



31 January 2011

Prisoners' Wives new BBC drama

- *More children are affected by the imprisonment of a parent than by divorce in the family.*
- *During their sentence 45% of people lose contact with their families and many separate from their partners.*
- *In 2009 the average distance from home for male prisoners was 50 miles.*
- *If family ties are maintained prisoners are 30% less likely to reoffend.*

BBC One's new drama series Prisoners' Wives tells the story of four different women with a partner in prison. Produced by Tiger Aspect Productions, APF members POPS acted as consultants. POPS invited 15 family members to share their experiences with Tiger Aspect so that the drama would reflect the real-life impact of imprisonment on a family.

Action for Prisoners' Families has members all over England and Wales working with families and practitioners to address the problems which are faced by families left to cope on the outside. Partners may have to deal not only with their own emotional distress, but with their children's and other extended family members, as well as financial fall out, potential housing disruption, health problems and stigma. Little support is available.

Maintaining a relationship from within a prison is not easy. Visiting prisons, as revealed in Action for Prisoners' Families' and the Women's Institute's recent ['Prison Journeys'](#) campaign, is expensive and, for some prohibitive if their partner is not in a local prison, which most are not. Booking visits is often difficult – phone lines are engaged, or only open for limited times. Phone calls are also expensive and access to phones can be erratic; the wing phone may not be working, or prisoners might be locked in their cells because there's a security scare or staff shortages.

Research has shown that prisoners are 39% less likely to reoffend if family ties are maintained and nurtured. Action for Prisoners' Families works with our members, many of whom are in prisons or work for organisations which work in prisons, to provide a positive visits experience and services which support family relationships.

The prison population stands at an all time high of 87,668 as of 27 January 2012 - more families than ever are being affected by imprisonment.

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Notes to editors:

Find out more about APF and the Women's Institute's **Prison Journey's Project** in December 2011's Action News which can be downloaded from APF's website:
http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/uploadedFiles/2010_Publications_And_Resources/Action_News_December_2011.pdf

Offenders' Families' Helpline 0808 808 2003