



Centre for
Child & Family
Justice Research



Building bridges through research: which knowledge gaps should we prioritise?

Webinar: Mothers on Trial, 5th of October 2021. Karen Broadhurst & Shona Minson

Workshop aims

Women and children in the CJS at the intersection of services
[pregnancy & early motherhood]

- To share our observations regarding **knowledge gaps**
- To listen to your **priority questions for new knowledge**

* we are sharing a list of key resources with you – a number of publications from speakers today are available open access.

Spotlight on qualitative research

Increase in qualitative research on women in the CJS and their children since 2012 - but it remains incomplete and limited.

Invaluable insights: lived experience of mothering in prison, the lives of children disrupted by the CJS, the impact on extended family members, pregnancy in prison.

Limited knowledge about:

- ❖ **attitudes of magistrates and the judiciary to maternal sentencing** or their awareness of the disruption caused by women's incarceration
- ❖ **decision-making in either public or private family law proceedings**, where women are involved in CJS
- ❖ women in CJS in the community **at the intersection of preventative services**

Spotlight on quantitative research

Dearth of quantitative research- very basic Qs unanswered:

- **shortfalls in national data collection** (particularly about numbers of dependent children)
- **statistics focus on performance or demand**
- **data silos** - limited research which **links data** across systems of children's social care, family justice and criminal justice
- key surveys – now rather **dated or offer widely varying estimates**

SOURCE	Estimate of number of mothers (with dependent children) who go to prison each year ²⁶	Estimate of number of children whose mothers go to prison each year ²⁷
Data matching exercise using Ministry of Justice and Department of Work and Pensions information (2012) ^{28, 29}	1,344	2,544
Prison Inspectorate prisoner survey responses (2016/17) ³⁰	4,536	8,618
Ministry of Justice response to parliamentary question asked by B. Fall (2018) ³¹	5,292	10,055
The Howard League for Penal Reform research (2010) ³²	4,200	17, 240 ³³

Family data - will new legislation deliver?

Estimates of children impacted by women's CJS involvement vary widely - this may now be addressed by clause 26 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021

However, new centralised data data collection will still not answer key questions about the impact of CJS on the lives of women and children or the intersection of services – without linking data

This means that it will be difficult to establish the impact of changes brought forth with the Female Offender Strategy (2018) or the recommendations of the Farmer Review, Women (2019)....

Priority Questions (Jam board 1)

CJS and Children's Social Care

- 1) Number and age profile of dependent children for all women involved with the CJS/prison? Living arrangements before prison/CJS involvement
- 2) The number of infants and children subject to Child in Need or Child Protection plans?
- 3) Impact of children's social care intervention on women's parenting, offending & desistance?
- 4) Whether there is an association between homelessness, children's services involvement or child removal?
- 5) The proportion of mothers who have been in care and the type of care history? (placement moves; type of care)

Priority Questions (Jam board 2)

Family courts and CJS

- 1) Whether FJS is a trigger for CJS – or visa versa (pathways between the two systems)
- 2) The number and profile of infants and children, permanently removed from their mothers' care? (Including at birth)
- 3) Caregiver/placement arrangements for infants and children (including siblings), when women are involved with CJS/prison?
- 4) The number of infants and children returned home to their mothers' care at the close of care proceedings – and whether this is successful
- 5) The number of women and children involved with private family law proceedings and whether they are successful in establishing contact with children, or having children returned to live with them.

Priority Questions (Jam board 3)

CJS and antenatal services

- 1) Age profile of mothers at first pregnancy and engagement with ante-natal services?
- 2) Whether rapid repeat pregnancy is more common for women involved with the CJS and which women?
- 3) The number of maternity losses for women involved with CJS (miscarriage; termination; still birth)
- 4) The outcomes for mother and babies separated at birth/placed in mother and baby units, in the longer term
- 5) The health outcomes of babies of mothers involved with CJS

Exercise

10 minutes input from Shona and Karen (we will give a hand-out of key research, but provide examples as we speak)

3 Jam board exercises (15 minutes each) Which are the top three priority questions? Invite polling & we move questions around on the board

Is there a question missing? Ask the audience for each jam-board and write on the topics

Thank the audience