

# Picking up the Pieces

families  
outside



• EDINBURGH •  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Support for Families of  
People Convicted of a  
Sexual Offence



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### **Acknowledgements**

*Families Outside is a national Scottish charity dedicated to supporting families impacted by imprisonment. Through our work we found that family members of those convicted of a sexual offence often faced unique and significant challenges, yet there was no specific support or information for them.*

*Families Outside would like to thank the family members who have contributed to this booklet, sharing their experiences and providing invaluable feedback as to what would best support people in their position. We would also like to acknowledge partner organisations such as Barnardo's Scotland, Stop it Now!, City of Edinburgh Council and NOTA for their contributions and support.*

## Introduction



*“When I found out what he was charged with, I sat down and just couldn’t move for half an hour. It was so unreal. I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach.”*

When someone you care about has been accused of a sexual offence, it is an enormous shock. From contact with the police, through to court cases and beyond, each stage brings its own challenges, and you may experience very mixed emotions.

*“You feel totally powerless. Finding just one person who understands can make a difference.”*



This booklet is written to help you at this time. Other people in a similar situation to you have also given comments to show that you aren’t alone and that there is a way forward.



*The information might feel daunting at first, but take your time and choose the bits you want to read. You might read one part now, feel that is enough, and pick it up again later.*

Throughout the booklet you will see some symbols and coloured boxes indicating different types of information.



*Quotations – family members sharing their experiences which you may be able to relate to.*



*Stop and Think – a moment to reflect.*



*Ideas for Support – practical ideas or people / organisations to contact. Full contact details for organisations referred to can be found in the ‘Useful Contacts’ section at the end.*

The booklet will refer to the person who has been accused or convicted as your **‘family member’**. This is simply to make the booklet easier to read. Family member includes friend, partner, neighbour or colleague. It is also important to point out that the booklet refers to that person as **‘he’**. Both men and women commit offences, but for ease of reading and to reflect the majority, we will use ‘he’.



*It can be hard to explain to others how you feel or why you made certain decisions. If there are parts that express how you feel, give the booklet to those you would like to understand how you’re feeling.*

## Understanding What Has Happened



*“I couldn’t believe it at first. There had to be an answer that would make things go back to how they were. Why would someone accuse him of this? Can it be true?”*

How can it be that the person I care about could have done something like this? This is often one of the first and most painful questions we ask, and we are desperate to find an answer that fits into life as we have known it. There must be an explanation or misunderstanding. Why has this happened?

*“I couldn’t see him as a sex offender. I couldn’t see him as the same as those other people in prison.”*



The straightforward answer is simply that there is no one reason. In fact, many different factors can contribute to why someone commits a sexual offence. What we find in society, on social media, and in some areas of the press, is a very stereotyped picture of a sex offender.



*It can help to draw a distinction between the person your family member is (a good dad, a loving husband) and the things they do. Knowing that good people can do bad things can help.*

## HOW CAN MY FAMILY MEMBER HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THIS?



*“For a long time I made excuses for him, but I’ve had to face up to the fact that he did what he did, and now I don’t have much to say to him until he faces up to it as well.”*

You may know the person very well. They may be the closest person to you in the world; they may be someone you have known your whole life. What they have been accused of may be far removed from the person you have known. ‘How can I start to even consider it is true?’ we ask, and ‘Who is this person I have been sharing my life with?’ How can we cope with the feelings that come as a result? It can be particularly confusing when an accusation is made years after the offence has happened about someone with whom you now have a good relationship.

*“It was hard, but I’ve had to accept that he won’t speak to me about it. I suppose I was hoping he’d explain it all and it’d make sense.”*



One way to deal with this is to dismiss the accusation as false – it simply can’t be true. Often, however, we find that there comes a point when we are provided with evidence we can’t avoid or the person is convicted of the offence.



So how can our family member seem one way to us, and yet have done something very wrong? This is a very complex question, and there are no easy answers to it.



*It is ok to keep asking that question, and it might be helpful to explore this with someone who is working with you and your family.*

### WILL I EVER GET ANSWERS?

*“If he would just admit what he’d done and seem sorry, I could deal with it better. I’m so angry with him.”*



It is often the case that people don’t get the answers they started off asking for. Even your family member might not understand the reasons for their behaviour. In time, however, people often find that this doesn’t stop them from moving forward.



*Sometimes writing down questions you have for your family member is helpful. You might choose not to send or ask them.*

## WHAT IF I BELIEVE HE'S INNOCENT?



*"I kept telling people that he wasn't guilty, but they just assumed it was true. He was guilty before proven innocent."*

It may seem that anyone you speak to expects you to accept the situation or verdict without question. This is extremely difficult when you know the person better than anyone. You may be thoroughly convinced they are innocent.

*"It didn't ring true with the person I knew. So I just ignored everyone when they spoke about it".*



Sometimes it can feel as though nobody is listening or that you are not 'allowed' to feel like this. It is a fact that a relatively high proportion of people accused of sexual offences will maintain they are innocent, which can also make it harder for your views and input to be 'heard'.



*Remember organisations such as the Prison Service and social services have to act on the verdict given.*

*If your family member has been found guilty, regardless of your views, these organisations must accept the official verdict.*



*MOJO (Miscarriages of Justice Organisation) is a human rights organisation, dedicated to assisting innocent people both in prison and after their release.*

If you believe justice has not been done, it may help to make the most of any legal advice, find out what options for appeal are, and also consult your family member.

### WHAT IF HE SAYS HE'S INNOCENT?

Many people who commit sexual offences maintain their innocence. Nina Burrowes is a psychologist who specialises in understanding sexual offending. Her video (see link below) can help explain this topic.

*Watch the video 'Why do some sexual offenders claim they are innocent?' for more information.*

[www.ninaburrowes.com](http://www.ninaburrowes.com)



It is also worth noting that some people who are convicted of an offence will admit guilt when working with professionals, but maintain innocence with family because they feel they can't admit to them what has happened. Sometimes people block themselves from seeking help for their problems because they are worried about how their family and friends will react.

It is really helpful to think things through and, when you feel able, ask yourself some difficult questions such as ‘What would it mean for me if he were guilty?’ ‘Would he still have a role in my life?’

*These types of questions are an important part of processing all that has happened, and asking them doesn't mean that you are being disloyal or unsupportive.*



Often people accept their family member's version of events because the alternative is traumatic and overwhelming. You may know they are guilty deep down, but be scared to think about it. Sometimes it can feel like pressure from others to accept a guilty verdict stops you being able to think it through for yourself. Remember other people are not walking in your shoes and you are doing your best in a difficult situation.

In the long run, however, accepting their guilty verdict puts you in a better place to support your family member and can mean less conflict with important services and organisations. It is fine to take time to work these things through.



*People who do not accept their guilt will remain at a higher risk level within the Prison Service, as they are seen not to recognise the significance of their crime.*

In most cases, people who commit online sexual offences find it hard to admit to themselves that their behaviour is wrong; they might tell themselves that the image just ‘popped up’, or they might minimise the offence because it is online and doesn’t involve any contact; sometimes when people look at things online, they forget that there are real children behind the images.



*Stop it Now! is a helpful organisation for anyone coping with their family member’s online offending.*

#### WHAT IF I DON’T WANT CONTACT WITH HIM ANYMORE?

*“I still love him, but I hate him as well, and I can’t tell anyone I still love him. You can’t make feelings just go away.”*



The decision about what part – if any – your family member will play in your life is up to you. You may feel pressures in different directions, but remember there are no rights or wrongs here. You do not need to feel guilty about this decision.



*You can ask for support from professionals who can help you with this decision.*

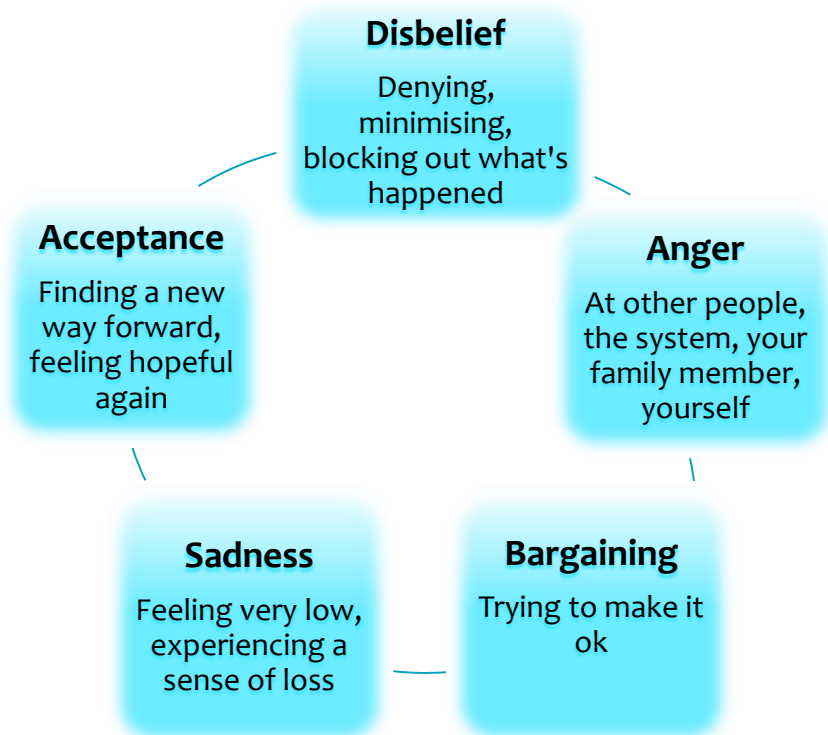
## The Emotional Journey



*“I wish I’d known that other people have felt like this.”*

### HOW SHOULD I FEEL?

You are likely to have very mixed feelings about everything. This is normal - here are some common reactions to someone’s imprisonment.



These are the kinds of intense emotions you can go through when you have lost someone or something very important to you.



*You might find it useful to look at the ‘Taking Care of Yourself’ section for ways to deal with these different emotions.*

When someone is convicted of a serious offence, the sense of stigma and shame can be intense. You might feel very exposed and vulnerable, and this can be really hard. It might help to know that you are not alone in this - that there are others who have been through what you are going through.

*“The reason it feels not in your control is because it isn’t in your control.”*



## HOW CAN I AVOID THIS BREAKING UP MY FAMILY/GROUP OF FRIENDS?



*“The family gets the sentence as well. He’s in his prison, and I’m in mine.”*

Someone’s arrest or conviction doesn’t just affect relationships with the family member, but also puts other relationships under a lot of strain. Some families will manage to stick together, but there can be a strain on relationships – disagreements about how to handle things, along with the pressure and stress of the situation.

Everybody deals with things in their own way. There is no right or wrong way to feel. It is important to try to understand the way others are feeling.



*“I didn’t know if I could do it myself. Then I realised it’s ok to struggle. Anyone would.”*

If the crime happened within the family, this can be particularly hard. There be may be feelings of guilt, and your emotions might be even more mixed up and extreme. It is totally normal to have mixed feelings, and it’s normal to feel overwhelmed – these are natural reactions to a situation that is anything but ordinary. It really can help to speak to someone you trust, someone who won’t judge you and can allow you that time.

*If you find you’re ‘stuck’ in these feelings, are low or anxious, it would be worth speaking to your GP.*



Everyone reacts differently to difficult situations. People may have their opinions, but nobody else is walking in your shoes. You have to make the best decisions you can with the information you have.



*It can be helpful to know how others have reacted; on the next page there are three different reactions to one family member’s situation. You may be able to relate to their responses. All of these reactions are understandable.*



## John's Family

John pled guilty to a high profile sexual offence but has not discussed it further with his family. His sister Heather, son Andrew, and mother Lisa are all affected, but have reacted differently, leading to many arguments.

### Lisa

Very angry –believes John is innocent and has been set up. Found court case and idea that he may be expected to attend sex offender courses in prison very upsetting. She is looking for justice for John.

### Heather

Couldn't believe it. Visits John but still feels angry. Wants answers and feels angry with John because he won't explain. Mixed feelings towards John but feels she needs to be involved; John is family, after all. Trying to keep everyone together. Accepts he's guilty. Wants to support him through treatment.

### Andrew

Devastated - was very close to his dad. Doesn't want contact, although he has spoken on phone. Can't comprehend it. Worried about impact on work, home life (particularly his children) and reactions of local community.



*It can help to remember that members of the same family may react differently.*

## DEALING WITH DIFFERENT REACTIONS

### TALK TO EACH OTHER

Can you all come together and explain how you are each thinking and feeling?



### ESTABLISH COMMON GROUND

Can you compromise to support others and put the things you disagree with to the side?

### ALLOW FOR CHANGE

Let yourself and others change their minds, overreact, and behave a bit out of character.



### AVOID THE BLAME GAME

Remember nobody else is responsible for your family member's actions.

### SEEK SUPPORT

Your relationships may be under strain. See 'Useful Contacts' section for organisations who may be able to support you.



## Taking Care of Yourself



*“I felt like I always talked about it and it wouldn’t help. But actually talking to my doctor took the pressure off a bit. I did need to think about myself too.”*

It is often the case when dealing with the effects of someone’s offending behaviour that we put ourselves last. Perhaps you feel you need to be strong for everyone else. Remember that your life is important too. You don’t need to feel like you’re on your own.

*See ‘Useful Contacts’ section for information on organisations who can support you.*



### HOW CAN I DISTRACT MYSELF AND GET THROUGH THE DAY?

It might be hard to know how to fill your time, and thinking about relaxing could be the last thing on your mind. However, it’s worth taking small steps, whether your heart is in it or not at first. Even 20 minutes out in the day can reduce stress levels.

Here are some simple ideas. They are not a quick fix, but a place to start:

## THOUGHTS TO KEEP BUSY

### MAKE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE

It could be a friend, a family member or someone neutral like a professional you work with. Someone who makes you feel good. If you don't feel like speaking send a text message and keep in touch.



### TAKE YOURSELF OUT THE HOUSE



Plan to get out the house, whether it's to a favourite place, somewhere you don't expect to meet anyone, out into the garden, a walk to the shops, it doesn't matter where.

### MAKE A LIST

Think of small things you normally like to do and make yourself do one of these each day.



### TURN OFF YOUR PHONE

Plan to read a book or watch your favourite programme without any distractions.

### POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Make the most of positive relationships. Arrange to catch up over a cuppa.



## THOUGHTS TO RELAX



### WRITING

Write down your thoughts. Keeping a diary can help clear your mind. There's no need to share it with anyone unless you want to.

### COLOURING FOR ADULTS

Simple colouring in can be good distraction. See [www.coloring-pages-adults.com/](http://www.coloring-pages-adults.com/).



### HAVE A BATH

Take time out and treat yourself to a nice long soak in the bath.

### DO A PUZZLE OR PLAY A GAME

Play a game on your phone, or challenge yourself with crosswords, word searches, Suduko etc.



### LISTEN TO MUSIC

Music is great for relaxing and changing your mood.

### FIND SOMETHING FUNNY

Watch your favourite series or film or a funny clip on YouTube. Laughter can distract.



## HOW CAN I FOCUS ON POSITIVES?

It is okay to be working through our thoughts and feelings in relation to the situation, but it is important not to be stuck in a negative cycle. Little steps can help you achieve this.



*Write down three positives each day. These can be really small (even something like ‘it’s dry outside’). This might seem difficult at first, but if done regularly it can become easier to see the positive things that are still in your life.*

On the flip side of this, it can be helpful to write down negative thoughts – ‘I’m angry because ...’, ‘I’m sad because ...’, ‘When I heard ... I felt ...’. You can then try ripping up these negative thoughts and throwing them away.

*“I didn’t know where my head was. I thought if I allowed myself to get upset, I’d never get better. I wish I’d spoken to someone back then.”*



Some of these techniques are known as ‘mindfulness,’ helping you to pay attention to the present moment rather than being stuck in negative thoughts.



*Mindfulness can be a great way of managing your thoughts and feelings.  
See [www.bemindful.co.uk](http://www.bemindful.co.uk) for details.*

## Supporting Your Children



*Families Outside can provide advice and support about speaking to children.*

### HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILDREN ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The situation can be distressing for children. Often how to tell the children can be one of the most difficult decisions parents face. It might feel easier for adults not to acknowledge the situation or even to tell a 'white lie' to ensure that the child does not worry unduly or does not see the family member in a negative light. Telling a child that a family member 'has moved away for a few months' can feel like the right thing to do, but not telling them what is really going on, is only likely to store up problems for the future.

Generally, it is better for the child to know about the offence and what has happened since conviction.

*Children can feel confused or distressed when they find out the truth if adults have not been open and honest. However, it is vital that information is given in a way that is right for their age and stage of development.*



Bear in mind every situation is unique. In some situations, a child may be too young to understand, while in others the child will be

able to make sense of this, or they may have seen the family member being arrested. Some children may have heard about what's happened from peers at school; others may know the victim of the crime.



*Make sure you prepare for the conversation with your child. You may find it helpful to rehearse what you are going to say with a trusted adult first or have them present. Think about where and when it will take place.*

Try and separate your own feelings from what the child needs to know. You may feel very angry yourself, but that shouldn't influence what you say or how you say it.

*Think carefully about the language you'll use. It might be helpful to explain that good people can make bad choices, and where people make bad choices there are consequences.*



Try putting yourself in your child's shoes – how will it feel to hear this information? Listen to your child's feelings and thoughts. Acknowledge them and don't try and change them.



*Think through any questions your child might have or how they might react. Preparing for this in advance can help you respond appropriately.*



The first conversation is just the start of the journey. You may need to talk about this again at later stages. As we grow and develop, we see the world in different and new ways, and we need clearer and more accurate explanations for the way things are.



*Make sure your child knows they can ask questions at any time. Like you, they may find it helpful to write down questions for you or your family member, even though it may be that these questions can't be answered at the moment.*

*"The kids and I are closer now. It's been hard, but we've got through it."*



## WHAT MIGHT HELP MY CHILDREN?



*Consider letting your child's school know.*

The natural reaction might be to want to keep it to yourself, but there are benefits to both you and your child in letting their school know. When the school is made aware, they will be able to understand and react sensitively to any changes in your child's behaviour and put support in place for your child if appropriate.

*"Someone should just have asked me what was wrong (at school)."*



The school may be able to ensure your child has someone to speak to about how they are feeling. Just knowing there is an identified person in the school to talk over their feelings is often a welcome relief for children.

*When speaking to your child's school, focus on your child's feelings and needs. The school doesn't need to know all the details of the offence.*



Schools are used to handling sensitive information and will only share the information with those who need to know, in order to best support your child.



*Families Outside can advise schools on supporting pupils affected by imprisonment, and you might want to let your school know about them if they are not already aware.*

You can also ask the school to authorise visits on school days.

*Your child might benefit from keeping a 'scrapbook' in which they can put positive things they would like to share with their family member. Writing letters to the family member might also help.*



## WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN VISITING THE PRISON?



*Contact Families Outside or your family member's prison for information on visiting.*

Currently there are different arrangements across the prison estate for children visiting people who have been convicted of a sexual offence.

Some prisons will carry out checks on *all* children visiting people who have committed a sexual offence. Other prisons will only carry out checks on children who are visiting people who have offended against a child who is under 17 (this is called a Schedule One offence).

When your family member arranges for a child to come for a prison visit, the visit cannot take place until the prison-based social worker checks with the Children & Families social worker (local to where the child lives), that they have no concerns about the child visiting the prisoner.

It is sometimes the case that the visit will not be supported by the Children & Families social worker, and the visit will not take place.

Each individual child's situation must be checked, and it might be that the prisoner's own children will be allowed to visit, while other children cannot.

There are a number of reasons why a social worker might not support the visit. For example:

- the child is the victim;
- the child is considered at risk from the prisoner; or
- the child will not have contact with the prisoner on release.



*If a visit is denied by a social worker, contact them for an explanation as to why the visit cannot take place. Ask for support if you feel the decision is wrong.*

## WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED?

Sexual abuse can affect children in many different and profound ways. If your child has been abused by your family member, the child may also need to seek specialist support.

*MOSAC and Barnardo's Lighthouse / Skylight service may be able to help support children who have been abused.*



If your child makes a disclosure to you about being abused, you must contact one of these organisations, social work or the police.

## Facing the Future



*“I’m not going to lie, that first year was the worst time I’ve ever gone through. I guess I’ve surprised myself though, and I’m getting on with things, and I’m stronger. I do think things are better. I didn’t think they could ever be.”*

We might be overwhelmed with the change in how we see our family member, because it affects how we see the past and future as well. It can feel like our whole world is turned upside down, and this is obviously frightening. It can open a lot of questions about bigger things in life.

*In time, moving forward will involve putting pieces of the jigsaw together again. It is unlikely that things will be the same, but there can be a future.*



Over time, our lives are reshaped, and a new picture emerges. Sometimes people even find that their relationship with their family member is better than before, because the offence has helped the person talk more about their thoughts and feelings.

## HOW CAN I HELP MY FAMILY MEMBER?

You may find you reach a point where you want to help your family member. Perhaps they are coming out of prison soon, and you plan to support them. Or you want to find out all you can so you can prevent them getting into the same situation again.

### THOUGHTS TO HELP YOUR FAMILY MEMBER

#### SPEAK TO YOUR FAMILY MEMBER

Find out what they want before you decide how far to be involved.



#### ENCOURAGE

Support your family member to work positively with any professionals involved.

#### RESPECT RESTRICTIONS

Your partner might not be allowed access to technology or be required to attend social work meetings. Support them with this.



#### SPEAK TO THEIR SOCIAL WORKER

Ask your family member for permission. You will have to respect their wishes if they don't want to give this. It may just be a case of making contact and offering your support. This can help support the work they do with their social worker.

Your family member may have an Integrated Case Management (ICM) meeting in prison. This is where prison staff will meet with your family member and other agencies to discuss ways to help them through their sentence. For you to take part in an ICM case conference, your family member must first invite you. If you wish to take part, it is worth telling them this so that you can be invited to attend. You may find yourself attending various meetings. Here are some thoughts to bear in mind.

## ATTENDING MEETINGS



### TAKE SOMEONE ALONG

It can help to take someone with you to meetings so that you don't feel alone.

### BE PREPARED

Before the meeting, think about what you would like to say or ask. It is ok to ask what is going to be covered in the meeting.



### TAKE NOTES

Memory and concentration can be affected by stress. It is a good idea to take notes in meetings, and it is ok to ask questions.

### PLAN TO RELAX AFTER THE MEETING

Think about what you will do after the meeting. Plan something that you enjoy doing that will help you relax.



## WHAT HELP IS THERE FOR HIM?

In prison there is a range of programmes which aim to reduce sexual offending. They will be offered to your family member according to their risk and needs. Anyone convicted of a sexual offence will be assessed to see if they are suitable for these programmes. Participation on these programmes is technically voluntary, and prisoners can refuse to take part, although refusal to take part may affect their chance of parole.

The groups are usually made up of people who have committed different types of sexual offence. Priority for treatment is based on need and the time they have left until release.

The programmes are delivered by psychologists, social workers, and specially trained prison officers. The programmes, and what is said during them, are confidential, and all participants have to agree to this by signing a contract.



*The next section contains ‘Practical Information’ about what happens when your family member is released from prison. This information might not be relevant to you now and you may prefer to read it nearer to your family member’s release.*



## Practical Information



*“Your key to getting through this is information and support.”*

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE GETS OUT?

For lots of families affected by imprisonment, release can be a stressful time. If you have not been living together for a while, it can be hard to get used to spending time together again. You may find that you have both had to change, and there can be a period of readjustment.

Prior to release the social work department will carry out a ‘Home Background Report’ to make sure that your family member has suitable accommodation on release. If your family member is returning to your house, this means that a social worker will visit you at home and discuss your family member’s return with you.

*If you have any questions or reservations about your family member returning to your house, it is ok to discuss this in confidence with the social worker. Remember that you also need to think about your life and what is right for you.*



When someone has been convicted of a sexual offence, there will always be some form of supervision in place on release. They will be released on a licence which will set conditions on what they can and

cannot do. Breaching these conditions can result in being returned to prison.

The licence conditions help keep your family member and others safe, and he will have to meet regularly with a social worker. The conditions may include, for example, restrictions on where your family member can go and the kinds of activities he can do; they can be discussed with the social worker. Some conditions might have a direct impact on your life, so it is worth understanding these.



*Remember to ask for support if you need help understanding these restrictions.*

## WHAT ABOUT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN?

There may be restrictions placed on your family member regarding his contact with children after he is released from prison; this can include children in your own family and in your wider family and friendship circles.

*Speak to your family member and his social worker about what these restrictions mean for daily life.*



## WHAT IS THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTER?

People convicted of a sexual offence are subject to notification requirements known as the Sex Offender Register. The length of time your family member will be on the register depends on the length of their sentence. It may be useful to know some of the basics about the register.



*Families Outside can provide more information about the notification requirements.*

Within three days of conviction or release from prison, your family member must notify the police and give them their details. It is an offence not to do so or for your family member to change their name or address without permission. He must also notify the police if he is planning on spending 7 days or more away from home. Re-registration is required with the local police every 12 months.

## WHO WILL GET TOLD ABOUT HIS MOVEMENTS?

Usually a decision will be made on an individual basis by MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), led by the police and social work. Any decision taken to reveal the movements of people who have been convicted of a sexual offence will be based on a risk assessment. This will take into consideration the potential consequences of disclosure to everyone concerned, including the offender and family.

Head teachers, doctors, youth leaders, sports club managers and others, including relevant people within housing authorities, are

notified in confidence of anyone living in the local community who has been convicted of a sexual offence.

Information about the identity of people convicted of sexual offences can now be shared with certain members of the public if the person convicted is thought to pose a specific threat to them or their immediate family.

### HOW DO I DEAL WITH THE MEDIA?



*MediaWise provide free, confidential advice for members of the public affected by inaccurate or intrusive media coverage.*

The situation can be hard enough without having to deal with media attention. It can be a worrying time, not knowing what is going to be reported, how it might be written, and where. On the next page are some thoughts which might help.

## DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Consider shutting down any social media sites that you use (e.g. Facebook). This will mean that you can have control of your personal information, comments and photos.

Plan and prepare for key dates when the media might be involved (for example the date your family member will be sentenced) and perhaps consider going away from home for a few days.

Remember you don't have to answer any journalist's questions, even if they are appearing at your door. If this happens, you can place a notice at your door saying you don't want to be interviewed.

Be wary of anything written. Very often, bits of stories, or fabrications of the truth, are reported in the media or posted on social media.

## Final Thoughts



*“At the beginning you can’t think!”*

Life as you knew it is never likely to be the same again, but with time the path ahead will clear.

*“I felt I had to do the right thing and always make the right choice, if that makes sense. Now I know I didn’t need to feel bad when I lost it with my friend. I’m not perfect, I make mistakes – it doesn’t make me to blame.”*



Know that you are not alone in your experiences and that, whilst at times life may feel like a rollercoaster, support is available.



*Families Outside is a national charity dedicated to supporting family members impacted by imprisonment.*

*Contact the Helpline on 0800 254 0088 to find out what support may be available to you.*

The final words should be left to a family member who has been through similar experiences to yourself:

*“There is light at the end of the tunnel. Life will never be the same again, but it isn’t always bad, just different.”*



## Useful Contacts



Families Outside offers support and information for anyone close to someone involved in the criminal justice system in Scotland. We have a number of information sheets on a range of subjects including 'Talking to Children about Imprisonment', 'When Someone is Convicted of a Serious or Sex Offence', 'Information on the Sex Offender Register' and 'Integrated Case Management'.

Tel: Free Helpline 0800 254 0088

[www.familiesoutside.org.uk](http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk)



Stop it Now! Scotland is the national programme for the prevention of child sexual abuse in Scotland and offers support to families of internet offenders. They may also support the offender.

Tel: 0808 1000 900

[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)



The Samaritans offer confidential support 24 hours a day.

Tel: Freephone 116 123

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)



Barnardo's Lighthouse / Skylight Service is a specialist service designed to support the Edinburgh and West Lothian communities to address issues associated with young people and sexual abuse.

Tel: 0131 446 7000

Email: [skylight/lighthouse@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:skylight/lighthouse@barnardos.org.uk)



Each Scottish prison has a Family Contact Officer (FCO), a member of prison staff responsible for encouraging links between prisoners and their families. Visit the Families section of the Scottish Prison Service website for details of specific prisons.

[www.sps.gov.uk/Families](http://www.sps.gov.uk/Families)



MOJO (Miscarriages of Justice Organisation) is a human rights organisation, dedicated to assisting innocent people in prison and after release.

Tel: 0141 552 0009

[www.miscarriagesofjustice.org](http://www.miscarriagesofjustice.org)



**Parents Protect!**

Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

Parents Protect! is a website that helps parents and carers better protect children from sexual abuse.

[www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk)



Breathing Space is a confidential, free phone line for anyone feeling low, anxious or depressed.

Tel: Freephone 0800 83 85 87

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

**ipso** independent  
press standards  
organisation

The Independent Press Standards Organisation is a regulator for the newspaper and magazine industry in the UK. IPSO provides support for individuals seeking to complain about breaches of the Editor's Code of Practice.

Tel: 0300 123 2220

[www.ipso.co.uk](http://www.ipso.co.uk)

 **mosac**  
supporting non-abusing parents and carers of sexually abused children

MOSAC is voluntary organisation supporting all non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused.

Tel: Freephone 0800 980 1958

[www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk)



MediaWise provide free, confidential advice and assistance for members of the public affected by inaccurate, intrusive, or sensational media coverage.

[www.mediawise.org.uk](http://www.mediawise.org.uk)



For information about legal advice, the Scottish Legal Aid Board is a good starting point.

[www.slabb.org.uk](http://www.slabb.org.uk)



Your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) will be able to offer guidance on who can help on a range of matters.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)



Victim Support Scotland provides support and information services for victims and witnesses of crime in Scotland.

Tel: 0345 603 9213

[www.victimsupportsco.org.uk](http://www.victimsupportsco.org.uk)



# Families Outside Support & Information Helpline

0800 254 0088

[www.familiesoutside.org.uk](http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk)

Email: [support@familiesoutside.org.uk](mailto:support@familiesoutside.org.uk)

Text service: text **Famout** followed by your message to 60777

*“There is light at the end of the tunnel. Life will never be the same again, but it isn’t always bad, just different.”*



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Families Outside is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 236539 and is recognised as a Scottish charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator No. SC025366