



Centre for  
**Child & Family**  
Justice Research



# Supporting Care-experienced Mothers in the Criminal Justice System: Challenges and Possibilities

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## Project Overview

- Literature review <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/care-custody/resources/>
- Data scoping exercise
- Interviews with three groups:
  - Women in prison with care experience
  - Girls/young women with both care and youth justice experience
  - Professionals who work with girls/women who have both care and criminal justice experience
- Documentary analysis

## Care-experienced Mothers in the Criminal Justice System: Challenges (I)

- Unnecessary criminalisation of children in care
- Stigma and labelling
  - Negative assumptions about care-experienced individuals
  - Gendered judgements
- Mistrust of systems

## Care-experienced Mothers in the Criminal Justice System: Challenges (II)

- Access to leaving care services
- Lack of support after child removal
- Emotional impacts
  - Fear
  - Anger
  - Shame

## Care-experienced Mothers in the Criminal Justice System: Possibilities

- Moving beyond official records
- Challenging stigma
- Building trusting relationships
- Identification and disclosure

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## Discussion Points

1. What are the biggest challenges facing care-experienced mothers or mothers-to-be in the criminal justice system?
2. What changes could make the biggest difference to improving support for care-experienced girls and women who are pregnant or mothers?
3. How might services work together to build engagement and trust amongst care-experienced mothers?