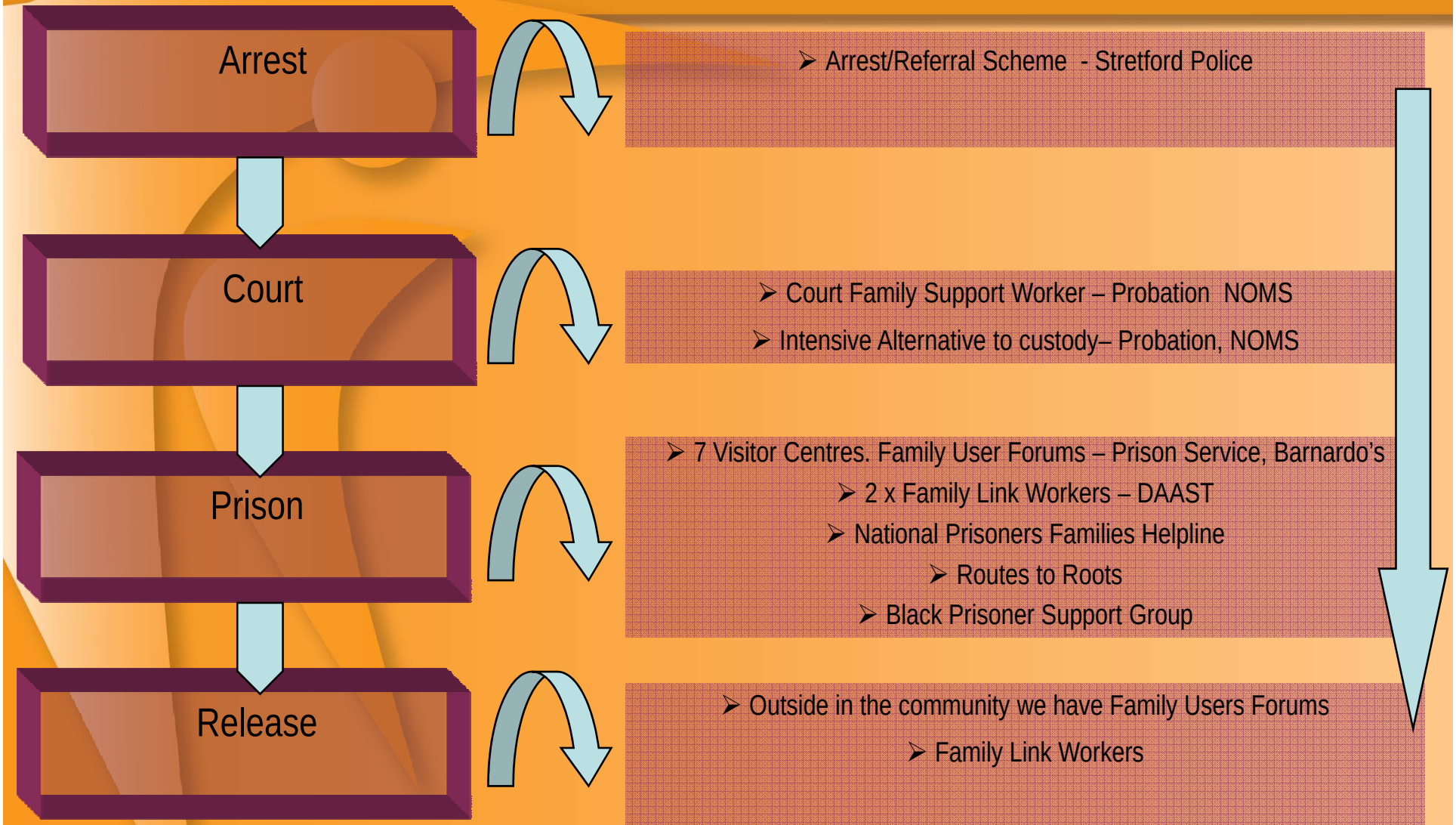
Family impact	Children's futures are heavily affected by family circumstance: the evidence suggests that the impact parents and family have is rarely neutral.
Existing social exclusion	As parents, prisoners are often subject to pre-existing disadvantages: most prisoners have a history of social exclusion before entering the prison system[7] and are more likely than the general population to be unemployed, of low social class, to have low skills, multiple mental health problems, other criminal convictions, relationship difficulties, and to have experience of abuse and neglect[9]
Differential impact	The effects of parental imprisonment on children may differ according to both the child's and family's characteristics, and the wider social context in which the child lives[1]. However, the experience for the child is generally negative.
Correlation not causation	While there is a strong correlation between parental imprisonment and poor child outcomes, research does not prove a causal link. There is little conclusive evidence on whether imprisoning parents actually causes these outcomes for children, or makes poor outcomes even poorer. Nonetheless, it is clear that children of prisoners are, for multiple reasons, at higher risk than the wider child population, and are likely to require extensive support.
Trigger point for early intervention	Parental imprisonment thus presents an opportunity to identify children at risk of poor outcomes and to offer support to mitigate the effects of both parental imprisonment and family circumstance.

Children of Offenders Review: Department for Children, Schools and Families. June 2007

There is a lack of continuity of support…



POPS and the Offender Supporter…



What is the user involvement?

Users interpretation ranged from:

- Wanting to voice an opinion.
- Heard by decision makers.
- Making friends.

Ask yourself which one are you?

Are you a management centred user involvement where service users take part in your existing structures with the agenda defined by the organisation.

Or

Are you a user centred user involvement where service users objectives and priorities becomes those of the organisation.

The role of leaders…

More user centred activity occurred where leaders:

- Gives a strong enough sense of direction while allowing opportunities for change.
- Negotiate the principles of user involvement.
- Enable others to translate them into action.
- Commit to making an organisation more user-centred.
- Has a broad vision of what a user centred organisation should look like.
- Create space for users and staff.

The role of leaders cont…

- Asks for and listens to a full range of views.
- Encourage and supports users and staff.
- Allocates resources.
- Learns from and with others.
- Takes risks.
- Balances getting involved and standing back.
- Steps aside to make space for individuals.

Moving forward. Implement the eight principles:

1.Be clear about the purpose of involving service users and families in aspects of your work.

- Identify benefits.
- Recognise boundaries.
- Be consistent and clear.

2. Agree Involvement…

Work with people who use your service to agree the way they are involved.

- Involving them in planning and assessing.
- Making sure service users and families have an opportunity to identify their own needs.
- Listen and take account of what service users and families identify as being important.

3. Choose involvement…

Let service users and families choose the way they become involved by making sure:

- Service users and families fully understand the reasons for the types of activities they will be involved in.
- Service users and families make informed choices.
- Conditions of involvement are clear.
- Involving service users and families in different ways to achieve the most effective outcomes.
- Making sure the task is in proportion to service users and families abilities.

4. Exchange feedback…

Exchange feedback about the outcome of service users' and families' involvement in appropriate ways.

- Developing a range of tools, materials and resources to provide effective feedback.
- Making sure service users and families are fully included in their involvement.
- Explain how their involvement has influenced the project.

5. Recognise and overcome barriers…

Recognise and overcome barriers to involvement.

- Overcoming physical and environment barriers of access, safety and transport.
- Overcoming barriers of procedures and practices that exclude service users and families, or only include them because they have to.
- Overcoming barriers of attitudes and values in ways that make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to get involved.

6. Include a wide range of people in your work…

Make every effort to include the widest possible range of people in your work.

- Develop opportunities to include groups that are “rarely heard”, such as people in prisons, homeless people, refugees or hard to reach people.
- Developing opportunities to groups which are hard to communicate with such as children, people with limited English, people with learning disabilities and people with issues of mental health.
- Acknowledge difference in power between the organisation and service users and families.

7. Value service users and carers…

Values the contribution, expertise and time of service users and families.

- Paying service users and families for their involvement.
- Follow recognised guidance on paying service users and their families.
- Refund all out of pocket expenses.
- Giving rewards or compensation for involvement in a fair, consistent and open way.

8. Use what you have learnt…

Use what you have learned from working with service users and families to influence changes in your ways of working, to achieve better outcomes.

- Asking service users and their families to share their experiences of being involved to influence future planning and change.
- Set up audit and monitoring systems to make sure involvement can be formally assessed.
- Report back to service users and families about how their contribution was used.
- Share learning with other organisations.

How can you encourage service user involvement?

- Requires a change attitude.
- A non judgemental approach.
- Service user forums.
- Don’t be tokenistic.
- Resources and training.
- Service users on management committees.
- Listen to them, they know what they want.
- Key eight principles.

Eight principles…

1. Be Clear.
2. Agree involvement.
3. Choose involvement.
4. Exchange feedback.
5. Recognise and overcome barriers.
6. Include a wide range of people in your work.
7. Value service users and carers.
8. Use what you have learnt.

The rewards will be…

- Your service will be more likely to meet the need and encourage others to come forward and use the service.
- Promotes continued development of services.
- Encourages confidence to develop.
- Empowers.
- Provides ownership.
- Gives service users and carers a voice.
- Generates funds.

No glass ceiling in POPS…

- The Chief Executive.
- The Chair.
- The Board of Directors.
- Paid staff.
- Volunteers.
- Visitor forums in Visitor Centres.
- Consulting with families.
- Black Prisoners forum.

Final thoughts…

Remember the great old adage “assume”. Makes an “ass out of you and me”

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