
**The evaluation of the
Community Support
for Offenders'
Families service**

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Glossary

Basic custody screening	A standardised tool for assessing the needs and risks that a prisoner presents. The new expanded tool includes questions about family composition and caring responsibilities. It will become operational as part of the Through the Gate operating model.
CAF	The Common Assessment Framework is a process whereby practitioners can identify a child or young person's needs early, assess those needs holistically, deliver coordinated services and review progress.
Children and Families Pathway	NOMS developed nine offender pathways to reduce re-offending. These are accommodation, education, training and employment, health, drugs and alcohol, finance, benefits and debt, children and families and attitudes, thinking and behaviour, abuse and prostitution.
Community sentence	A non-custodial sentence combining punishment with activities carried out in the community.
CRC	Under Transforming Rehabilitation, 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies will be responsible for the management of offenders categorised as low to medium risk of harm, and supervising short-sentence prisoners after release. These will become effective in 2015.
Delius	The National Probation Service case management system that was rolled out across England and Wales during 2013.
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
Families First	Families First was set up in Wales in 2010 to play a key role in addressing child poverty. It works with local authorities to provide co-ordinated support and a range of projects to help families experiencing multiple difficulties. The TAF (see below) oversees and co-ordinates the services families receive.
Hidden Sentence	Developed by Action for Prisoners' Families, this is a training course for professionals who work with the families of prisoners and offenders. It aims to raise awareness about the criminal justice system and issues facing prisoners' families, explore issues facing families and help practitioners to identify ways to support families.
i-HOP	The Information Hub on Offenders' Children and their Families for Professionals (https://www.i-hop.org.uk) has been funded by the Department for Education since 2013. Delivered by Barnardo's and Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group, it aims to integrate working across agencies that support children in offenders' families, and increase awareness and knowledge of the issues that affect these children. It provides an information and advice service for practitioners and those responsible for strategic development and commissioning.
IFSS	Integrated Family Support Services operate only in Wales and focus on families where parents have substance misuse problems that affect the welfare of their children. IFSS teams started work in 2010 and operate throughout Wales. Local authorities and health boards are required to work together to establish the service and provide support/services to families.
Invisible Walls Schools Accord	Part of the Big Lottery-funded Invisible Walls Wales (a partnership between G4S, HMP Parc, Barnardo's, Gwalia Housing Association, Bridgend County Borough Council and the Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice). It aims to work with individual schools in Wales to offer support and guidance to pupils who have a parent or close relative in prison.

NPS	Under Transforming Rehabilitation, the National Probation Service will be responsible for the management of offenders who are categorised as high risk of harm.
OASys	The Offender Assessment System is completed by an Offender Manager. It is used to measure the needs and risks of offenders and covers offending history and current offence, social and economic factors (including access to accommodation; education, training and employability; financial management and income; lifestyle and associates; relationships; drug and/or alcohol misuse) and personal factors (such as thinking and behaviour; attitude towards offending and towards supervision; emotional factors such as anxiety and depression).
Offender Manager	The person in the probation service with allocated responsibility for assessing what each offender requires, engaging the offender in planning and co-ordinating delivery, establishing interventions to support and facilitate change, reviewing progress and evaluating outcomes, taking enforcement action, and motivating when needed.
PSR	A pre-sentence report is written by an Offender Manager following an interview with the offender. It includes information about why they committed the offence, how they feel about it now, and what their background, family and work circumstances are. It is used to inform the decision about the most appropriate sentence for the offender.
TAF	Team Around the Family is part of the Common Assessment Framework and additional assessment processes in Wales. It is a multi-disciplinary team of practitioners established on a case-by-case basis to support a child, young person or family.
Theory of change	A framework that is widely used to describe the journey towards a programme's ultimate goal. It identifies the inputs, participants involved, activities and resulting outcomes. It illustrates how, over time, the achievement of short-term outcomes lead to intermediate outcomes, which contribute towards to the attainment of the long-term goals for a service.
WASPI	The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information is a framework for services directly concerned with health, education, safety, crime prevention and social wellbeing. In particular, it is for organisations that hold information about individuals and may consider it appropriate or necessary to share that information with others in a lawful way.

Summary

Context

This summary sets out the findings from an evaluation of the Community Support for Offenders' Families (CSOF) service¹. CSOF was a time-limited service, jointly funded by Barnardo's and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Commissioning Strategies Group (CSG) using grant monies, which aimed to complement custody-based models of family support by developing capacity and capability in a community offender management context.

The CSOF service was developed in recognition of the need to provide effective support for offenders and their families in the community, and in light of growing evidence showing the serious impact of parental imprisonment on children and the wider family, and the role of family relationships in desistance.

It was established in three areas: Bristol, the Isle of Wight and south east Wales. Each project differed in terms of its location, geographical coverage and the make-up of the local population. In Bristol, the project covered the Bristol City Council area (population 430,000); on the Isle of Wight, it covered the whole island (population 140,000); and in Wales, it covered eight local authority areas (total population 800,000).

Within each area, the projects sought to work with local agencies to raise awareness of the needs of families affected by the imprisonment or offending of a parent/carer, to facilitate the development of procedures and practice, and to provide support to a small number of families with children aged 0 to 18 years who had a parent or carer in prison or serving a community sentence. The pilot phase ran from August 2012 to March 2014 in Bristol, January 2013 to March 2014 on the Isle of Wight and from April 2013 to March 2014 in Wales.

The evaluation

The evaluation sought to answer the following research questions:

- Has CSOF contributed to improved outcomes for offenders' families?
- Has CSOF influenced the local service response towards offenders' families?
- Has CSOF resulted in increased professional awareness of the support needs of offenders' families in each locality?

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach. Data were collected from the three CSOF areas using a range of methods, including: qualitative interviews with stakeholders, staff, and families; case reviews of service user data; questionnaires; feedback forms; telephone interviews; and an online survey for professionals who had participated in training and/or awareness-raising activities. Case examples were extracted from the data to illustrate how the CSOF service worked with families and the outcomes that this achieved. The evaluation was conducted by a research consultant from Barnardo's Training and Consultancy, seconded to Barnardo's Strategy Unit for the duration of the work. The evaluation was overseen by a research advisory group that included members from NOMS, Barnardo's and Wales Probation Trust.

The CSOF model

A theory of change for the CSOF service was developed in conjunction with staff from the service, as part of the evaluation. This set out the intended outcomes in the short and medium term, and how those outcomes could contribute to achieving the long-term aims of the service.

While the long-term overall aims of the service were to improve the life chances of offenders' children and reduce re-offending,

¹ Throughout this report, where reference is made to a specific operational site, the term 'project' is used. When discussing the three projects as a whole, the term 'service' is used.

the evaluation focused on the intermediate outcomes, which evidence suggests can contribute towards these results. The intended outcomes that were identified for the service in 2012 were informed by NOMS guidance on factors that promoted desistance and strengthened family relationships (1), as well as earlier Barnardo's work with children of prisoners. The key intermediate and short-term outcomes that were addressed are identified in the theory of change for the CSOF model (see Figure 1 below). Intermediate outcomes were: reduced isolation/stigma; improved parenting capacity; improved parenting knowledge and strategies; improved parent/carer-child contact and/or relationships; and children having improved confidence and self-esteem.

The key activities of the CSOF service were:

- providing support for families with children who have a parent/carer in prison or serving a community sentence
- facilitating the development of local procedures and practices that take into consideration the impact of offending on family members
- raising awareness of the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment or offending through training and other awareness-raising activities.

Findings

Operational delivery

A total of 79 families were referred or self-referred to the CSOF service for family support during the pilot period. Across the 79 families, 134 individuals received support, with the length of intervention ranging from less than a month to 12 months or more, depending on the issues the family was facing and other support available to them. In the majority of cases, the service was working with partners/ex-partners and their children, but where possible, direct work was also carried out with the offenders themselves.

The nature of the support provided was wide ranging and determined by the needs of the

family. It included therapeutic interventions for the whole family, the parent or child, parenting advice, liaising with other services on the family's behalf, and facilitating prison visits or contact with the offender. The CSOF service also made referrals to, and worked with, a wide range of agencies on behalf of families who required family support, as well as providing advice and information to practitioners from other agencies to assist them in supporting families of offenders.

In order to facilitate the development of local procedures and practices that took into consideration the impact of offending on family members, the CSOF service undertook work to establish relationships with professionals who had strategic and management responsibility for relevant areas of work, as well as practitioners who had day-to-day contact with offenders, their children and families. This was achieved through networking and participation at key meetings and forums.

Training and awareness-raising activities were also held with a range of different services to increase understanding of the impact of offending on children and families and the role of family relationships on desistance. A total of 25 one-day training sessions were conducted and 362 professionals trained across the pilot period. In addition, an estimated 1,000 practitioners and managers were engaged through shorter awareness-raising briefings and sessions.

Service outcomes

For families

Family support by the CSOF service filled an important gap in service provision, and there was evidence of a number of benefits for families who engaged with the service, who were often struggling with multiple and complex issues at the point of referral (including self-referral). Families spoke of their relief at being able to talk freely to the Project Workers without being judged. The CSOF service was able to assist families in addressing practical or financial concerns, provide advice and strategies to help build

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parenting capacity, and facilitate contact and/or address concerns regarding contact with the offending family member. The service also had an important role to play in building the self-esteem and confidence of the children and young people who had been negatively affected by their parent's offending, and in tackling the isolation and stigma experienced by families of offenders.

Developing the local service context

The evaluation highlighted that the CSOF service played an important role in bringing together different agencies to review overarching systems and processes, as well as encouraging individual organisations to review their own practice. There was evidence that a number of agencies in the three areas covered by the CSOF service had reviewed and adapted their recording and assessment practices as a result of the service's input. Other ways in which the service influenced the local service context was through promoting and developing the role of 'Single Points of Contact' or 'Champions' for children and families of offenders in probation services and other partner agencies. It also produced charters for organisations working with families of offenders and developed procedures for recording, an information sharing protocol, and a toolkit for Offender Managers working with offenders' families.

Raising awareness

There was evidence that the training and awareness-raising activities carried out by the service were effective in improving practitioners' understanding about the impact of offending on families, and equipping them with the skills and knowledge to identify and support families more effectively (including making referrals to the CSOF service and other agencies). Following the training, participants indicated areas where they were planning on making changes to their practice. Data collected as part of the evaluation demonstrated that many had gone on to make these changes in areas such as reviewing caseloads

with family offending in mind, offering targeted support to a child or family, or sharing information with colleagues about the support needs of offenders' families. Their engagement with and commitment to reviewing practice within their own organisations was testament to the positive impact of the training and awareness-raising work carried out by the CSOF service.

Learning

The major learning points of the evaluation are set out below. They highlight some of the best practice and challenges faced by the service and its evaluation.

Service formation and development

- Changes in resourcing during the lifetime of the service meant that only the Wales project included a full-time Offender Manager. Consequently, almost all development of procedures and protocols happened in Wales, and their joint work/information sharing was stronger.
- The re-organisation of other services and uncertainty around this had an important impact on the service. The preparation for the transformation of the Probation Trusts into the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies meant that there were changes in personnel and additional demands on Offender Managers' time.
- The differences in implementation in the three local services and varied emphases, for example on training professionals versus direct family support, across the three sites resulted in difficulties in assessing the overall impact of CSOF's work.
- There were some gaps in service user data and inconsistency in the use of outcomes, which had an impact on data analysis.

Awareness raising and engaging with partner agencies

- Awareness-raising activities underpinned much of the work of the CSOF service.
- Engaging senior staff in other agencies

and gaining their commitment was critical to the delivery of the service.

- The presence of the CSOF service in probation offices, either as an office base or at drop-ins/surgeries, was an important factor in encouraging referrals.
- The secondments and gifted time of Offender Managers helped to reinforce CSOF's relevance for criminal justice agencies and enabled the service's aims and activities to be communicated in a meaningful way.
- The limited staff resources and wide scope of the CSOF service restricted the time that could be committed to engaging all agencies. Schools were identified as key services but engaging with them was particularly resource intensive due to their large number and diversity.
- The awareness-raising briefings and training were successful in reaching a large number of professionals and in improving their knowledge and understanding of the needs of offenders' families. Participants were able to illustrate how they could apply their learning in their practice.
- The *Bristol Charter for Children of Prisoners* was an example of an effective way of focusing attention on the child's voice.

Working with families

- Self-referral proved to be an important pathway to support for some isolated families, including families with significant support needs, but only a small number of families from black and minority ethnic groups accessed the CSOF service.
- The Project Workers accessed a range of services, tools and resources to support families. Applying their specialist knowledge, advising other practitioners and drawing on the expertise of other providers were all important in achieving positive outcomes for families.
- The number of referrals illustrated the demand for the service and the outcomes data demonstrated a variety of needs. The qualitative analysis found that families reported positive outcomes as a result of the CSOF service's input.

- Particular learning can be gained from CSOF interventions where a family member had been convicted of a sexual offence. Feedback from CSOF staff and the families themselves suggested that these families are particularly isolated, face complex issues and require a range of practical and therapeutic support.
- The fact that a large number of families were separated as a result of imprisonment or family breakdown meant that the projects had no direct contact with the offenders in almost half of their cases.

Identification and assessment

- Feedback from stakeholders highlighted some of the complexities and challenges in identifying families of offenders, including families' own reluctance to be identified.
- Changes to enable agencies to identify and assess children and families of offenders were often dependent on key individuals taking the initiative, and the benefit was often realised at an individual level rather than enabling systematic identification and assessment.

Information sharing

- Casework with families highlighted the need for criminal justice agencies and children and family services to share information effectively.
- CSOF casework highlighted the potential for workers to come across information that needed to be shared with probation, the police and social services departments as part of their intelligence.
- Service staff experiences suggested the need for a specified point of contact within the newly formed National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies, in order to facilitate a two-way process of information sharing.
- CSOF was able to develop an information sharing protocol and procedures that would enable contact with family support services to be recorded on the Probation Service case management system.

The evaluation

- This evaluation should be seen as a contribution to the growing area of

research on intermediate outcomes linked to desistance. Systematic collection of personal information by services, as well as longer-term monitoring of offending of parents and future offending of children, would be required to establish the relevance of outcomes achieved by the service in the short and medium terms.

- CSOF services should, in future, ensure more rigorous measurement and recording of outcomes for service users.

Implications

The major implications of the evaluation findings are as follows:

- The CSOF community-based model of family support and service development was effective.
- The multi-dimensional role of the CSOF service contributed to its success.
- The combination of a child and family-focused Project Worker and an Offender Manager within the service was important.
- Awareness-raising activities and training were central elements of the service.
- There were agencies (especially schools) that CSOF were not able to reach during the pilot period.
- Awareness raising and joint working combined to have an impact on offender management practice.
- Communication with Offender Managers is key to the assessment of risk and engaging with offenders.
- Procedures need to be in place so that information about risk can be shared with family support services.
- Working with other agencies, the service has identified resources and developed practice knowledge and expertise that could be applied in other localities.
- Long-term monitoring would be required to determine whether the intermediate outcomes have an impact on desistance and intergenerational offending.
- The service demonstrated the need for changes to probation systems to collect, record and share information about offenders' families.
- Identification of children of offenders

continues to be done ad hoc, and further work is required to ensure it is instead done systematically to build a comprehensive picture of need within the group.

It will be important for the new probation providers – Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS) – to understand how the learning from CSOF can inform development of services in the new Transforming Rehabilitation operating model. Barnardo's has committed to fund the CSOF service for a further two years from April 2014. In Wales the CRC has extended the secondment of a full-time Offender Manager into this team up to March 2015, where it is anticipated that this will complement other community-based initiatives and contribute to effective resettlement of offenders as part of NOM'S Integrated Offender Management approach (2). Discussions are taking place in a number of areas, and in Wales a new role of Consultant Offender Manager has been proposed, with a specific brief to provide consultancy to other OMs, to ensure that Hidden Sentence training is embedded and to ensure updated Practice Directions are appropriate in relation to children and families. This role could act as a key link to children's services and other family support services, including any Community Support for Offenders' Families teams, maximising benefit for the offender management process as well as for children and families.

1. Context

This report sets out the findings from the evaluation of the Community Support for Offenders' Families (CSOF) service.² CSOF was a new, time-limited service, jointly funded by Barnardo's and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Commissioning Strategies Group (CSG) using grant monies, which aimed to complement custody-based models of family support by developing capacity and capability in a community offender management context.

1.1. Parental offending and its impact

The service was developed against the backdrop of growing recognition of the need to provide effective support for offenders and their families in the community, and of the impact of parental imprisonment on children and the wider family. With a prison population of around 85,000, and 220,000 offenders being supervised in the community by probation services at any one time, it is clear that a large number of offenders' children are directly affected by the criminal justice system. Although data were not systematically collected, it is estimated that approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in prison each year (3).

Family relationships are placed under considerable strain as a result of imprisonment. Offenders and their families are often severely economically and socially deprived, which is further exacerbated when a family member is serving a prison sentence: there may be a loss of income from employment or welfare entitlements; living arrangements may be disrupted; and higher levels of stress can lead to reduced physical and mental wellbeing (4, 5, 6, 7). The stigma associated with having a family member in prison can also have detrimental effects on the family, causing isolation from the community and other supportive social networks, the

breakdown of relationships with trusted professionals and, in some cases, can even lead to families having to move away from an area because they are ostracised by the community (8).

The impact on children of offending, and in particular parental imprisonment, is also well documented; research has pointed towards a link between parental imprisonment and a series of adverse outcomes for children, such as aggressive behaviour, depression, anxiety, sleeping and eating disorders, running away, truancy, mental health problems, poor educational performance and antisocial behaviour (9). Longer-term adverse outcomes associated with parental imprisonment in childhood include mental health problems, poor accommodation, poor employment, substance misuse, anxiety, depression, and offending behaviour (9).

1.2. Family support and desistance

Strong and supportive family relationships are widely considered to be important factors in desistance from crime (10, 11, 12), helping offenders to develop social bonds and a positive identity away from their offending behaviour, as well as acting as a source of both material and emotional support in the transition from custody to the community (13). Living with a supportive partner and becoming a parent has also been found to be associated with reduced criminal behaviour, while reductions in re-offending have been reported for those who maintain family contact during imprisonment (14, 15). For children and young people at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour or criminal activity, a stable relationship with one or both parents and links to adults who model positive social behaviour are also important protective factors (16).

² Throughout this report, where reference is made to a specific operational site, the term 'project' is used. When discussing the three projects as a whole, the term 'service' is used.

In 2012, a NOMS Commissioning Intentions Discussion Document described nine 're-offending factors' related to criminal behaviour that had strong evidence to support their link to re-offending and desistance. The desirable intermediate outcomes identified in relation to the 'family/marital relationships' factor included: reduced conflict; positive relationships; enhanced warmth and caring; re-integration into (non-criminal) social and family groups; strengthened family ties; improved family and intimate relationships; improved parenting behaviours; and increased acceptance into communities and social networks. The evidence for these outcomes came largely from therapeutic approaches for young adult offenders that involved the family (1). A more recent exploration of family interventions and desistance was published by NOMS in October 2013 (17). In this rapid evidence assessment, potential intermediate outcomes included enhanced parenting knowledge and skills, improved parental satisfaction, improved communication skills and increased self-esteem, more positive relationships with children and increased dedication to partner relationships. However, it also suggested that few family and intimate relationship initiatives could demonstrate that they had reduced re-offending (with the exception of family visits and home leave interventions), and that further work was needed to develop measurement tools and long-term monitoring processes.

1.3. The family and policy on offenders

Responding to the growing evidence base, in 2009 the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Children, Schools and Families designed a framework for improving the multi-agency provision of support for offenders' families (18), acknowledging the potential for 'huge savings for society' that could be achieved by helping reduce the likelihood of re-offending as well as longer-term costs associated with family breakdown, poor child outcomes and inter generational offending. This document set out the tasks and responsibilities for

statutory agencies to improve support for families and restated the importance of the Children and Families Pathway.

More recently, the Coalition Government has promoted an approach to offender management and rehabilitation that views the offender within the context of the wider family and community. Their vision for rehabilitation, as set out in the *Breaking the cycle* green paper (19), the Ministry of Justice Business Plan 2011-15 (20), and most recently the Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy (21), emphasises the need to provide support to offenders 'through the prison gate' to help them reintegrate into their families, jobs and communities.

A key part of the vision for resettlement services has been the provision of family support, and NOMS's commissioning intentions have reflected the role of family and relationships as one of the protective factors in effective resettlement and in reducing re-offending, with 'children and families' being one of nine designated 'pathways' to reducing re-offending in their Integrated Offender Management approach. NOMS commissioning intentions for 2014 (22) states that key services include the Troubled Families programme in England and Families First and Integrated Family Support Services in Wales, prison visiting services, family days and child-focused extended visits and parenting skills programme. Family support is also identified as a means by which family circumstances and needs can be identified and multi-agency assessment and planning promoted, so information can be shared in a timely manner and interventions targeted more effectively.

1.4. Family interventions

Recent positive developments in some localities include services focusing on maintaining relationships with family members (such as prison visit support services, extended visits and family days), parental learning and relationships skills building, family-based interventions and

1. Context

casework-based family support (23). Providers of these services in England and Wales include Action for Prisoners' Families, Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group (POPS), Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), NEPACS (a charity based in north east England, aimed at helping people affected by imprisonment), Ormiston, Women in Prison, St Giles Trust and Barnardo's. However, provision is patchy and with the Probation Service's focus in recent years being on addressing adult offending behaviour, there has been a heavy reliance on the community and voluntary sector (24).

1.5. The CSOF service

It was within this context – of a growing recognition of positive family relationships as a protective factor in reducing both re-offending in adults, and antisocial behaviour and offending among young people – that the CSOF service was established. Work with children and families was seen as a pathway to positive change that was not as well resourced, understood or evidenced as other pathways such as employment, education, housing, substance misuse and finance. It was also an area where further development was required. The need to identify what was happening to offenders and their families in the community, as well as in prison, was also recognised, as that was where most offenders were located. The service's aim, as set out in its specification, was 'to demonstrate how improved intermediate outcomes, which contribute towards reducing offending and improving the life chances of offenders' children³ may be achieved through improved multi-agency partnership and effective offender management practice' (see Appendix 1.).

The service was established in three areas: Bristol, the Isle of Wight and south east Wales. Each project sought to work with local

agencies to raise awareness of the needs of families affected by the imprisonment or offending of a parent/carer, to facilitate the development of procedures and practice, and to provide support to a small number of families with children aged 0 to 18 years who had a parent or carer in prison or serving a community sentence. The family support was particularly designed to inform service development. Each project was supported by a local Barnardo's Children's Services Manager.

CSOF Bristol was established in August 2012 and was staffed by two part-time Project Workers and an Offender Manager seconded from Avon and Somerset Probation Trust from May to November 2013. The project covered the Bristol City Council area: a city of 430,000 people. CSOF Bristol was preceded by a Barnardo's service that provided support to children of offenders. The local authority had also previously commissioned a children's centre to take a lead on work with prisoners' families.

CSOF Isle of Wight was established in January 2013 and was staffed by one full-time Project Worker. There was no direct Offender Manager involvement until August 2013, when the Hampshire Probation Trust team gifted 5.6 hours per week of Offender Manager time to the project. CSOF Isle of Wight encompassed the whole island, which has a population of 140,000.

CSOF Wales was established in April 2013 and was staffed by a full-time Project Worker and a full-time Offender Manager, seconded from Wales Probation Trust for 12 months. The Wales CSOF area covered a population of approximately 800,000 within eight (out of 22) Welsh local authorities and two (out of seven) Wales Probation Trust local delivery units.

The pilot phase for all three projects ran until March 2014.

³ It was anticipated that the longer-term 'life chances' of children would be improved by the reduction in the adverse outcomes associated with parental imprisonment – this would result in, for example, improved mental health, accommodation and employment, and reduced incidence of substance misuse and intergenerational offending.

2. The evaluation

This section describes the methods used by the evaluation, and the strengths and limitations of the approach.

2.1 Evaluation questions and approach

The evaluation sought to answer the following research questions:

- Has CSOF contributed to improved outcomes for offenders' families?
- Has CSOF influenced the local service response towards offenders' families?
- Has CSOF resulted in increased professional awareness of the support needs of offenders' families in each area?

As part of the evaluation, a theory of change was developed for the CSOF service. This had two purposes:

1. to clearly set out how the activities carried out within the service would contribute to the overall aims and intended outcomes for families and local service context
2. to provide a broad framework for the evaluation.

The evaluation approach combined formative and summative elements. The projects themselves were in development during the period of the evaluation, and the work on their theory of change helped to articulate clearly what the projects were seeking to achieve with and for service users, and the links between the short-term and intermediate outcomes, and longer-term outcomes. The evidence underlying these links is summarised in the above Context section. The summative element sought to assess the results of the work against the intended outcomes, as described in the research questions.

2.2 Methods

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach. The service was developing and taking shape during this pilot period, so qualitative methods were needed in order to capture key elements and to reflect

the service user experience. In addition, quantified information was needed, for example, to describe numbers and types of professionals trained.

Data were collected from all three CSOF projects using the following methods:

- telephone interviews with a total of 29 local stakeholders across the three areas
- telephone interviews with the Barnardo's lead and NOMS lead for the project
- face-to-face interviews with 22 people (including children and young people) from 14 families supported through the CSOF service
- case reviews of service user data
- pre- and post-training questionnaires for 362 professionals participating in training
- feedback forms from 556 professionals participating in awareness-raising sessions
- follow-up telephone interviews and an online survey for 58 professionals who had participated in the training.

In addition, theory of change workshops were held for each of the CSOF projects at the start and end of the pilot period. The initial workshops were used to help define inputs, participants, activities, intended outcomes, assumptions and indicators of success for the service. An interim report for internal use described the projects' model of work, and developments to date. The workshops held at the end of the pilot period were then used to review activities and progress towards the service's intended outcomes. Follow-up phone calls were also carried out with staff to gather additional information and for clarification purposes.

Further details of the methods used in the evaluation can be found in Appendix 2.

2.3 Analysis

All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. The interviews were categorised according to the role of the participant (for example, family member, service 'Champion', professional

stakeholder), and the data systematically entered into separate thematic coding frames. These contained the key issues, themes and outcomes relevant to each role, as identified in the theory of change, and further items were added as themes were identified in the transcripts.

For families, the coding framework recorded contextual information about family composition, the impact of the offence on their support needs and existing support networks and information about their reaction to the way the CSOF service was provided. It also investigated the perceived short-term and intermediate outcomes and the extent to which the support provided or co-ordinated by CSOF had contributed to these outcomes.

For professional stakeholders, the thematic coding framework for the follow-up interviews collated data about the nature and extent of contact with CSOF and captured any strategic, procedural or operational changes in this area of work that had been influenced or facilitated by CSOF or other factors. The framework also captured any other factors that had an impact on the development of this area of work.

The data in the frameworks included summarised or paraphrased information, as well as direct quotes from participants where they illustrated a particular issue or theme. Displaying the data in this way enabled the researcher both to proceed with the analysis of individual cases and to compare cases with similar roles. It allowed the researcher to identify where outcomes had not been achieved or changes had not been made, to count the number of instances that each theme occurred, and to highlight cases where something unusual had occurred as a result of particular circumstances. The data displays were repeatedly revisited during the analysis to verify the emerging conclusions.

Case studies from the interviews illustrate the journey taken by five families. The case studies were selected to convey a range of circumstances and interventions, and are presented using components of the theory of change to show how the activities of CSOF and

other agencies could lead to the achievement of short-term and intermediate outcomes for different family members.

Demographic information and data about the offence and individuals receiving support from the CSOF service were extracted from case files and analysed using Excel. Data captured at initial assessment, follow-up assessment and case closure using Barnardo's outcome framework (an outcome framework used across all Barnardo's services) were also reviewed and analysed using Excel. For each case, these data consisted of a score on a five-point scale for each outcome that was relevant to them at each assessment. It was analysed to ascertain whether their situation had improved, stayed the same or worsened during their contact with the CSOF service.

Quantitative data from the pre- and post-training questionnaires, awareness-raising sessions and online survey were analysed using Excel. This included information about the participants and their organisations, and descriptive statistics that showed the proportion of participants who were confident or very confident about their knowledge and understanding against each learning outcome before and after the training. Following a process of data familiarisation, qualitative information from these surveys was coded to enable conclusions to be drawn. These conclusions suggested, for example, how the training had impacted upon professional practice and further development needs.

2.4 Ethics

The lead researcher was a consultant from Barnardo's Training and Consultancy, seconded to Barnardo's Strategy Unit for the duration of the work. The evaluation was guided by a research advisory group, which included members from NOMS, Barnardo's and Wales Probation Trust. The research received approval from the NOMS National Research Committee and the Barnardo's Research Ethics Committee. Consent and confidentiality were key issues, given the nature of the service

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and potential vulnerability of the families involved. Information about the offender and the offence was not made available to the evaluation unless the offender had given written consent and families who were invited to take part in the research gave written consent before the interview commenced. Prior to the interview, potential participants were provided with both written and verbal information about the purpose and content of the interview (from the Project Worker and the researcher) and given the opportunity to ask questions. Where children were asked to take part, informed consent was sought from both parent and child.

2.5 Strengths and limitations of the approach

The research design facilitated the engagement of professionals and families and allowed for the range of activities undertaken by CSOF to be reflected in the evaluation. The service under evaluation was itself a developmental learning process, unfolding somewhat differently at each site. The evaluation aimed to ensure that maximum learning was gained during this process as well as to assess results. The theory of change proved to be a useful tool in understanding the development of the CSOF service and tracking progress in each area, both in terms of activities and the resulting outcomes for families and the local service environment.

The short timescale meant that it was not possible for the evaluation to investigate the impact of CSOF on the longer-term improvement in the life chances of children, or repeat or intergenerational offending. It is hoped that developments such as the Justice Data Lab⁴ will facilitate this process, but the potential long-term impact of services such

as CSOF cannot be examined for several years. The data analysis was also limited by the fact that some information was missing from family case files (particularly data about the offender and the offence if they were not an open case) and a number of individuals declined to take part in the interviews.

Although the primary researcher had no previous connection with the CSOF service, they were a Barnardo's employee. The formation of a research advisory group (which included staff from other agencies) and the line management of the researcher outside the service management structure encouraged objectivity and provided a range of experience and expertise to guide the evaluation.

⁴ The Justice Data Lab enables organisations to submit data about offenders they have worked with to assess the impact of an intervention on their re-offending rates in comparison with a similar group of offenders. Currently, this system can only be used for offenders who were released from prison between 2002 and 2011. It also requires a minimum of 60 cases to make an assessment. See www.justice.gov.uk/justice-data-lab for more information.

3. The Community Support for Offenders' Families model

This section sets out the working model or theory of change for the CSOF service (see Figure 1). This was developed in conjunction with staff from the CSOF service (see Section 2.1 for more information); it provides an overview of the intended outcomes in the short and medium term, and sets out how these contribute to achieving the long-term aims of the service.

While the long-term overall aims of the service were to improve the life chances of offenders' children and reduce re-offending, the service aimed to contribute to the growing body of evidence on intermediate outcomes. The outcomes that were identified for the service were informed by NOMS guidance on factors that promoted desistance and strengthened family relationships (see Section 1.2) and Barnardo's earlier work with children of prisoners in Bristol. The key intermediate and short-term outcomes that were addressed are identified in the theory of change for the CSOF model (see Figure 1 below). Intermediate outcomes were: reduced isolation/stigma; improved parenting capacity; improved parenting knowledge and strategies; improved parent/carer-child contact and/or relationships; and children having improved confidence and self-esteem.

The inputs (resources), participants and activities required to achieve these intermediate outcomes are described below.

3.1 Inputs

The primary inputs were: staff time, including a Barnardo's Children's Services Manager for each project, Project Workers and Offender Managers; professionals from partner agencies; publicity materials; assessment tools; a framework for measuring outcomes; training resources; and resources for work with parents and children. Staff at the CSOF service required a range of skills to be able to engage professionals from a range of services, deliver training and awareness raising, contribute to the development of agency and interagency processes and support families.

3.2 Participants

Staff at the CSOF service worked closely with professionals from a range of different services, as well as directly with offenders' families. The agencies included: criminal justice agencies (probation, prisons, police, courts, and youth offending teams); and children and family and community-based services (for example, children's social care, preventative family support services, children's centres and early years services, schools and education services, youth services and community health services).

3.3 Activities

The key activities of the CSOF service were:

- provision of family support for families with children who have a parent/carer in prison or serving a community sentence
- facilitating the development of local procedures and practice that take into consideration the impact of offending on family members
- raising awareness of the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment or offending through training and other awareness-raising activities.

The latter two strands of work were a key aspect of the service and considered to be important to ensure sustainable change. They were informed by the direct work with families, which helped build a good understanding of the local context.

The nature of the direct work carried out with families was wide ranging and included:

- therapeutic interventions for the whole family, a parent or a child
- service/CAF co-ordination
- pursuing housing/rehousing issues
- parenting advice
- obtaining household items or furniture
- health-related issues
- group work with children and families
- financial assistance with debts, benefits, and applying for grants
- facilitating prison visits or contact with offenders

- facilitating parental contact with schools
- access to work/training/volunteering
- access to childcare or nursery
- access to activities/community integration
- access to leisure activities.

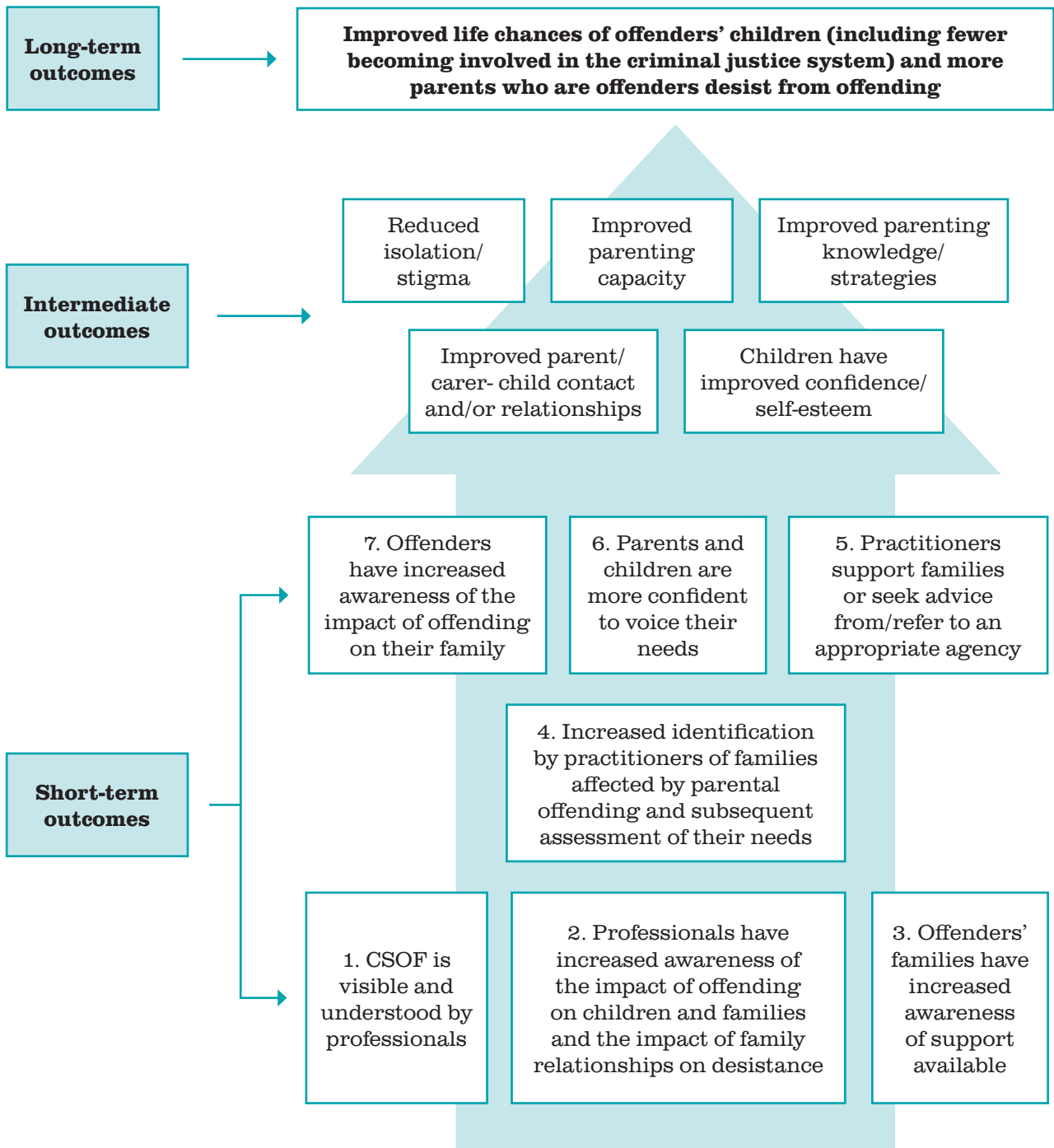
As well as working directly with families, the CSOF service also provided advice and information to other practitioners, enabling them to support families themselves or signpost them to the appropriate services.

CSOF activities relating to service development included: building links with existing groups or forums working with offenders and their families; forming steering groups (in two of the three areas); and reviewing current processes, procedures and practice, for example, in relation to identification, referrals and/or sharing information between agencies. New tools and protocols were also developed where they were required.

Awareness-raising activities took a number of different forms, including the delivery of a one-day training course for professionals and shorter briefing sessions with relevant agencies and groups of practitioners. The one-day training was based on the Hidden Sentence course, which is developed by Action for Prisoners' Families and which aims to give professionals an overview of the issues affecting families of prisoners, and to provide them with a range of strategies and resources to support these families. The shorter briefings took a number of different formats, depending on the audience and time available, but aimed to enhance professionals' knowledge of the impact of offending on children and families and the role of family relationships on desistance, and to provide updates to agencies on local developments and the role of the CSOF service.

The short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes towards which these activities were intended to contribute are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The CSOF Model



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4.1 Operational delivery

The key deliverables of the CSOF service during the pilot period are set out below against each strand of activity.

4.1.1 Family support

A total of 79 families were referred or self-referred to the CSOF service for family support during the pilot period. A breakdown of the number of families each project worked with is provided in Table 1. These figures reflect the length of time each project was running during the pilot period: the service was established in Bristol in August 2012, on the Isle of Wight in January 2013, and in Wales in April 2013.

Table 1. Number of families supported by CSOF projects

Project area	Number of families
Bristol	39
Isle of Wight	23
Wales	17
Total	79

Across the 79 families, 134 individuals received support. In the majority of cases, the service was working with partners/ex-partners and their children, but in a minority of cases (17 families, or 21.5 per cent), direct work was also carried out with the offenders themselves – see Appendix 3 for more information. Contact was made with an additional 27 offenders during the course of work with other family members.⁵ The majority of individuals were white British with 14 (10 per cent) known to be from black and minority ethnic groups.

Of the 75 for whom this information was known, 65 (87 per cent) offenders were male and 10 (13 per cent) female.

Data on the offending family member's offence and sentence were not available for all families who received support through the CSOF service.⁶ However, where the data were available (see Figure 2, Appendix 3), it highlighted that offenders had committed a range of offences including acquisitive, drug-related, violent and sexual offences. The sentence type was also found to vary, although a slightly higher proportion of families receiving support had a family member who was serving a prison sentence (45.8 per cent) compared with a community sentence (31.3 per cent).

The length of time that individuals were supported by the service ranged from less than a month to 12 months or more, with the length of intervention being dependent on the issues the family was facing and other support available to them.⁷ In particular, Project Workers reported that, where a sexual offence had been committed, families' needs were multiple and complex and, as a result, required support for longer. They were often isolated and needed therapeutic support to come to terms with the offence, as well as practical support to re-establish contact, where this was judged to be appropriate. It was crucial to work directly with children in an age-appropriate way so that they had access to the information they needed, when they wanted it, and had time to absorb and process it.

The referral criteria for the CSOF service were broad and the nature of the support provided responded to the expressed needs

⁵ As this work was at a low level, it was not considered to be part of the caseload of CSOF workers and is therefore not included in total number of cases.

⁶ It was the intention to collect data on offender type and sentence type for all offending family members. However, issues were encountered with gaining consent to collect and record this information, which made it challenging for services to gather this data, particularly in instances where they were not working directly with the offender themselves.

⁷ Much of the direct work was ongoing at the point at which the data were reviewed for the evaluation.

of the family (see Section 3.3 for more information). As part of the intervention, the CSOF service also made referrals to and worked with a wide range of agencies on behalf of families who required support.

The CSOF service in Wales cited contact with more than 35 services working in the fields of family/relationships, offending, accommodation, employment, education or training, finance or debt, emotional well-being, mental or physical health, and substances or alcohol misuse.

Referrals for family support came from a number of different agencies. Approximately a third of cases were referred by the Probation Service; one manager said the service has ‘given Offender Managers somewhere to go with family issues’ (stakeholder, Probation Trust). Self-referrals also accounted for a notable proportion of referrals (12 cases out of 79, or 15 per cent). Agencies already working with or supporting the child and/or family also referred into the CSOF service. These included child and family support services (for example, social care teams and children’s centres), and voluntary sector agencies working with families in prison. The source of referrals for the 79 families supported by the CSOF service is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2. Source of referrals made to the CSOF service

Referrer	Number of families
Probation Service	25
Self	12
Children’s services/ family support	11
HMP Bristol – PACT	7

HMP Erlestoke – Barnardo’s	4
School	4
Substance misuse agency	3
Police	3
Youth Offending Team	3
Health visitor	1
CAMHS	1
Housing	1
Not recorded	4
Total	79

The CSOF projects circulated information about their referral procedures electronically and when they visited services. To ensure clarity, referral pathways were discussed with other organisations supporting families of prisoners or offenders.

The CSOF service used a range of channels to promote the service to families. These included websites (for example, Family Information Services and information services aimed at young people), displaying posters and leaflets in settings that families might visit (both specialist services and universal settings such as libraries) and providing information at sites where offenders would go (including probation offices and local prisons).

In addition to directly supporting families, the CSOF service was approached by individual children and family practitioners for advice and information. In Bristol, this included children’s centre staff, health visitors, school health nurses, children’s services and youth workers. The service provided a range of information to them, most frequently about the assisted prison visits scheme, but also housing services, debt advice, children’s centres, children’s

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services, online resources and resources for discussing offending with children.

Attempts were also made to establish peer support groups for families of offenders. However, there was little demand for these groups and, instead, a decision was made to encourage participation in existing groups and activities (such as stay and play sessions run through children's centres).

In Bristol, a series of debt advice workshops were run in partnership with a local advice service. While parents were at the debt workshop, the service arranged activities for children and young people. This group of young people went on to work with a theatre group to write a drama about their experiences and to produce a *Charter for Children of Prisoners*, which has been endorsed by Bristol City Council.

Further information about the families supported by the CSOF services, the length of intervention, and the type of offence and sentence is summarised in Appendix 3.

4.1.2 Development of local procedures and practice

In order to facilitate the development of local procedures and practice that took into consideration the impact of offending on family members, the CSOF service undertook work to establish relationships with professionals who had strategic and management responsibility for relevant areas of work, as well as practitioners who had day-to-day contact with offenders, their children and families. This was achieved through networking and participation at key meetings and forums.

In Bristol and the Isle of Wight, where the CSOF service covered a single local authority area, a key deliverable was establishing steering groups in both areas to bring together the relevant agencies, provide strategic oversight, and guide and inform future work around families of offenders.

The Isle of Wight steering group first met in March 2013 and since then, 23 services have been represented at their meetings. In July 2013, a decision was made to split the group into an action group and an executive group, with the role of the executive group to prioritise tasks for the action group to complete.

In Wales, where CSOF covered a wider geographical area spanning eight local authorities, the project was actively engaged in a number of groups with a broader Wales-wide remit, including:

- NOMS's Children and Families of Offenders Pathway Group, which the Barnardo's Children's Services Manager currently chairs
- Probation Trust's Safeguarding Operational Working Party
- Probation Developing Practice Work Stream
- Probation Safeguarding Work Stream
- Women's Pathfinder Project steering group

They also established links with and presented to the All-Wales Learning and Development Business Partnership, the All-Wales Integrated Family Support Service board, Integrated Offender Management Cymru Partnership, and Multi-agency Migration Meetings in each local authority area.

Across all three areas, meetings were held with service managers and practitioners from a wide range of agencies (see Appendix 4). These enabled the CSOF service to share information about the aims of the project, provide practical information (such as contact details, referrals forms, leaflets and details of other resources) and gather intelligence about other providers' contact with offenders and their families.

4.1.3 Professional training and awareness raising

Twenty-five one-day training sessions were delivered by the CSOF service between January 2013 and March 2014 (10 in Bristol, eight on the Isle of Wight and seven in Wales), and a total of 362 professionals were trained.

A wide range of agencies were represented at the training. Ten or more staff attended from each of: youth services; the police; children's services; school health; Troubled Families teams; probation; family support; health visiting; substance misuse; children's centres and early years; education services; and schools and colleges.

Although the majority of the training was multi-agency, which provided opportunities to network and increase understanding of the role of other agencies, some training was designed to encourage attendees from, or to meet the needs of, specific groups. This included early evening 'twilight' sessions for schools and slots at existing training days for health visitors, school nurses, and other children and family support teams. Most agencies sent a select number of participants on the training with a view to their sharing that information with other colleagues, while others, who were more likely to be making changes to their service and directing referrals to CSOF, sent a much larger proportion of their staff on the training during the pilot period.

In addition to conducting formal training sessions with professionals, shorter awareness-raising sessions were held with a wide range of agencies. The format, length and structure of these varied as they were adapted to meet the needs of the partner organisation and to be flexible to accommodate other priorities and scheduling. This was a substantial area of activity for the CSOF service across the three areas and it is estimated that there was contact with at least 1,000 practitioners and managers through

these awareness-raising activities.⁸

The CSOF service also promoted and/or adapted existing resources to help raise awareness of the issues facing families of offenders. These included: a Barnardo's-developed handbook about families affected by imprisonment aimed at children's centres (Bristol and the Isle of Wight) and an adapted version for Families First services in Wales; and a good practice handbook for schools, adapted by CSOF Wales in partnership with the local authority in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The CSOF service also developed their own project-specific leaflets and posters, and information relating to the service and issues affecting families of offenders was distributed using existing mechanisms, such as the Isle of Wight CAF co-coordinators' quarterly email and early help newsletters.

The CSOF service encouraged families to speak out about their situation to raise awareness of the issues they face. The CSOF projects in Wales and Bristol have produced DVDs aimed at informing professionals, and in Bristol, a theatre company worked with children who accessed the project to produce a play for school pupils, which focused on the experiences of two young people who have a parent in prison.

The full range of agencies engaged by the CSOF service in awareness-raising and service development activities is set out in Appendix 3. This spans more than 120 different organisations and other entities across the three sites.

⁸ This is the lowest estimate and comes from a count of 700 people attending meetings and sessions in the first six months of the pilot, plus 270 who completed feedback forms at sessions from mid-September 2013 to March 2014.

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4.2 Service outcomes

4.2.1 Outcomes for families

As set out in the CSOF model (see Figure 1), the service was working towards the following short-term and intermediate outcomes for families of offenders:

- parents and children being more able to voice their needs
- reduced isolation and stigma
- improved parenting capacity
- improved parenting knowledge and strategies
- improved parent/carer and child contact and/or relationships
- children having improved confidence.

Key findings based on the 22 interviews with parents, children and grandparents from 14 families are outlined below, together with supporting quotes and case examples. An additional six families agreed to be contacted but either did not respond to calls or texts or did not answer the door at the agreed time. Further details of how the activities of the CSOF service contributed to these outcomes can be found in Table 3, which provides an overview of the work undertaken with five of the families who were interviewed.

The challenges associated with undertaking a quantitative assessment of outcomes for families, as well as measuring the long-term outcomes of the service are also discussed below.

It should be noted that although the provision of family support only formed one part of the work carried out by the CSOF service, feedback from stakeholders indicated that it was extremely important for filling a gap in service provision, particularly where families of offenders had been identified but the partner agency did not have the specialist skills or knowledge to address their needs.

Parents and children being more able to voice their needs

The CSOF service encouraged families to express their needs in a number of different ways, for example, during individual

assessments and casework, but also to a wider audience through training sessions, making DVDs and a drama production. It also assisted in the development of charters for organisations working with families of offenders on the Isle of Wight, and for children and young people affected by parental imprisonment in Bristol.

During the interviews conducted for the evaluation, all of the families said they felt able to discuss their situation and needs with the Project Worker. Families expressed relief that that they were able to speak freely to the Project Workers without being judged, with one family member describing it as *'a breath of fresh air'*. The service appeared to provide an opportunity for individuals to voice their concerns or issues, in a way that other services had not: *'People are very opinionated about this and no one is neutral like [the Project Worker]. She was just there for us and not from any point of view.'*

One mother whose family received support from the service suggested during an interview that the awareness-raising work undertaken by the CSOF services could encourage families to speak out to professionals who were known to them. She had had direct experience of staff at the school where she worked raising the subject with her after attending the Hidden Sentence training, saying that they *'didn't have any idea'* how much she and her family were going through. They also appeared to be more comfortable discussing the subject with her.

There was also evidence of the service enabling children to voice their feelings. A 10-year-old child expressed this in the following way: *'I talk about all the trouble I have in school. I feel like I can tell her [the Project Worker] anything... I like it because when I'm with her I feel like if I've got anything to hide I can just say it out to her because she recognises how it feels to me. I don't hide anything from her because she'll be that person who understands and I trust her a lot.'*

One parent interviewed for the evaluation had self-referred to the CSOF service as

she ‘*wanted somebody to be able to support the children*’, as well as to gain support for herself. This was particularly important in this instance as the parent was a witness in a case involving her ex-partner and felt conflicted in what she could say and do to support her children. Reflecting on their first meeting, the family member highlighted that the CSOF Project Worker engaged with children as well as adults, saying that she ‘*immediately focused on the children*’ and ‘*made it absolutely clear that she was there for all of us*’. The importance of having a way for children to express their thoughts and feelings was apparent in the mother’s comments about the experience. She said: *‘I believe we are much more stable as a family unit with having that outside channel to express ourselves; so I don’t have to keep being a mum – I can let the kids have a voice to somebody else and she will do something about it. It doesn’t have to come through me, which is very important. If I wasn’t involved in the case then I could just be mum. But at the moment I’m a mum and an ex-wife and a breadwinner – and a counsellor in some ways – and I’m a witness. And all of those things without having somebody else for them to talk to is no good for them.’*

Reduced isolation and stigma

The interviews with nine of the families highlighted the extent of the isolation and stigma experienced by families of offenders prior to their involvement with the CSOF service, particularly in instances where a family member had committed a sexual offence.

Family members spoke about the relief they felt after their initial contact with the service, with one individual saying that they ‘*cried at the end of the first session, just out of relief*’. One family member who described having previously felt like ‘*prisoners in our own home for six months*’, reported that she and her family felt less isolated, better supported and more able to access the information they needed as a result of the intervention they received from CSOF. She described how ‘*a weight was lifted from my shoulders*’.

This reiterated the relief expressed by other families at being able to access the service and talk to someone about the issues they were facing without being judged (see previous section). Critically, one parent suggested that their difficulties would have been less severe if they had received this support from the outset, highlighting the need for good identification and early intervention with families of offenders.

Improved parenting capacity and improved knowledge of parenting and parenting strategies

The CSOF Project Workers observed that primary carers can be emotionally overwhelmed as a result of another family member’s offending. They may have to manage their own feelings about the offence, deal with the separation caused by imprisonment, confront stigma and isolation, and face additional practical and financial responsibilities. For eight of the families interviewed as part of the evaluation, this was a particular issue. In addition to their own feelings and practical difficulties, parents were often concerned about their children, who had their own anxieties and ways of reacting to the situation. This can result in increased stress and reduced resilience and/or self-esteem, which negatively affects their capacity to parent. One parent described during an interview the impact of this on their family: *‘It was just constant, just rowing all the time... I just thought ‘I can’t take any more of it’. I felt like the kids hated me, they hated [their step-dad, the offender], vice versa... there was nobody there for me to talk to. Sometimes I’d just sit in my kitchen and cry.’*

She went on to describe how the situation had changed following her involvement with the CSOF service: *‘Because I know there is support out there – people I can talk to – I became stronger. I can cope with it, we are stronger, and I feel our relationship with the children has changed. I feel they are more connected with us now... it has brought us closer as a family unit. Before, we were*

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different people living in a house, but now we can say we are a family. My mum has seen a difference in me and the kids – we are not shouting and screaming at each other anymore, we stop and think.'

Another parent highlighted the challenges she had faced in coping with three young children while their father was in prison: *'[Their father] had gone to prison and left me to cope with everything. We had hit rock bottom, me and the kids – not able to do anything or function properly or anything. The children were completely unruly and I couldn't cope with that.'*

The CSOF Project Worker provided advice on strategies to use with the children to address particular behaviours and introduced the parent to *The Incredible Years* handbook (25). Reflecting on the experience, the parent said: *'She didn't make things right for me – she gave me what I needed for me to do it myself, which has set me off.'*

The parent also indicated that the worker *'helped me to feel more confident and more positive... I think in those circumstances everything does get on top of you, but she helped me see things clearly.'*

However, feedback from this parent also highlighted the importance of working with the family as a whole as the mother expressed concern that the father, who had recently been released from prison, did not share her enhanced knowledge and awareness of parenting strategies. She said: *'As a whole we are better as a family than before he went away, but there a few things that would make it better for him as a dad, like learning what to accept and what to ignore – that helped me a lot.'*

Improved parent/carer and child contact and/or relationships

The CSOF service worked with families to establish contact with parents in prison, prepare children for prison visits and facilitate contact with other relatives, including grandparents, when family relationships had broken down following an offence. Project Workers also worked with offenders to help

them understand the impact that separation could potentially have on their children. This was a particular issue for five of the families who were interviewed.

In one situation, two children had not had any contact with their father for six months, since he was arrested for sexual offences. Statutory safeguarding risk assessments had taken place and contact with the children had been approved, but the mother had struggled to work her way through prison processes to proceed with this. She was interviewed as part of the evaluation, and explained the problems she faced: *'Every time I phoned, you're just passed from pillar to post, nobody knew or seemed to know what they were doing. I couldn't get any straight answers and I just kept hitting a brick wall every time I phoned. I wasn't getting anywhere and the children were suffering.'*

Once involved, the CSOF worker was able to arrange telephone contact, followed by prison visits. The mother said that the Project Worker helped the children prepare for each step: *'She came out specifically before their first visit, talked with them about what to expect, what they thought they would see and made it a little bit more comfortable for them, so they could understand what to expect... which I found was a great benefit. They weren't fazed at all – it was like they had seen him yesterday.'*

Other examples of the CSOF service facilitating improved contact include a case where a grandmother was caring for her two grandsons. The children's mother was about to be released from prison and the grandmother was worried about the arrangements for contact and did not know how to approach the Probation Service to ask questions and voice her concerns. The CSOF worker was able to facilitate communication with the Probation Service and accompany the grandmother to meetings. This led to improved understanding of contact arrangements, with the grandmother saying during her interview: *'I don't feel half as stressed as I used to.'*

Another family that was interviewed had a five-year-old boy who'd had no contact with his father during his prison sentence and only

had intermittent contact since his release. The mother described him as being anxious and experiencing angry outbursts. During an interview, she explained that the CSOF Project Worker gave advice and shared strategies for managing her son's behaviour, and talked to the father to help him to understand the impact of his unpredictable contact on his son. A voluntary 'contact agreement' was also established and work was undertaken with the father to help him reinforce the behaviour strategies when he was with his son. The mother said that the support from the Project Worker had enabled her to *'take control of the situation and do what is best for my son'*.

Children having improved confidence

The CSOF service worked with offenders' children who lacked confidence or had low self-esteem, which can lead to problems such as anxiety, isolation and/or restricting their activities and personal development later on in life. Families in eight of the interviews described the impact of the CSOF work on their children's self-confidence.

One interviewee – a 16-year-old girl – was supported by the service after she had gone to live with her father, an ex-offender. She had not attended school for a number of years, and her father (who was also interviewed) said she was *'depressed and worried about her weight'* and wasn't going out. He also had concerns about his ability to support her financially. In response, the CSOF project initiated a CAF, one aim of which was to get the girl into education or training.

As well as providing practical support and advice, including helping the girl join an apprenticeship scheme, applying for a bursary and clothing grant and making arrangements for child benefit to be paid to the father, the Project Worker's support appeared to have had a positive impact on the girl's self-esteem: *'You don't feel like you're nothing when you're with her. She makes you feel good... she's like a friend as well. She helps you all the way; it's good.'*

She explained that the support for her father, and her own contact with the CSOF service,

had also made a big difference to her outlook and the way she felt: *'Things have changed big time... I've come such a long way since July. Now I go out every day and train and study and work. It's brilliant.'*

In another situation, a nine-year-old girl was being negatively affected by the way her family spoke about her father, a repeat offender currently in prison and separated from the family. She was exhibiting difficult behaviour at home and at school. In addition to supporting the girl to explore her feelings about her father and help improve her self-image, the service worked with the mother and held joint sessions with them both to present a different perspective on the father.

The CSOF service also worked closely with the school where the child was subject to an internal exclusion for her behaviour. The child said that she felt confident to talk to the Project Worker, that she had learned strategies to manage her emotions and that the sessions helped to *'get it all out and then knowing how to make it better'*. Her mother, who was also interviewed, reflected on the difference their contact with the project had made: *'[She] has come on leaps and bounds, and we have as a family learned to be more understanding about everything.'*

Another child also indicated that the sessions with the CSOF Project Worker had helped her at school, which she expressed in the following way: *'It's made a big difference in class really. I was struggling with things and as I've been talking to [the Project Worker] it's made me feel I can do anything I want to do. I've got better at my lessons because she said I am good at things and I can do it.'*

Families who did not engage

Some families referred to CSOF did not engage. Twenty cases (15 per cent of the total number of families) were closed after initial contact but before a follow-up assessment was undertaken. CSOF Project Workers interviewed said that the chaotic lifestyles of some families who were referred to them made it difficult to establish contact to undertake work or facilitate links with

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other agencies. Even though CSOF Project Workers persevered and made multiple attempts to get in touch with families who were referred, they suggested that some families needed an immediate response and if that was not possible, they could be difficult to contact again.

Stigma and trust were also identified as potential barriers. When interviewed as part of the evaluation, one offender's partner said that the biggest obstacle to a family engaging with support services was '*generations of mistrust*'. She suggested that discrimination and stigma were issues that needed to be confronted if offenders' families that needed support were to make themselves known. In an attempt to engage with families from black and minority ethnic groups in particular, CSOF Bristol took advice from another Barnardo's project and developed links with smaller local community groups to gain the confidence of these families.

Case studies

To illustrate how the CSOF service, in partnership with other agencies, have contributed to the intended outcomes, the journeys of five families are described in Table 3 overpage. These case studies, based on interviews with the families and information from CSOF Project Workers, describe the families' circumstances prior to the referral, the inputs provided, the activities carried out with the families and the outcomes achieved. The case studies also indicate where other services were involved and contributed to these outcomes. The case studies were chosen to illustrate a range of family circumstances and interventions. All names in the case studies have been changed.

Table 3. Family case studies

Family 1	Parents	Children	Other services
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father was in prison for child sex offences (non-familial). - The mother was concerned about her children and their lack of contact with their father (statutory risk assessments having approved contact). - She was struggling to come to terms with the offence and felt she needed to know more so she could make informed decisions about the father's contact with the children. <i>'You have to think ahead; he's not going to be in prison forever. Are the children going to be in danger when he comes out?'</i> - The mother felt isolated, vulnerable and unsupported. <i>'There was never any offer of support or help... I felt as if I was the criminal. Me and the children didn't do anything wrong but they just left us to get on with it.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11-year-old Tom and 13-year-old Joe were struggling with separation from their father who they had not seen for six months. <i>'Their dad was here 24/7 and then he was gone with no form of contact... it was like he had died.'</i> - Tom was having nightmares and thought he would not see his father again. - The children feared that their peers would find out where their father was and what he had done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social services were initially involved with the family to establish whether there were safeguarding issues. - The police were involved when the mother received <i>'threats on the computer'</i>. - Tom was seeing the counsellor at school. - The counsellor contacted an advocacy service so Tom could talk about what he wanted. - The counsellor also referred the family to CSOF because the issues were related to their father's offending.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for 10 months, assessment tool, outcomes framework (see p38), resources from Stop it Now! and Action for Prisoners' Families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for 10 months, outcomes framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School counsellor, advocate, PACT worker.

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<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaison with school counsellor so the mother could attend a three-way session with Tom if necessary. - One-to-one sessions with the mother so she could understand the implications of the offence, supported by resources <i>What we need to know to protect our children</i> and <i>Someone in my family has sexually abused a child</i>. - <i>'The [Project Worker's] going through the right channels to find a way to help me make up my mind about the situation... so I can make a judgment that is suitable for my children's safety.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-to-one support to prepare Tom and Joe for contact with their father and advise them on what to expect at a prison visit. - Liaison with Offender Manager and prison to facilitate telephone contact for the children, then prison visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School counsellor has one-to-one sessions with Tom (and as necessary), and she liaises with the deputy head so school is aware of any issues. - The advocacy service withdrew as CSOF took the lead in establishing contact with father. - Signposted to PACT for ongoing support during prison visits. PACT is also aware of children's anxieties concerning the father's offence and will be able to offer support when the time is right.
<p>Short-term outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother received the support she wanted. <i>'Having [the Project Worker] was a weight lifted off my shoulders.'</i> <i>She felt she could contact CSOF when she needed to.</i> - The mother felt comfortable to be open and honest with the Project Worker <i>'It's non-judgmental... you've got enough going through your mind – like 'what are the public thinking about you?' – so it's nice, a breath of fresh air.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The children were confident to speak openly to the Project Worker about their contact with their father. - Contact issues are addressed with CSOF support. <i>'As soon as [the Project Worker] got involved, it turned around. I guess if I'd carried on, on my own, I still would be waiting now.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school counsellor identified that his father's imprisonment was causing difficulties for Tom. - She was aware of CSOF, sought advice from the project and subsequently felt it was appropriate to refer Tom.
<p>Inter-mediate outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The family is less isolated. - Parental stress is reduced. <i>'She made a difference for my children so it has made me happier.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact has been re-established with the father and the relationship is being rebuilt. <i>'The children got phone calls first, then visits. I've noticed a big difference in them since having that.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support during prison visits is reducing the children's anxiety and improving the quality of contact with their father.

Family 2	Parents	Children	Other services
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father was serving a prison sentence. - The mother was finding it difficult to cope, struggling with her children's anxiety and behaviour. <i>'We hit rock bottom, me and the kids... The children were unruly and I couldn't cope with it. I was in such a mess at that point.'</i> - The family was finding things difficult financially. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three children aged six and under. - Ben was particularly anxious; his sleep was disrupted and he'd started soiling himself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother approached her GP who initially referred to CAMHS, but it was decided after an assessment that this service was not needed. - The mother spoke to the children's head teacher but <i>'it probably would have been just talking and having a moan'</i>. She wasn't sure who referred to CSOF – it was, in fact, the Offender Manager following a home visit.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for seven months, assessment tool, outcomes framework, parenting resources including <i>Incredible Years</i>. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offender Manager for the father.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-to-one sessions with the mother about the children's behaviour, discussing strategies and providing resources she could use. <i>'We went through different ideas about what we needed to do and then put something into practice... the Incredible Years book is a godsend. She was always there with different options if something didn't work.'</i> - Help with a grant application for school uniform. - Conversations with the father on release, providing information about sources of employment, but he did not engage with the work on parenting strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Project Worker met the children but support was provided to mother. 	

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<p>Short-term outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother was able to voice her needs and felt the Project Worker was easy to talk to. - The mother was supported to try new techniques with her children. <i>'[The Project Worker] helped me see things clearly... she encourages you and you get there.'</i> - The father was aware of the stresses on his partner while in prison, but on returning home he did not have the parenting skills that the mother had acquired, and this was causing difficulties. She said: <i>'We have been apart for so long; he's working in one way and we're working in another.'</i> 		
<p>Inter-mediate outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother's parenting capacity has increased, and she is less stressed as the children's behaviour has improved. - She has a greater understanding of the reasons for their behaviour and strategies to manage it. <i>'She gave me the keys I needed to make it right.'</i> - The family is less isolated - The mother has renewed confidence and has become a Barnardo's volunteer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The children's behaviour improved. - Ben's sleeping pattern improved and he stopped soling himself. 	

Family 3	Parents	Children	Other services
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father had been in prison for six years, and was released three years ago. - He had not lived with his children since he went to prison and lacked confidence in his parenting skills. <i>'It was quite a big shock for me after living on my own and being in prison... my head didn't know which way to go, I didn't know what to do, I was sort of stuck and people I was asking didn't really know.'</i> - His daughter, Emma, coming to live with him had created financial worries. - The father had health and substance misuse problems. - He was also concerned about Emma's lack of confidence and negative self-image. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16-year-old Emma left home after falling out with her mother and moved in with her father. - She was not in employment, education or training (NEET) and hadn't attended school for a number of years. - Emma did not know what she wanted to do and had <i>'no motivation'</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father had a key worker at the drug and alcohol service. He picked up a leaflet about CSOF at their office while he was waiting to see his key worker to ask for help.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for six months, assessment tool, outcomes framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for eight months, outcomes framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drug and alcohol service key worker, careers service counsellor.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CAF assessment initiated by CSOF. - Assistance with applications for child benefit and higher-level bursary. - The father came to CAF meetings. <i>'They have all linked together, which is another good thing with this... everyone here has got in touch and worked out what should be going on.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF Project Worker is the CAF lead professional for Emma. - CSOF facilitated contact with a careers participation team. - Helped with an application for a clothing grant and the Project Worker went shopping for work clothes with Emma. - One-to-one sessions to review progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The drug and alcohol service key worker was aware of CSOF. - The key worker came to CAF meetings with the father. - The counsellor meets with Emma when she requests a one-to-one session.

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<p>Short-term outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father felt the CSOF worker was approachable and could offer the support the family needed. <i>'It was a big panic so as soon as [the Project Worker] appeared, there is a way, there is light.'</i> - He was happy to talk about what they needed and felt the worker <i>'made things happen'</i>. - The father realised he needed to be there for Emma. <i>'I can't do anything dangerous or illegal or I'll end up in prison again, and that would be it for both of us.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emma was able to voice her needs, including saying who she wanted to lead the CAF. <i>'We did need help because things weren't straightforward, but it was good that she came up because we didn't know what to do.'</i> - She felt the Project Worker was easy to talk to, understood her situation and gave her confidence. <i>'You don't feel like you're nothing when you're with her.'</i> - Emma said the Project Worker had <i>'pointed me in the right direction about my education'</i>. 	
<p>Inter-mediate outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parental stress was reduced. - The father is learning about his daughter and how to be a parent. - They are building their relationship: Emma said her father <i>'gave me that confidence boost to get out and do everything. I couldn't have done it without him'</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emma now has work ambitions and confidence. <i>'I've come such a long way since July... looking back to when I didn't do anything, it's brilliant.'</i> - She is on an apprentice scheme and is less isolated. <i>'Things have changed for me, big time.'</i> 	

Family 4	Parents	Children	Other services
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father is out on licence after serving a prison sentence for child sex offences (non-familial) - He is separated from the family and the mother has a new partner. Their children, Sam and Alice, have weekly supervised contact with their father. - The mother did not know what to say when the children asked about their father's offence. - She described the poor atmosphere in the house, reporting '<i>constant rowing</i>'. - The mother's mood was very low and she was feeling very isolated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother described 15-year-old Sam as '<i>emotional and withdrawn</i>'. He had been bullied in the past as a result of his father's offence. - 12-year-old Alice had angry and violent outbursts. She was also overweight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father spoke to his Offender Manager after hearing from his children that '<i>the family was going through a bad phase</i>'. - Sam had access to the counsellor at school and Alice was on the waiting list. No other services were involved with the family at the time of CSOF referral, although two years earlier the family had received support from the children's services early intervention team.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for 10 months, assessment tool, outcomes framework, resources from APF. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family therapist, specialist therapy, dietician, the Mind, Exercise, Nutrition... Do it! (MEND) programme, school counsellor.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family needs assessment and referrals made to other services. - One-to-one sessions with the mother to provide emotional support and review progress. - The mother did not have the confidence to contact the school so the CSOF worker initially made appointments and accompanied her. - Discussions about how the mother could tell the children about the offence and provided resources. The Project Worker and family therapist offered to be there if mother wanted this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF Project Worker met with the children but the work has primarily been to co-ordinate other services and support the mother. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the assessment, CSOF referred to a mental health family therapy project, and for Alice, a specialist therapy programme, a healthy lifestyle programme and a dietician. - CSOF spoke to the school to pursue counselling for Alice, but due to capacity it was only started approximately eight months later.

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<p>Short-term outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother felt confident to voice her needs and in control. <i>'Everything that was offered was only if we wanted it... everything we accepted was our choice.'</i> - The mother said she feels confident to tell the children about the offence when the time is right. - Home/school communication has improved. - Involvement of CSOF has resulted in the father <i>'shifting his position'</i>, now appreciating that his offence has had an impact on the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the first therapy session, the family decided to spend more time together and have a family night once a week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The family therapy helped the family to think about how they spoke and listened to each other. - The therapy sessions enabled the children to start to express how they were feeling. - Sam and Alice have points of contact in school they can talk to, now including the counsellor.
<p>Inter-mediate outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother is less isolated and now knows there is support available if the family needs it. - Parenting capacity has increased; the mother feels less stressed and more confident, saying she <i>'became stronger – I can cope with it'</i>. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alice's self-esteem is growing. - Communication within the family has improved – the mother said: <i>'Our relationship with the children has changed. They are more connected with us now... it has brought us closer as a family unit.'</i>
<p>Family 5</p>	<p>Parents/carer</p>	<p>Children</p>	<p>Other services</p>
<p>Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The father was a repeat offender and currently in prison. He had not had any contact with his daughter, Chloe, since she was six. - The mother had a new partner and two younger children. - The relationship between Chloe and her mother was stressful at times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chloe was nine years old. - There was a lot of negativity about her father at home and all Chloe heard about him was bad. This was having an effect on her self-image. - Chloe was exhibiting difficult behaviour at home and at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other agencies (social services, family support, Home-Start, a drug and alcohol service) were involved with the family although not specifically with Chloe. - A social worker recognised that Chloe needed specific help and made the referral to CSOF.
<p>Inputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF assessment tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOF for seven months, outcomes framework, resources from Young Southampton and This is me, helping children express themselves (Roberts, H). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social worker, family support, drug and alcohol team key worker.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother's view was that other people were addressing Chloe's behaviour but someone needed to talk to her about her emotions. - The Project Worker talked to the mother about the impact that hearing only negative things about her father was having on Chloe. <i>'I didn't understand why she was angry with me, I thought she should be angry with her dad.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-to-one sessions in school with Chloe to explore her feelings about her father and improve her self-image and identity. - Joint sessions with Chloe and her mother to present a different perspective on the father, talking about positive or normal events, such as activities they did together, favourite food, how proud he was when Chloe was born. - Planned case closure so Chloe was prepared when it happened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family support included tasks for Chloe such as getting ready for school and washing up after dinner. - Chloe was subject to an internal exclusion at school so was being taught outside the classroom. When the exclusion began, arrangements were made for CSOF and the school to work more closely.
Short-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More openness at home in talking about the father, and the mother is more aware of what she is saying and its impact on Chloe. - The mother has a different approach towards Chloe and her behaviour. <i>'Chloe has come on leaps and bounds – and we have as a family learned to be more understanding about everything.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chloe is confident to talk freely to the CSOF Project Worker. <i>'I feel comfortable when I say things to her. No one has talked like this to me before.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chloe's internal exclusion has come to an end. She has returned to her class and her behaviour has continued to improve.
Inter-mediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved relationship between the mother and Chloe, with better communication and them spending more time together. - Reduced parental stress and improved parenting skills. <i>'It has taught me a lot and things have calmed down because of it.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chloe says she has strategies to manage how she feels: the sessions helped to <i>'get it all out and then knowing how to make it better'</i>. - Her sense of identity has improved and she can talk positively about her father. 	

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Quantitative assessment of outcomes for families and assessing long-term change

As described in the research methodology (Section 2), it was intended that a quantitative assessment of the outcomes achieved for families who received support through the CSOF service would also be carried out as part of the evaluation. Data were captured using Barnardo's outcomes monitoring framework, an electronic database holding a list of outcomes, from which services select. For each service user, the most relevant outcomes are identified during the initial conversations with the Project Worker. A five-point scale was used to assess an individual's progress across the course of an intervention through an initial assessment, follow-up assessments (typically every three months), and a final assessment at case closure.

A review of this data found that assessment data were available from two time points (initial and follow-up/final assessment) for 85 of the 134 individuals supported directly by the CSOF service (63.4 per cent). However, different outcomes were measured for different cases depending on the particular issues that the individual family member was facing, and there appeared to be some inconsistency between the projects in the interpretation and scoring of outcomes.⁹ This meant these scores may not fully reflect all the outcomes achieved for families.

As part of the analysis process, these outcomes were mapped against the outcomes specified in the CSOF model. This was carried out by the researcher through discussion with the Project Workers to ensure that it accurately reflected how these data were being recorded. The available data are presented in Table 4, showing the number of individuals who had

improved scores, showed no change and whose situations had worsened between initial and follow-up assessment.

Due to the variability in outcomes measured and the low number of cases for some of these outcomes, caution is advised in interpreting this data. However there is a clear trend towards improvement for the majority of outcomes. Important outcomes prioritised and achieved for this group of families are outlined as follows:

- Access to support services had improved for 75 per cent of individuals, but in a quarter of cases the CSOF project identified further unmet needs. CSOF worked with many families to access other services.
- The level of stress had improved for 74 per cent of parents, but the 16 per cent for whom there had been no change or the situation had worsened reflected the nature of the challenges that families were facing.
- Parent-child contact had improved for 89 per cent of cases, but parent-child relationships were clearly an ongoing concern for some families. CSOF was working with a significant number of separated families (sometimes because of the offence or prison sentence but also as a result of relationship breakdown), where these were going to be difficult issues to address.
- CSOF worked with children in groups and individually to improve their confidence and self-esteem. The outcomes data illustrated a degree of success in this area with improvement observed in half of the children where this was an issue, but also showed that these issues continued for others.

⁹ Project Workers are able to select from more than 100 different outcomes in Barnardo's outcome framework to indicate the outcomes that they are working towards with each service user. Although guidance was provided to Project Workers about which outcomes to select, in some instances more than one outcome descriptor fitted the individual's circumstances, leading to inconsistency in data recording between cases and service location.

Table 4. Quantitative assessment of outcomes for families

Outcome measured	Change observed between initial and follow-up/final assessment			
	No. of individuals showing improvement	No. of individuals with no change	No. of individuals whose situation had got worse	Total
Families voices are heard				
Ability to express feelings	10	4	1	15
Views voiced and acted on	4	2	0	6
Reduced isolation/stigma				
Family has access to support services	46	14	1	61
Reduced victimisation/discrimination	8	0	0	8
Satisfactory school/college attendance	3	3	1	7
Family less isolated	4	2	0	6
Access to/use of inclusive resources in community	1	2	0	3
Build community capacity to meet children's needs	1	0	0	1
Increased capacity to parent				
Reduced parental stress	25	6	3	34
Improved parent confidence/resilience/health	4	2	1	7
Improved self-esteem	4	1	1	6
Improved contact and/or relationships				
Increased parent-child contact	17	2	0	19
Enhanced parent/carer-child relationships	8	7	0	15
Improved family communication	4	2	0	6
Able to develop healthy/trusting relationships	2	1	0	3
Children have improved confidence/self-esteem				
Improved self-esteem	8	8	0	16
Improved mental health & wellbeing	2	1	0	3
Social skills gained/improved	1	2	0	3

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The long-term outcomes for offenders and their families

The long-term aims of the CSOF service were to improve the life chances of offenders' children (including fewer becoming involved in the criminal justice system) and to improve desistance rates. However, because the CSOF service was newly established and operational for 20 months at most, not enough time had elapsed to assess desistance or the longer-term impact on children. Only more systematic recording of the input by Offender Managers and tracking over a period of time (by initiatives such as the Justice Data Lab) would show whether it resulted in an actual reduction in offending.

It is possible to say, however, that:

- Circumstances improved for some children and young people who were anxious, angry, had low self-esteem and/or were isolated. Through direct work with the CSOF service, referrals from CSOF to other agencies or advice to other practitioners, they were able to talk about the issues confronting them. Action was taken to address issues of concern and children and young people were equipped with strategies to manage their difficulties.
- Parents and carers who engaged with CSOF were supported to manage and understand their situation. Sometimes this was by addressing practical or financial concerns, while other parents needed one-to-one support to enable them to come to terms with the impact of an offence or to improve their parenting capacity. Parents and carers who felt isolated were helped to access the support they needed.
- There were cases where CSOF input with the offender or their family had clearly resulted in an increased understanding on the part of the offender, and indicated that it would affect their future behaviour. There was also evidence to suggest that Offender Managers were more aware of the impact of offending on the family, and some were adopting a different approach in their conversations with offenders, encouraging a greater focus on their children's welfare.

4.2.2 Local service response

This section shows how the CSOF service contributed to developments in the local service environment. This is drawn from interviews with stakeholders, the theory of change workshops conducted with staff members and follow-up phone calls with staff. The very wide range of agencies engaged by the three projects is shown in Appendix 4.

Identification, assessment and recording

The CSOF service sought to increase the frequency of identification of families of offenders and encourage assessment of their needs. It did so through a number of mechanisms, including training and awareness raising for professionals, and by encouraging and/or supporting partner agencies to review current practice and procedures to ensure that families of offenders could be identified and their needs assessed. The rationale for this work was twofold: first, to improve identification and assessment of families in the areas in which the CSOF service was operating; thus enabling them to access the support they require; and second, to improve understanding of the vulnerability of this group and aid the strategic development of services.

As part of the training delivered to professionals and awareness-raising activities carried out with partner agencies, the CSOF service provided information about the extent and impact of parental offending and encouraged practitioners to be alert to the possibility that it may be affecting people they were working with. This appeared to be effective in encouraging practitioners to consider the potential impact of offending on the family, with one stakeholder commenting that *'because staff have attended the training they will be more likely to ask... they are more mindful of the whole family impact'*. (stakeholder, youth offending team).

One of the key agencies that the CSOF service worked with around improving identification procedures was the probation service. The secondment of two Offender Managers to the CSOF service in Wales and Bristol,

respectively, allowed a thorough examination of existing procedures to be carried out. Stakeholders and CSOF Project Workers reported that this encouraged debate about whether Offender Managers should be more involved in preventative work, and discussion of issues relating to children and caring responsibilities with offenders, even when the nature of the offence or previous known behaviour does not *'set alarm bells ringing'* (stakeholder, Probation Trust), for example, in relation to safeguarding concerns.

As part of this work, particular attention was paid to the Pre-sentence Report (PSR), which is prepared by the Offender Manager following an interview with the offender, and includes information about the offender's background, the offence, and their family and work circumstances, and the Offender Management System Assessment (OASys), which is used to measure the needs and risks of offenders. Some Probation Trust interviewees suggested that changing probation assessments to include questions about family welfare would help facilitate a *'culture shift'* within the probation service, and enable relevant conversations with the offender. Although these tools currently include information that is relevant to children and families of offenders (for example, a *'risk of harm'* assessment where there are safeguarding issues, and a section on *'impact of custody'* on the PSR; and a question about relationships as part of the OASys), the majority of Offender Managers and Probation Managers interviewed indicated that they felt these do not currently draw out the needs of offenders' children.

While it was beyond the scope and remit of the project to make changes to the national format for either PSR or OASys, the CSOF service in Wales was able to provide input into the Developing Practice Work Stream, a working group set up within the Wales Probation Trust to develop practice and procedures in particular areas as part of the Excellence in Public Protection and Rehabilitation (EPPR) programme.

Although the new assessment guidance was too near completion when the project was established for this to be amended, it was agreed that as the work of the Developing Practice Work Stream progressed the *'think family'* perspective would be encouraged. This was reflected in the new purpose statement incorporated into the Wales Probation Trust's Children and Adult Safeguarding Practice Directions, which states its purpose as to *'work to support the children and families of offenders in the knowledge that family ties can be a significant factor in reducing the likelihood of offending and that parental imprisonment can lead to adverse outcomes for children and young people'*.

Participation in training delivered by the CSOF service appeared to encourage people to think about their own organisation's procedures. One participant from a college said they had discussed changing their enrolment form used at the college to allow the student to say if they have a parent in prison, enabling them to *'fast track personal tutor and financial support, if appropriate'* (stakeholder, Further Education college). Other practitioners, such as school health nurses, said they would go on to discuss the coverage of their assessments with their managers to ensure they allowed them to effectively assess the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment. Feedback from one youth offending team (YOT) also indicated that they were investigating whether the Probation Service could inform them if a parent of a YOT client was known to them, as part of the more holistic approach to addressing the needs of families of offenders, which was encouraged through their work with the CSOF service.

The raised profile of the impact of parental offending encouraged a range of other services in all three CSOF areas to make changes to the information they capture about service users at the point of referral, to ensure that it helps them identify whether the child or family has additional support needs in relation to parental offending. Partners who made changes to their referral forms and/or

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procedures as a result included: children's centres (this was also encouraged by the Ofsted's inspection guidance¹⁰), education psychology (Isle of Wight), Attendance and Wellbeing (Rhondda Cynon Taf, Wales), children's services (Caerphilly, Wales), Early Help (Bristol) and Victim Support (Wales). One provider suggested that *'the change to the registration form raises awareness and helps reduce stigma so people will come forward'* (stakeholder, Children's Centre). Some services have also adapted their assessment tools (including Troubled Families, Women's Aid and Gwent's Crime Reduction Initiative for drug rehabilitation requirements) and questions about the support needs of offenders' families are also being asked by court-based probation staff in Gwent. In one local authority area in Wales, social services have also included 'family member in prison' on their reporting protocol.

On the Isle of Wight, the CSOF service contributed to the review of the CAF assessment process. The new Safeguarding Children Board's and Children's Trust's 'early help' threshold now includes a category of 'children of prisoners or parents subject to community orders'. This is an important step in improving identification of children of offenders in this area. It also helps to address an issue that was identified by the CSOF service during direct work with families, whereby families might have been referred to and assessed by children's social care (for example, in cases of a sexual offence being committed by a family member), but on finding there were no safeguarding concerns, the case was closed, despite the family having other needs.

To ensure that an offender's record makes a clear connection between offending and the

issues facing the family, and raises the profile of this area of work, CSOF Wales investigated how Delius, the case management recording system used in the probation service, could be used to identify when an agency was providing support to an offender's family. There is a field on Delius that enables an Offender Manager to identify that Troubled Families is working with an offender and their family. As this service does not operate in Wales, it was agreed that during the pilot this field would be used as a flag for CSOF or the involvement of other family support agencies such as IFSS. The name of the agency working with the family was to be recorded in a notes box.

The work of CSOF Wales, informed by their casework and relationships with Offender Managers, has resulted in the development (with the NOMS application support team) of operational processes and proposals for amendments to Delius, initially in the areas that CSOF is operating. These changes, which are subject to agreement by the National User Group and Delius business partners, mean that family support information will be recorded within the offender index section of Delius and the contact log, and would be visible if the Offender Manager navigated to one of these screens. This information could be reported on at a local and national level.

CSOF activity also promoted the discussion of how children's centres in Bristol and on the Isle of Wight could record information on their databases that would enable them to identify children of offenders, and whether agencies such as the CSOF service were working with a family. There was capacity on the electronic system used in both areas to record this information, but it did not appear to be happening systematically during the

¹⁰ Children of offenders and/or those in custody are one of the target groups specified in Ofsted's 2014 children's centre inspection handbook.

pilot. However, it is still considered to be an area of development for the Bristol Steering Group and was part of their strategic plan for 2014-15.

Consent and information sharing

CSOF sought to identify whether the procedures for consent and information sharing were able to adequately accommodate family support services in their present form. It was important that processes were transparent, legally compliant and took into account the potential risks for families and practitioners.

CSOF staff reported that their casework with families raised questions about risk and illustrated the necessity for criminal justice agencies and children and family services to share information. CSOF Project Workers generally asked the referrer (in the case of self-referrals, a family member) if there were any risk-related issues they needed to be aware of, but it became clear to them that there may be risks to the worker or the family that the family may not be aware of or may not share with support services. In providing family support, the worker also needs to know whether there are limitations on what they can and cannot do, for example with reference to contact between the offender and family members. This information was available to the CSOF projects through contact with Children's Services on a case-by-case basis and more systematically in CSOF Wales, where closer working relationships enabled the seconded Offender Manager to support the link between the CSOF Project Worker and the relevant Offender Managers.

Work with one CSOF family also highlighted the potential for support workers to come across information that had to be shared with the Probation Service and police. A vulnerable family was being supported by a friend who was a registered sex offender and should not have been in contact with children. In this instance the Project Worker was able to talk to the seconded Offender Manager and they approached the relevant person in probation.

The basic procedures to gain consent from families for information to be shared with CSOF broadly fitted within existing formats – for example, the CAF documentation where a family specifies who information can be shared with or the 'permissions slip' that an offender signs at court. CSOF recognised the need, however, for information-sharing processes to be in line with the Data Protection Act. CSOF Wales consulted with the Probation Trust, Barnardo's and NOMS information security staff and, using the template devised by the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI), produced a protocol for the CSOF service. This specifies who sends and receives information, what information needs to be shared, why the information is required, how long it is kept and when and how information is shared. The protocol currently awaits Probation Service sign off.

Enhancing practice

Other ways in which the CSOF service appears to have influenced the local service environment has been through promoting and developing the role of 'Single Points of Contact' (SPOCs) or 'Champions' for children and families of offenders in Probation Services and other partner agencies. In Wales, for example, the Probation Service has extended the role of the Safeguarding SPOCs to include children and families of offenders and the updated Child Safeguarding Practice Direction, to which CSOF contributed, now refers to 'working with offenders' families'. In the Isle of Wight, the 30 CAF co-ordinators are to become Champions for this area of work and in Bristol, family support workers were nominated as a Champion in each of the children's centres. Tasks undertaken by the SPOCs or Champions include being an informed point of contact on issues relating to families of offenders, providing advice and information to colleagues and service users, presenting updates to team meetings and distributing information about other relevant services.

The service has also supported the development of practice through the production of 'charters' on the Isle of Wight and in Bristol. On the Isle of Wight, a '*charter of rights*' was developed by the steering group

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for organisations and services supporting children and families of offenders (this had been developed but organisations had not yet been asked to sign up to the charter at the point that the evaluation was being conducted). In Bristol, the CSOF service supported nine young people aged eight to 16 to develop a 'Charter for Children of Prisoners', which has been endorsed by Bristol City Council. These charters were seen as an additional tool to raise awareness among families and indicate that support was available, 'conveying the message in a different way' (stakeholder, Children's Centre).

There appeared to be encouraging developments in terms of improved joint working, with children's centre staff in Bristol and the Isle of Wight reporting that they have had more contact with Offender Managers during the last year, which they assume is because the Probation Service is now more aware of the support they can provide. Discussions are also underway to encourage the use of children's centre premises as venues to meet with families. Some Children's Services staff also reported that Offender Managers have been more likely to attend child protection case conferences or Team Around the Family/Common Assessment Framework meetings to share information as a result of the awareness raising carried out by the CSOF service.

The Bristol *Charter for Children of Prisoners* includes the following six points:

- Children with a parent in prison should be helped to write letters, make phone calls or visit if they want to.
- Children with a parent in prison should be welcomed and respected by prison staff.
- Children with a parent in prison should be told where they are and how long they will be there for.
- Children with a parent in prison should be able to talk to an adult in confidence, who can help and support them.
- When police arrest someone they should take into account the impact on the child.

- Professionals (teachers, nurses etc.) should know how many children have a parent in prison and how to support them.

The CSOF project identified that children and young people had concerns that were not being heard. The development and promotion of the Charter was seen as being one way in which they could be enabled to speak out, raising awareness among professionals. The Charter is being used as a vehicle to promote change within individual agencies: as part of their work programme for 2014-15, the Bristol Strategy Group is encouraging its members to sign up to the Charter and to develop their own service action plan.

Strategic developments

The specific focus of the CSOF service on families of offenders and its expertise in this area appears to have enabled the service to contribute to wider developments at a local and national level. The steering groups set up in Bristol and the Isle of Wight were established so that relevant agencies could be brought together, information could be shared and appropriate services developed. Responses from steering group members showed that these groups enabled managers to 'learn a lot about the agendas of other agencies' (stakeholder, Children's Centre) and membership from a range of agencies provided 'expert knowledge' in specific areas (stakeholder, drug and alcohol service). Professional relationships also developed between group members, enabling work to be pursued outside the group – one example of this was described during an interview with a youth offending team manager who was liaising with a college in relation to supporting siblings of young offenders. There has been a commitment from stakeholders to maintain these groups beyond the CSOF pilot to embed changes that have taken place and further develop the local strategic direction.

In Bristol, a Strategy and Action Plan for 2014-15 to support children affected by parental imprisonment was produced by the steering group. Its six aims are to:

- raise awareness
- identify children of prisoners
- establish referral arrangements
- develop strategies to support children
- develop and promote the Bristol charter
- monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy and learn from wider research.

In Wales, where the service was able to contribute to a number of groups and forums with a Wales-wide remit (see Section 4.1 for more information), the work of the CSOF service has been recognised in the Welsh Government's new Wales Reducing Re-offending Strategy. Barnardo's Cymru's contact with a Welsh Assembly Member has also played a key role in establishing a Cross-Party Group for children affected by parental imprisonment, the inaugural meeting of which was informed by the work of CSOF and focused on community provision for prisoners' families.

4.2.3 Professional awareness

A key outcome for CSOF was to broaden the awareness of professionals from a range of services. CSOF aimed to make practitioners more aware of the impact of parental offending so they would consider it as a possibility when working with an offender, child or family, and be able take appropriate action. Awareness-raising activities included multi-agency training sessions and bespoke presentations with individual services.

Feedback from professionals on the one-day training course on issues affecting families of offenders was extremely positive, and the vast majority considered it to be relevant to their roles (91 per cent stated that most or all aspects of the training were relevant). One health visitor, for example, said she had had offenders' families on her caseload but *'hadn't realised the impact on children – I hadn't thought about it'*. Analysis carried out for the evaluation on the pre- and post-training questionnaires completed by

training participants indicated that it had improved training participants' confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, as illustrated by the data in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Training participants' confidence in their knowledge and understanding before and after the training course

Learning outcome	% participants confident or very confident	
	Pre training	Post training
The effect of imprisonment on prisoners' families	28	98
Stages in the offender's journey	23	95
The support needs of prisoners' families	21	97
How to find out what prisoners' families want and need and how to use this information	11	93
How to improve the co-ordination of services to provide more effective support for those affected by the imprisonment of a family member	11	86
How to improve your own practice in supporting prisoners' families	16	93

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Schools were identified as a key service because of the extent of their contact with children and young people, but their number and diversity made this time consuming. Advice was sought from groups such as the local school heads associations about the best way of communicating with schools and Governors, and approaches that proved to be successful included: using existing forums where schools come together (for example, SENCO meetings); running 'twilight' (after-school) sessions for teachers; and making direct contact with key individuals (Head of Year, learning mentors and Primary School Deputy Head Teachers).

Both the one-day training and the shorter awareness-raising sessions sought to increase professionals' knowledge of referral pathways (including reinforcing any changes in children's services procedures) and provide information about partner organisations. This appeared to be effective, with participants reporting that they had a better understanding of roles and responsibilities as a result. One early years practitioner said: *'It was useful to find out who people were, about their roles and what support was available if you needed it.'* Improved knowledge about local sources of support was a key outcome of the training, and using this knowledge to support families and/or make referrals was the biggest anticipated change to practice, with nearly a third of training participants (31 per cent) stating that they intended to apply what they had learned in the training in this way.

The training in Bristol and the Isle of Wight included a presentation from a family affected by offending. Training participants provided feedback that this was a valuable element of the training, particularly in relation to understanding the impact on children, with one individual describing it as *'excellent having the input and knowledge from someone who's living it'* (trainee, Strengthening Families). In Bristol, the training has also been delivered in a prison setting. A school nurse said she *'really got to see what life is like for the whole family'*.

There is also evidence to suggest that the training delivered by the CSOF service led to professionals changing certain aspects of their practice. Following the training, the CSOF service received referrals and requests for advice from participants, and interviews conducted with practitioners after the training indicated that they were more likely to think about the impact of offending when working with a family, and to take steps to address related issues as a result. In addition, two-thirds of practitioners responding to the follow-up survey described things they had done differently following the training, including making a referral, reviewing current cases with family offending in mind, offering targeted support to a child or family, displaying CSOF publicity materials or talking to colleagues about the support needs of offenders' families. One children's services practitioner reported that the training had enabled her to prepare a grandmother and children for a first prison visit, which they had anticipated would be a *'frightening'* experience. It is important to note that the benefit of the training is likely to extend beyond those present at the training day, as many attendees said they would take actions that would raise the profile of this area of work within their organisations and others said that they would share their learning with colleagues.

Increased awareness of the impact of offending on families following the training has encouraged some agencies to develop their own practices and resources, sometimes with the assistance of CSOF, including the identification of 'Champions', developing bespoke training for particular groups/agencies and revising working tools. For example, the Isle of Wight Youth Offending Team worked with CSOF to revise their parenting programme. The more holistic approach being encouraged has resulted in a greater consideration of the impact on younger siblings of offending and separation as a result of incarceration.

In recognition of the value of in-depth training on the impact of offending on families, six staff

members from the Probation Service (four in Wales, one in Bristol and one on the Isle of Wight) have been trained to deliver the one-day Hidden Sentence training course that the CSOF service was using to train professionals, and an agreement has been reached to roll out this training. The CSOF projects have also entered into discussions with Local Safeguarding Children Boards to investigate whether Hidden Sentence training can become part of their rolling multi-agency training programme. CSOF Wales has worked with HMP Parc to promote the schools handbook alongside their Invisible Walls Schools Accord. These developments would help to extend the impact of the professional awareness-raising activities carried out to date.

4.3 Learning

This study adopted a mixed methods approach to evaluating the Community Support for Offenders Families service and sought to assess how this new pilot service contributed to improved outcomes for offenders' families, influenced the local service response and increased professional awareness of the support needs of offenders' families. The major learning points of the evaluation are set out below. They highlight some of the best practice and challenges faced by the service and its evaluation.

Service formation and development

- Changes in resourcing during the lifetime of the service had an impact on the work of the projects and resulted in less integration with Probation Trusts where an Offender Manager was not seconded or seconded only for a short time. There was no secondment of an Offender Manager in the Isle of Wight project, and in Bristol the secondment was for only six months. This meant that the development of procedures and protocols was led by the CSOF project in Wales, and that joint working and information sharing between CSOF and probation was stronger in Wales than in the other areas.
 - The re-organisation of services during the pilot had an impact on the service.
- The preparation for the transformation of the Probation Trusts into the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies in particular had an impact on CSOF activity as there were changes in personnel and additional demands on Offender Managers' time.
- There were some gaps in personal data about the offenders and family members, inconsistency in the use of outcomes and missing outcomes assessments. The outcomes selected for the service did not cover all areas of work (for example, developing parenting skills or increasing household resources were not outcomes selected) so the requirement for and success of work in these areas was not necessarily completely captured.
 - The objectives of the service could have been more precisely defined when the service was established, and emphasis in terms of methods used to achieve the project goals varied across the three sites – for example, greater emphasis on training professionals versus direct family support. This resulted in difficulties in assessing the overall impact of CSOF.

Awareness raising and engaging with partner agencies

- Awareness-raising activities underpinned much of the work of the CSOF service and enabled the three projects to engage with partners and influence developments in the local service context, as well as to identify families that needed support. This was a process that required the service to work with partner agencies in a range of different ways throughout the pilot period.
- Engaging senior staff and gaining their commitment was critical to ensure that they understood the relevance of the work, could promote it, and commit time and/or resources within the organisation where necessary. 'Champions' for this area of work were established within some services to provide advice and information to their colleagues and keep the issue on the agenda.
- The physical presence of the CSOF service in probation offices, either as an office base or at drop-ins/surgeries, was an

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important factor in encouraging referrals and Offender Managers described the benefits of being able to talk to a member of the CSOF team within a few days of family issues being identified.

- The secondments and gifted time of Offender Managers within the service helped to reinforce its relevance for criminal justice agencies and enabled the service's aims and activities to be communicated in a meaningful way for these agencies – for example, by emphasising the role of family relationships in desistance.
- The limited staff resources and wide scope of the CSOF service restricted the time that could be given to engaging all agencies, especially those that were more reluctant or large in number. This was particularly the case in Wales where the service covered eight local authority areas. It took time and persistence to access key services in some areas and there was a need to revisit teams, especially as this was a time of significant organisational change and, in some cases, high staff turnover.
- Schools were identified as key services but engaging with them was particularly resource intensive due to their large number and diversity. Direct contact with key individuals who are more likely to have contact with children of offenders (Head of Year, learning mentors and Primary School Deputy Head Teachers) and using an existing forum (such as SENCO meetings) were useful approaches. Timing awareness-raising sessions to fit in with the school day was one way of enabling the participation of teaching staff.
- The awareness-raising briefings and training were successful in reaching a large number of relevant professionals and in improving their knowledge and understanding of the needs of offenders' families. Participants were able to illustrate how they could apply their learning in their practice. Towards the end of the pilot, the projects were investigating how the provision of training could be sustained in the future.

Working with families

- Self-referral proved to be an important pathway to support for some isolated families, including families with significant support needs, encouraged by local publicity and word-of-mouth recommendations from other families.
- Only a small number of families from black and minority ethnic groups accessed the CSOF service. It is hoped that developing better links with community groups and working actively with schools with high numbers of black and minority ethnic pupils will increase trust.
- The Project Workers accessed a range of services, tools and resources to support families. Applying their specialist knowledge, advising other practitioners and drawing on the expertise of other providers were all important in achieving positive outcomes for families.
- The number of referrals illustrated the demand for the service and the outcomes data demonstrated a variety of needs. The findings of the evaluation suggested that some families particularly benefitted from the specialist intervention, but the needs of other families could have been met by signposting to other early help services, particularly if they were sensitive to the impact that offending could have on the family as a whole.
- The qualitative analysis found that families reported positive outcomes as a result of the CSOF service's input, despite often coming to the service with multiple and complex issues. They spoke about the encouraging and enabling approach of the staff and identified a number of areas where the service had made a positive difference to their circumstances and/or wellbeing. Importantly, some families supported through the service had self-referred, illustrating a demand for direct access to family support of this kind.
- Particular learning can be gained from CSOF interventions where a family member was convicted of a sexual offence. Feedback from CSOF staff and the families themselves suggested that they were particularly isolated, facing complex issues and requiring a range of

practical and therapeutic support. These families continued to feel the impact of the offence, even after the sentence had been completed. Challenges for these families included the non-offending parent coming to terms with the offence, and a lack of involvement from social services beyond statutory safeguarding assessments. CSOF provided the non-offending parent with help in dealing with children's questions in an age-appropriate way, helped children think about what they wanted to ask/say to their offending parent and helped the non-offending parent to negotiate arrangements for contact once statutory safeguarding assessments had approved it.

- The fact that a large number of families were separated as a result of imprisonment or family breakdown meant that the projects had no direct contact with the offenders in almost half of their cases. So while CSOF involvement may have resulted in positive outcomes for other members of the family, close working relationships with Offender Managers and/or activities in prison are required if there is to be an impact on the offender.

Identification and assessment

- Feedback from stakeholders highlighted some of the complexities and challenges in identifying families of offenders, including families' own reluctance to be identified due to stigma, difficulty in reaching them through current service provision, and unwillingness to engage with agencies (noted as a particular issue where there have previously been child protection concerns).
- It was the experience of the CSOF service that within children and family services, changes made to enable the identification and assessment of children and families of offenders were often dependent on key individuals taking the initiative, and the benefit was often realised at an individual/family level rather than enabling systematic identification, which was felt to be needed. Some data about family composition and caring responsibilities are collected in prison settings and relevant changes are being made to the prison

service Basic Custody Screening (BCS) tool so that children can be identified. However, the limited involvement of prisons in the CSOF steering groups has meant there has not been an opportunity to consider how the information might be used more widely.

Information sharing

- Casework with families highlighted the need for criminal justice agencies and children and family services to share information effectively. In particular, there is a need for risk to be assessed alongside the Offender Manager.
- CSOF casework also highlighted the potential for workers to come across information that needed to be shared with probation, the police and social services departments as part of their intelligence gathering (for example, about registered sex offenders).
- The experience of staff working within the CSOF service suggested that a specified point of contact will be needed within both the newly formed National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies so that family support services such as CSOF could gain information when a new referral was made or where there were concerns that related to an offender or an offence.
- A particular issue that needed to be addressed during the course of the pilot projects was how to record information about contact with family support services on the Probation Service case management system. There were situations where this could potentially have put family members at risk, for example, in cases of domestic violence, as offenders are able to request access to their record. This highlights that care and due consideration needs to be given to how information about family support is recorded and shared with other agencies.

The evaluation

- This evaluation should be seen as a contribution to the growing area of research on intermediate outcomes linked to desistance. Systematic collection of personal information by services and

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longer-term monitoring of offending of parents and future offending of children would be required, to establish the relevance of the short- and medium-term outcomes used by the service.

- The information available to the evaluation was limited by the fact that some data were missing from some family case files and a number of individuals declined to take part in the interviews.
- The evaluation was commissioned and funded by NOMS and although the overall aims of the service reflected both NOMS's interest in desistance and Barnardo's primary focus in outcomes for children and families, there was a tension in the balance of the evaluation between these two areas. The formation of the Research Advisory Group, which included members from NOMS, Barnardo's and a Probation Trust was an attempt to promote objectivity, particularly as the researcher was employed by Barnardo's.

5. Implications

The major implications of the evaluation findings, highlighting areas for further development, are as follows:

- **The CSOF community-based model of family support and service development was effective.** It resulted in increased awareness of the impact of offending on families, informed changes to service procedures and achieved positive outcomes for individual family members, including some offenders.
- **The multi-dimensional role of the CSOF service contributed to its success.** Awareness raising and training underpinned engagement with other agencies, facilitated partnership working and fostered commitment to developing service processes and procedures, as well as strengthening practitioners' ability to identify and respond to families with support needs as a result of a family member's offending.
- **The combination of a child- and family-focused Project Worker and an Offender Manager within the service was important.** It enabled work to be carried out in a way that was sensitive to the procedures and culture of both criminal justice and children and family agencies. The specialist expertise and knowledge within CSOF was highly valued and enabled the service to build credibility and develop a good understanding of the local service context, as well as to respond in situations where a family had been identified as requiring additional support, but where no current provision was in place.
- **Awareness-raising activities and training were central elements of the service.** CSOF played a critical role in building the capacity of other organisations, both through providing formal training and advising and signposting other agencies to relevant materials and sources of information. Training and awareness raising was important not only for identification of families, but also for ensuring that practitioners are confident and able to support families and/or make appropriate referrals. 'Champions' within services can be a source of information and advice for staff, and the projects have latterly been exploring how this activity can be embedded so that new staff are informed.
- **There were agencies that CSOF did not reach during the pilot period.** Further work is required to ensure that all relevant agencies engage in this agenda and to change the culture within some organisations in relation to families of offenders.
- **Awareness raising and joint working combined to have an impact on offender management practice.** There was evidence to suggest that Offender Managers were more aware of the impact of offending on families, and were adopting a different approach in their conversations with offenders, as a result of the service's input. There were cases where the involvement of the CSOF service had resulted in an increased understanding on the part of the offender, and there were indications that it would have a positive influence on the offender's behaviour in the future.
- **Communication with the Offender Manager was key to the assessment of risk and engaging with offenders.** Offenders were involved in work undertaken with families in a minority of cases. Where a link was made with the Offender Manager, the CSOF service was able to undertake valuable partnership work, reinforcing to the offender the impact of offending on the family. However, in practice, the involvement of offenders was found to be limited by a range of factors, including: parental separation and a lack of contact between the offender and family members that were being supported; the prison in which the offender was serving their sentence being far away from the family's base; or an Offender Manager not being allocated to that case. This will need to be

It will be important for the new probation providers – Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS) – to understand how the learning from CSOF can inform development of services in the new Transforming Rehabilitation operating model. Barnardo's has committed to fund the CSOF service for a further two years from April 2014. In Wales the CRC has extended the secondment of a full-time Offender Manager into this team up to March 2015, where it is anticipated that it will complement other community-based initiatives and contribute to effective resettlement of offenders as part of NOMS's Integrated Offender Management approach. Discussions are taking place in a number of areas, and in Wales a new role of Consultant Offender Manager has been proposed, with a specific brief to provide consultancy to other OMs, to ensure that Hidden Sentence training is embedded and to ensure updated Practice Directions are appropriate in relation to children and families. This role could act as a key link to children's services and other family support services, including any Community Support for Offenders' Families teams, maximising benefit for the offender management process as well as for children and families.

an area of focus for future development of the service.

awareness raising, training and joint working at a strategic level).

- **Procedures need to be in place so that information about risk can be shared with family support services.** In some cases it was not appropriate to inform the offender of the service's involvement as this could have potentially posed a risk to the family. This highlights a need for clear procedures to be in place between children and family agencies, and the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) so that issues relating to risk can be identified. This could be done through the Offender Manager responsible for the case or a Single Point of Contact for the area's NPS or CRC. However, direct work with families highlighted the importance of working with the whole family where possible.
- **Working with other agencies, the service has identified resources and developed practice knowledge and expertise that could be applied in other localities.** CSOF staff have acquired important practice knowledge and skills (such as working with families where there had been a sexual offence), identified tools and resources for working with offenders' families, developed methods of promoting their needs (such as charters, a drama production, DVDs) and encouraged other services to change their practice (through
- **The quantitative assessment of outcomes for families proved challenging.** This is an area that will need to be addressed in future service delivery and evaluation work. In particular, robust outcome measurement systems will need to be in place that allow for objective and consistent recording of progress towards the service's intended outcomes.
- **Long-term monitoring is required to determine whether the intermediate outcomes have an impact on desistance and intergenerational offending.** Systematic recording of the type of support provided, stronger links with the Offender Managers and tracking offending over time will be required to determine whether this has resulted in a reduction in offending in the longer term.
- **The service demonstrated the need for changes to probation systems to collect, record and share information about offenders' families.** Following an exploration of current practices and learning from CSOF casework with families, the CSOF service worked with the Probation Service to develop new procedures that could be implemented nationally. These included procedures whereby additional reference data can be

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input into existing fields in Delius (so that information is more easily identifiable and accurately recorded), and an information sharing protocol. The CSOF work also highlighted where probation Safeguarding Practice Direction and assessments (pre-sentence and OASys) could be adapted to give a clearer steer towards conversations with an offender about the needs of their family and highlight the impact of offending and imprisonment on their children.

- **Identification of children of offenders continues to be ad hoc.** While the work of the CSOF service led to a number of procedural changes within the Probation Service and organisations working with children and families to facilitate identification of children and families of offenders, further work is required to ensure that this is done systematically. This will be critical in building a comprehensive picture of how many children and families are affected, their circumstances, what their needs are and whether those needs are being met.

Appendix 1. Community Support for Offenders' Families grant obligations

The obligations set out in the grant agreement were:

- to support innovation, development, improvement, skills and capability in the community to support offenders' families and children.
- to develop and strengthen work with offenders' families from a community-based and offender management perspective.
- that the activities to be undertaken will demonstrate how improved intermediate outcomes that contribute towards reducing offending and improving the life chances of offenders' children, may be achieved through improved multi-agency partnership and effective offender management practice
- to work with partners to develop a plan to take forward a number of areas of work through (including but not limited to):
 - refining the identification and assessment of need by Offender Managers of family circumstance and likelihood of intergenerational offending
 - identifying best practice models for strengthening referrals from offender management to local authority services
 - exploring the most effective and information assurance-compliant ways in which to share relevant data and information between agencies to facilitate needs assessment and targeting
 - developing guidance materials.

Appendix 2. Research methodology

Method	Research participants	Further details
Telephone interviews with local stakeholders.	Managers and practitioners working in criminal justice, children and family, and other community services.	<p>29 stakeholders were interviewed in total across the three sites: nine in Bristol, 11 on the Isle of Wight and nine in Wales.</p> <p>13 stakeholders were interviewed in the early stages of the pilot and eight were re-interviewed at the end of the pilot. The remaining interviewees were interviewed at the end of the pilot.</p> <p>Key interview topics: issues affecting families of offenders; current situation in relation to CSOF's intended objectives/changes to local practice and professional awareness as a result of CSOF's work; potential/realised benefits of the CSOF model; areas for future development.</p>
Telephone interviews with service leads.	NOMS contract holder and Barnardo's lead for the CSOF service.	The interviews were carried out to set the work of CSOF within a broader policy and organisational context and clarify what they were looking for the service to achieve.
Face-to-face interviews with families.	Families supported by the CSOF service.	<p>22 individuals across 14 families were interviewed, including two offenders and seven children/young people. These included families from all three geographical areas: four in Bristol, seven on the Isle of Wight and three in Wales.</p> <p>During the interviews, families were asked to reflect on their circumstances before the referral, the nature of their contact with the service and the perceived outcomes for their family.</p>
Case review of service user data.	Families supported by the CSOF service.	<p>Information about all 134 individuals in the 79 families that received support from CSOF was extracted from the Barnardo's client database. This included 85 individuals in Bristol, 32 in the Isle of Wight, and 17 in Wales.</p> <p>Case data were analysed to provide descriptive statistics about referrals, family composition, the length of the intervention and the outcomes achieved.</p>

Appendix 2. Research methodology

Method	Research participants	Further details
Pre- and post- training questionnaires.	Professionals participating in training on the impact of offending on children and families.	All 362 training participants completed pre- and post-training questionnaires. These were used to assess whether the individuals felt more confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject after the training, its relevance to their role and how they felt they could apply what they had learned to practice.
Feedback forms.	Professionals attending awareness-raising sessions.	556 individuals completed feedback forms following attendance at short awareness-raising sessions conducted by staff. This equated to approximately half of those who attended such events. The forms were used to ascertain whether the session was useful and whether they had any further development needs.
Follow-up interviews and online survey.	Professionals participating in the full training.	Follow-up contact was made with a sample of training participants to ascertain whether the training had had an impact on their practice: 10 telephone interviews were conducted with participants attending training in the early phases of the pilot courses; 48 individuals completed an online survey (introduced to encourage responses from a wider range of participants).
Workshops with project staff.	Children's Services Managers, Project Workers and seconded Offender Managers.	Whole-day workshops were held with staff from each area at the start of the project to construct a theory of change for the service, and at the end of the project to review progress against the intended outcomes.
Follow-up telephone calls with project staff.	Children's Services Managers, Project Workers and seconded Offender Managers.	Telephone calls were made following the workshops to gather additional information and for clarification purposes.

Appendix 3. Families supported through the CSOF service

Additional data are provided below on the families supported directly by the CSOF service.

Length of intervention

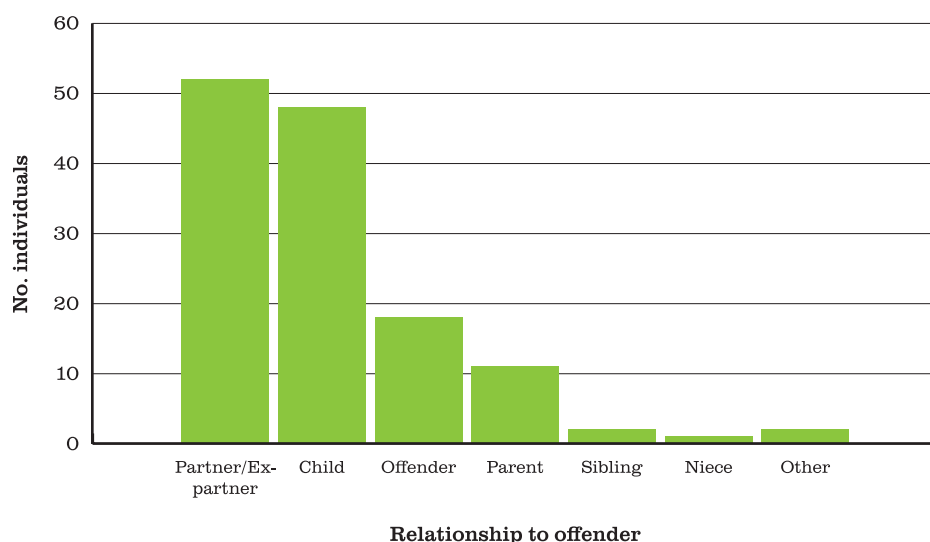
Table 1. Length of CSOF intervention by case status at 31 March 2014

Length of time cases were open	Number of cases	
	Open	Closed
Less than one month	13	7
One to three months	11	19
Four to six months	12	24
Seven months to one year	20	21
More than one year	2	5
Total (134)	58	76

This table shows the length of time cases have been – or were – open, for direct work within the CSOF projects at the point of data capture. Each case represents an individual supported by the service.

Family members supported through CSOF

Figure 1. Individuals receiving support through the CSOF service, by relationship to offender



As the table shows, in most cases the service worked with partners and children where the offender was a parent, but in a few cases it was an uncle, an older sibling or other relative. Eleven grandparents received support where grandchildren were living with them.

Offender involvement

Table 2. Offender involvement with CSOF by gender

Offender contact with CSOF	Male	Female	Not recorded	Total
Supported directly	11	5	1	17
Limited contact only	25	2	0	27
No direct involvement	29	3	7	39
Total	65	10	8	83

This table illustrates the extent to which offenders were involved in the casework with the 79 families. In four families there was more than one offender.

Ethnicity

Table 3. Ethnicity of individuals supported by the CSOF service by area

Ethnicity	Bristol	Isle of Wight	Wales	Total
White British	66	32	15	113
Asian/British – Indian	2		1	3
Black/British – African	3	0	0	3
Black/British – Caribbean	2			2
Mixed – Other	1			1
Mixed – White/Black African	2			2
Mixed – White/Black Caribbean	1			1
White Irish	2			2
Not recorded/declined to provide	7			7
Total	86	32	16	134

Children supported by CSOF

Table 4. Involvement of children with the CSOF service by gender

Children contact with CSOF	Male	Female	Not recorded	Total
Supported directly	25	21	5	51
Children in family not directly involved in work	51	40	3	94
Total	76	61	8	145

Table 5. Age of children in the families receiving support from CSOF (including children not directly involved in the work)

Age of children	Number of children
Zero to four	39
Five to 10	43
11 to 16	46
17 to 18	12
Not recorded	5
Total	145

Type of offence and sentence type

This information provided in Figures 2 and 3 includes data for 83 offenders as four of the families supported had more than one offender.

Figure 2. Type of offence committed by the offending family member(s)

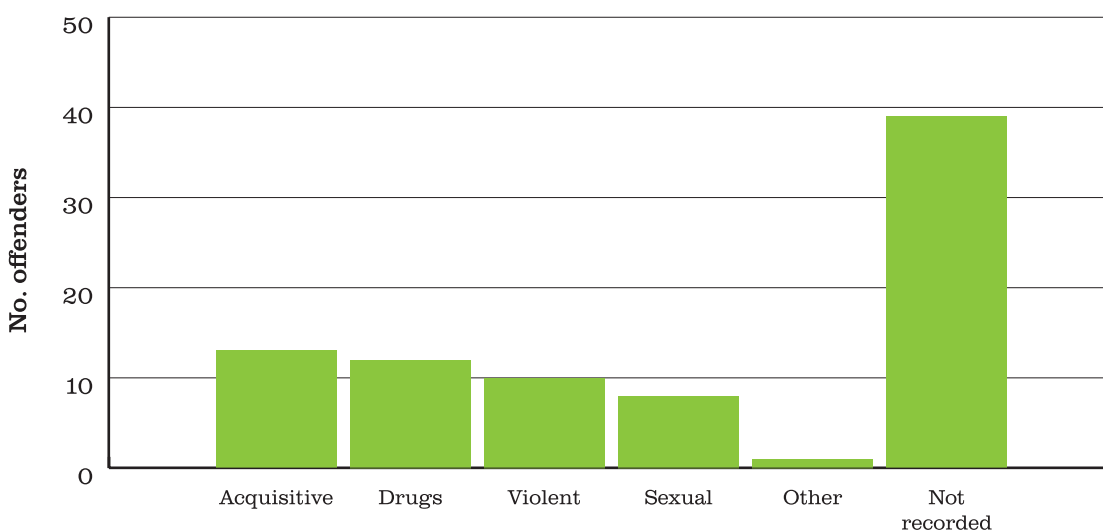
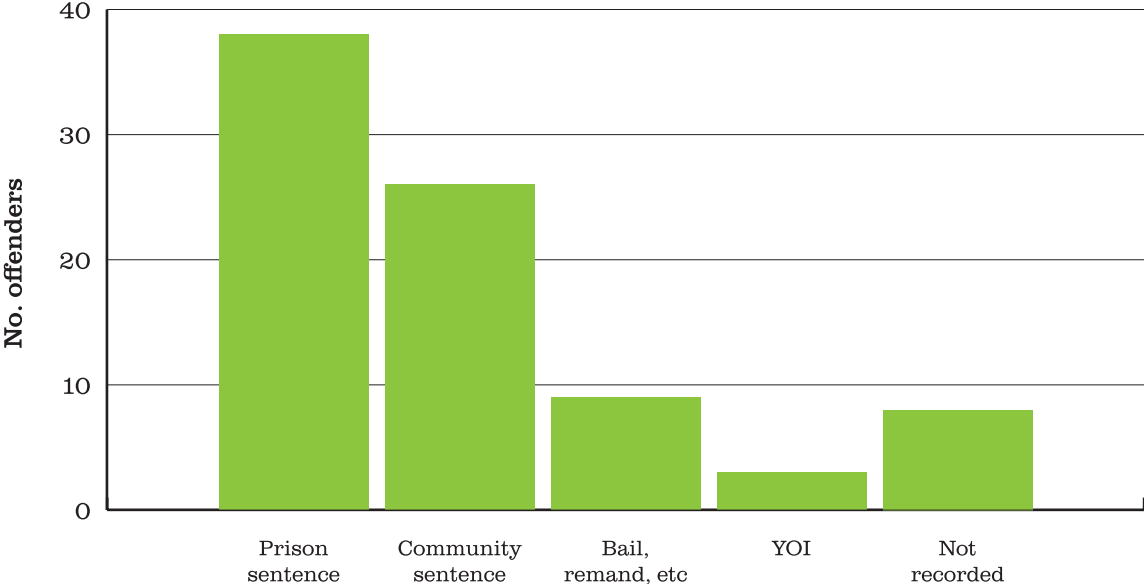


Figure 3. Type of sentence by the offending family member(s)



Appendix 4. Partner agencies

Below are the agencies, teams and events visited by the CSOF^F projects to raise awareness and develop working relationships.

Service area	Bristol	Isle of Wight	Wales
Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offender Manager (OM) team meetings ■ Information fair ■ practice development manager ■ Training manager ■ Desistance officer ■ Eden House ■ IMPACT team, including weekly drop-in ■ Offender management unit at HMPs Bristol and Erlestoke ■ Avon and Somerset Probation Trust staff conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Probation team leader ■ OM team meetings ■ Court probation officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OM team meetings (Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)) ■ Women's Pathfinder Project ■ Business manager ■ Developing Practice Work Stream ■ Safeguarding Work Stream ■ All-Wales Learning and Development Business Partnership ■ Local delivery unit deputy (Cardiff and Vale) ■ Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) team ■ Victim support officer ■ Circles of Support ■ Prison Offender Management Unit
Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Crown and magistrate courts ■ New magistrates' conference ■ Court listings manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gwent Court team manager and business manager ■ Gwent magistrates' meeting
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pathway co-ordinator ■ Police community support officer (PCSO) linked to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner ■ Priority Crime Unit and Integrated Offender Manager Supervisor ■ East/west locality PCSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ South Wales Police ■ Gwent Deputy Police Crime Commissioner ■ Police liaison officers ■ IOM police (RCT, Merthyr, Gwent)

Appendix 4. Partner agencies

<p>Prisons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HMP Bristol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family day - Resettlement fair - Healthy living event - Resettlement officer - Education officer ■ PACT (HMPs Bristol and Eastwood Park) ■ PACT business development manager ■ HMP Guys Marsh ■ HMP Erlestoke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HMP Isle of Wight ■ HMP Winchester ■ Spurgeons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HMP Parc ■ Invisible Walls (HMP Parc) ■ PACT (HMP Swansea, Cardiff, Prescoed, Usk, Eastwood Park) ■ PACT network group ■ Action for Prisoners' Families ■ OM at HMP Usk ■ HMP Send ■ HMP Dovegate
<p>Youth justice</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Team leader ■ Parenting officer ■ Parenting programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Youth offending service Merthyr, Torfaen and Monmouthshire
<p>Children and family services/ family support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children's services First response and early help ■ Children's Centres ■ Children Centres Champions Group ■ Home-Start ■ Family Intervention Team ■ Parent mentoring project ■ Multi-agency locality meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social care duty and assessment ■ CAF co-ordinators ■ Children's Centres ■ Barnardo's Parenting and Family Support ■ Home-Start ■ Strengthening Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gwent Children's Services ■ Team around the Family Merthyr, Newport and Caerphilly ■ Eight local authorities' Family First co-ordinators ■ Integrated Family Support Service ■ Action for Children ■ Right From The Start ■ Orminston ■ Gwent Mediation Services
<p>Services for young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1625 Independent People ■ Learning Partnership West targeted youth support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Targeted youth support ■ Youth and community ■ Youth Trust counselling ■ Talk2 Counselling ■ Gateway community safety project ■ Community safety officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Young Carers ■ Youth Services ■ Comets and Rockets ■ RCT detached youth workers ■ Tri-county Play Association ■ NYAS Cymru (advocacy) ■ Prevent

<p>Education/employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual primary and secondary schools ■ School network meeting ■ Locality twilight sessions and conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual secondary and primary schools ■ College ■ Primary schools special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) clusters ■ Choices (post-16 participation) ■ Bridges4Learning (education psychology service) ■ Job Centre Plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual secondary and primary schools ■ Education welfare/attendance and wellbeing services ■ Primary and secondary school heads (RCT) ■ School counsellors ■ Special education needs ■ Hedfan Out of Hours Learning ■ SNAP Cymru ■ Genesis ■ Rathbone
<p>Adult services</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People Matter (adult CAF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Crossroads ■ Lighthouse project ■ Big Issue
<p>Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ @ Bristol ■ Unique Voice Theatre Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community support ■ Voluntary sector forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ BAWSO (support for BME service users) ■ Communities First ■ Gellideg Foundation Merthyr ■ Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil ■ Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
<p>Advice and information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bristol Debt Advice Centre ■ Family information service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Law centres ■ Libraries ■ Family information zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Citizens Advice Bureau ■ Family information service in eight local authorities ■ Newport libraries
<p>Domestic violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DV co-ordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Women's Refuge ■ Hampton Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Welsh Women's Aid ■ DV co-ordinator Newport
<p>Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health visitor training day ■ School nurse away day ■ Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mental health trainer ■ Health Watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School health ■ Health promotion ■ Health visitors ■ Gofal (mental health) ■ Healthy Schools co-ordinators ■ National Autistic Services ■ Mind ■ Mental health teams ■ MS support

Appendix 4. Partner agencies

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shelter ■ Bristol City Council housing department ■ Housing associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Southern Housing Group ■ Spectrum Housing ■ Local authority housing department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Charter Housing ■ Gwalia ■ Llamau ■ Solas ■ Newport City Homes ■ Lighthouse
Substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KWADS ■ Hartcliffe and Withywood Kick Start (HAWKS) ■ Developing Health and Independence (DHI) ■ Bristol Drugs Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Get Sorted (young people) ■ Island Drug and Alcohol Service (IDAS) ■ Cranstoun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kaleidoscope ■ Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service (GSSMS) ■ Barnardo's B@1 ■ CRI (drug rehabilitation requirement) Newport
Victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Victim Support 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gwent Victim support ■ Parents Protect
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Family Holiday Association 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cruse Bereavement Care ■ Wales Children and Families Pathways Group ■ Assembly Member for Cynon Valley Christine Chapman ■ IOM Cymru Board ■ NOMS Delius development team ■ NOMS information assurance ■ NOMS head of community offender management policy ■ NOMS Women's Criminal Justice Pathway Group

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service**

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