

WEST GLAMORGAN PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

A PROJECT LOOKING AT THE PROBLEMS OF PRISONERS

FAMILIES IN SWANSEA.

P H A S E I

RESEARCHING THE PROBLEMS

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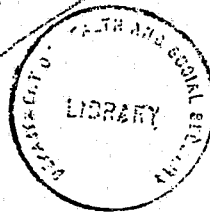
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PHASE I

RESEARCHING THE PROBLEMS

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Although a considerable amount of research and project work has been done in various areas of the country in connection with the problems facing the families of prisoners, not all of it is applicable to specific parts of the country. Probation Officers in Swansea were aware that they knew some of the problems facing families known to them individually but realised that work needed to be done to estimate the scope of particular difficulties in order to assess how best the needs of such families might be met. It was felt that only by examining in detail the extent and nature of the problems and difficulties that are experienced by such families, and by exploring in as much depth as possible the alternative forms of help and support that might be relevant to the problems in hand, could the programme of assistance that would be potentially most relevant and effective be discovered.

A research (Phase I) and development (Phase II) project was formulated and application made to the Manpower Commission for resources to implement the project.

A Psychology graduate, was appointed to carry out Phase I. His brief has been to investigate the problems facing the families of prisoners and to try and assess how best assistance can be provided. (We are very aware that loss of a spouse, be it temporary or permanent, can be caused by circumstances other than imprisonment, but we are hoping to focus as much as possible on the problems arising from imprisonment.) In carrying out the investigation into problem areas, as defined by the prisoner's spouse, we also examine the apparent response of the various organisations and agencies involved with the family to see how effective it is in the eyes of the client.

From the collated information it became clear that we did not have to search very far to find a justification for Phase II.

PART IRESEARCH PRECIS

A Research Project was conducted, which investigated some aspects of the lives and problems of prisoners' families living within the Swansea area, with a view to discovering in what ways the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service might be of assistance to them.

Previous research work was examined, and the possible factors resulting in social, practical, and emotional problems were scrutinised. Information was obtained regarding the various forms of help which prisoners' families might receive from National or Regional Statutory or Voluntary Agencies.

Thirty prisoners' wives (including permanent co-habitees) were interviewed, using a prepared questionnaire. Wives' problems (whether social, practical, emotional or any combination thereof,) concerned with housing; visiting; relationships with neighbours; immediate reactions to the "crisis of imprisonment"; loneliness and/or "missing the husband"; dealing with officials or bureaucratic structures; money; children; health; inability to cope; and her emotional state, were shown to occur to a large enough extent to warrant consideration. Many wives also expressed fears concerning re-adjustment (themselves and / or their husbands) upon their husbands' release. Prisoners' children were shown often to experience social and emotional problems, sometimes with behavioural consequences.

The majority of wives considered that the assistance that they had received from various "welfare" agencies had been inadequate. Apart from problems of finance, lack of appropriate information appeared to be a major area of difficulty. Some suggestions for the improvement of provision received enthusiastic responses.

Detailed results of the study, see Appendix I, appear to suggest that many of the problems of prisoners' families could be tackled by means of a helping programme which includes crisis intervention, information dissemination, various types of practical and emotional support for the wives and children. Towards this end a number of possible schemes were suggested, and are assessed in Part II.

PART IITHE PROBATION OFFICER'S VIEW

Whatever changes take place in penal policy, it is the Probation Officer in the Field on whom falls the responsibility for advising, assisting and befriending the families of men sentenced to imprisonment.

During the past six months, this Project has been looking carefully at some of the problems of prisoners' wives and their families. In looking at the problems locally, the Project has tried to bear in mind not only the subject of our enquiries but also the setting.

At this stage of the Project, it is necessary to look at the findings of the research; and drawing on our own experiences, gauge the possible effectiveness of various proposals for the clients.

The Probation and After-Care Service, like many others having their roots in voluntary community action, frequently finds that its statutory duties increase with Government legislation.

The Probation Officer's links with the Courts, can lead to an element of suspicion on the part of the person being "befriended". The Probation Officer cannot abdicate his statutory responsibility. However, voluntary support is seen as complimentary and we feel that a combination of Volunteers and those employed professionally, can work effectively in partnership because of their common concern, and the research seems to indicate that this partnership would be acceptable.

Although Probation Officers do enlist the assistance of Volunteers, it appears that the priority is to mobilise within the area, a group of volunteers equipped to visit families shortly after the man goes into custody, and where appropriate, make available, long-term support.

The provision of appropriate information may be through such volunteers but it also appears necessary to ensure that it is available at local centres. Practical support may best be supplied by local centres in the community. Students from the local University could find a placement in such a family centre most stimulating.

Phase II would seem to afford the opportunity to develop a Pilot Scheme, incorporating the professionals of the Probation and After-Care Service and local people of goodwill, who recognise that the problems of prisoners' wives are a legitimate cause for concern and action.

PART III

PLANNING

Phase I has focused on trying to find the answers to the questions, "What are the problems?", and, "What can be done?". In order to proceed to Phase II we must now ask the question, "How?".

In attempting to formulate a programme for development we have recognised factors such as the limitation of resources and the change in administrative structure. From September 1st, 1978, the Probation Team responsible for the project, will be covering a 'patch'; prior to this date, the Team shared with another, the work within the whole of the Swansea Petty Sessional Division.

We appreciate that some of the problems experienced by the families of prisoners are common to all single parent families within the Community, whilst others are specifically related to the imprisonment of the other parent. Some of the more ambitious proposals will have to wait until we have a firm commitment from other organisations. Others, we propose to implement as soon as possible.

Volunteers are often lost because the Service does not provide them with work to do. We believe that a very real task has been identified and that we must develop a scheme which enables individual volunteers to play, what the research has shown would be, a welcome role. A system of referral and follow-up will need to be devised and co-ordinated. In order to maximise the benefit to the family and the satisfaction to the volunteer, it will be necessary to give volunteers a certain amount of fairly specific information. Some of the volunteers already involved with the Probation Service locally have expressed interest in the scheme, but more are needed and we plan to recruit a group of volunteers who will be offered a short course of training, geared directly to the task.

Unless we are fully aware of the existing Community resources, it is not easy to ensure that they are available to those who need them. Also, the Community needs to be made aware that a need does exist. We plan to work at improving the dialogue between the Probation Service and the various organisations, both statutory and voluntary, within the Community, in the hope that existing resources can be fully utilised and that deficiencies can be identified. Then, perhaps, we can realise some of our more ambitious proposals.

PARTNERS PROBLEMS OF PORRIDGE

An Investigation into the Problems of Prisoners' Families Living in the Swansea Area.

Section 1 - Background and other Studies:

As P. Tomlinson said (1), the statement made by Kate Vercoe in 1970 (2) that "the families of prisoners are a group whose problems and needs are low on the scale of public awareness, partly from ignorance and apathy, and partly because of an ill-defined hostility which attaches to the prisoner and is extended to his family, and covers them as not deserving", is open to very little dispute. This is not to say that these problems and needs have been ignored, although it is certainly the case that until the publication of "Prisoners and Their Families" (P. Morris, 1965. (3)) there existed no documentation of any major research work carried out in this country which specifically dealt with the families of men in prison, and it is still the case that "in a Society where a Welfare State provides services well defined to meet the specific needs of particular groups, the wives and families of men in prison are the responsibility of no single statutory agency" (P. Tomlinson 1971. (1)). We shall look at some of the ways in which statutory and voluntary agencies are able to assist prisoners' families, in the next section. Let us now, however, examine briefly some of the research which has been carried out in relation to these families.

The first empirical study of prisoners' families, was conducted in 1928 by the United States Department of Labour, in Kentucky (4), and the major finding was that considerable financial hardship was very often experienced by families as a consequence of the imprisonment of the husband (a direct result of this study was an increase in the rate of compensation for prison labour in Kentucky). Ten years later (1938) another American study (5) revealed that the majority of those families studied were "unable to make satisfactory economic or social adjustment subsequent to the incarceration of the family head" (6). In 1959 another American study (7), examined prisoners' families in the light of "family crisis theory", and discovered that favourable adjustment to the crisis caused by the incarceration of the family head "was positively related to high level of family income, high level of education of the wife, and good marital adjustment". (6).

Another American study (1974. 10) also interpreted the situation faced by prisoners wives in terms of "Family Crisis Theory". This study concluded that social work "crisis intervention" is solely needed.

As has been stated, the first major British study that systematically investigated the families of men in prison, was carried out in 1965 (3), the same year as the first major study into the subject was carried out in Australia (8), and in fact their findings were quite similar, in that problems related to money, loneliness (including sexual frustration) and the children, were "among the most frequently experienced hardship of prisoners' wives". (6).

Since 1965, the only other major British study has been the three-year Nottingham project (1970 - 1973. (9)). The research orientation of the Nottingham study though, was different to that of the studies previously mentioned, in that the research was a study of work undertaken by the Nottingham Probation and After-Care Service with the families of men in

prison, and with the men themselves after release. This research cannot, therefore, really be regarded as objective, since the sample used consisted only of families with which the Probation and After-Care Service had been actively involved.

A more recent American study (6), has attempted to "determine which of the conditions existed before the family member was incarcerated, and which developed subsequent to his incarceration ... and ... go beyond the work of previous studies".

No mention has been made here of any study which has investigated the wives of men in prison from a particular theoretical (usually psychological or sociological) perspective, where little or no empirical research has been undertaken (e.g. (25)); or of any study which has dealt specifically with single aspects of the situation in which prisoners' families find themselves (e.g. visiting); or of any study which has dealt specifically with prisoners' children (e.g. (12)); or of any study which has investigated or described any sort of voluntary or statutory aid which is, or should be, available to these families (e.g. (13)); or of any study or article that has concerned itself with merely describing any aspects of the lives of prisoners' families (e.g. (14)) - including case histories (e.g. (31)); or of any study not published in the English language.

Many of the types of study or article mentioned above will, though, be cited in later sections of this report.

Section II - Introduction:

- (1) According to P. Tomlinson (working under the direction of Dr. Pauline Morris (1) there are three broad categories into which the problems which face prisoners' wives can be put - practical, social and emotional.

Practical:

Serious financial difficulties are often experienced when the family wage-earner is in prison. It may be true that the work habits of the husbands concerned may have been erratic, but nevertheless, upon their incarceration the wives find that they alone are faced with the responsibility of disposing of the family income. They may also find that they are responsible for debts that their husbands accrued, or discover the true financial position of their families is not that which their husbands had led them to believe was the case. It may also be true that the illegal activities of the husbands contributed sizeable incomes which could be sorely missed. Where wives cannot work - for example, there may be small children - then the financial crises may be more acute; and even if the wives are able to work, they may have no specific skills or training, and the jobs which are available may not be sufficiently lucrative to enable them to provide for themselves and their families. In cases where the wife finds herself dependent upon State Benefit for the first time, problems can be experienced in such practical matters as negotiating with the D.H.S.S., or other statutory bodies, and she may be unaware of rights and benefits to which she is entitled, and of how they can be obtained, (e.g. obtaining travel warrants for visits). Even when a wife is well used to

claiming State Benefit, difficulties can be (and often are) experienced.

Ignorance of the workings of the prison system is another practical difficulty, and may result in yet more problems (of various kinds). Rules and regulations concerning visits or letters, remission, parole, or the possibility of transfer to another prison - all must be discovered by the wife. Major worries can be caused by inaccurate or garbled information reaching the wife, and hopes may be raised only to be squashed again, if there is any confusion, concerning for example, parole or transfer. Both money and time may be wasted if, for example, a wife is unaware that a Visiting Order is necessary for visiting.

Although Tomlinson (1) puts problems concerned with children into the category of emotional problems, it is clear that there will be many practical difficulties experienced in the bringing up, alone, of children who may themselves react to the imprisonment of their father in any number of ways. The wife may encounter difficulties which range from problems concerning the finding of baby-sitters, to finding herself completely unable to cope with a child who is becoming increasingly disturbed.

Other idiosyncratic practical problems will, of course, exist - the wife, for example, may find that she has to rely on public transport while the family car remains unused in the garage; or difficulties can be experienced when the house requires redecoration; or when electrical goods need repair or replacement. The list can be extended almost indefinitely.

Social:

A certain amount of stigma attaches to the wives of men in prison, purely by virtue of the fact that they are married to criminals. This is not to say that this is the major social difficulty experienced by prisoners' wives, although overt hostility in the community is sometimes experienced, and even where no overt hostility is directed towards the wife, she may be aware of gossip, or feel (rightly or wrongly) that she is being ostracised by the community. This feeling can be intensified if her friends, feeling unsure of how to broach the issue, or of how to approach her in her changed circumstances, simply stay away. Even if the wife is not the victim of direct antagonism in the community, she may well feel that her children have not been so lucky: school-children can be notoriously cruel, and it is certainly not unknown for adults to emulate this behaviour.

However, according to Tomlinson (1), "for the majority, the most important social factor is that of being without a husband". The prisoner's wife may suddenly find that she feels out-of-place in the presence of her married friends or acquaintances; she may find she is unable or unwilling to continue with many of her former social activities - either because she cannot leave the children, or find baby sitters, or because social activities centred around pubs or clubs tend to be geared towards couples, and she may feel uncomfortable by herself. She may feel equally awkward associating with single girls, whose activities

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might be directed to meeting the opposite sex.

A prisoner's wife does not readily fit into the socially defined roles of married, single or divorced. She is, therefore, not only in a position where she finds it difficult to mix socially, but it is likely, even on those occasions when she does socialise, that not only will she find it difficult to adjust to her change of circumstances and will therefore be unsure of the appropriate behaviour to adopt, but that her friends and associates will be equally unsure of the correct behaviour to adopt towards her (for example whether to be protective, sympathetic, etc.). Even those social activities that she does attend may not, then, be particularly successful.

As Tomlinson (1) says, the result of the social situation in which a prisoner's wife finds herself "is often loneliness, isolation, and the feeling of being an outcast".

Emotional:

Although some sort of distinction can be drawn (roughly) between practical and social problems, no such distinction is applicable in the case of emotional problems. Emotions and emotional problems do not exist in vacuo, but derive their existence from events that take place within the experience of the individual, in that they are aspects of the responses of the individual to these events. Where events and experiences are perceived as disruptive or incapacitating, then the emotional responses to these perceptions of reality are often extreme. We cannot, then, separate practical or social problems from their emotional consequences, so perhaps the distinction that Tomlinson suggests is a little artificial. It is possible to look at the emotional aspects of being a prisoner's wife in isolation, and even to speak of "emotional problems", but it is important that we are aware of the shortcomings of this approach.

It is clear that the many social and practical difficulties which a prisoner's wife may encounter, can have a severe emotional consequence. Equally important, are the disruptions in a wife's immediate inter-personal relations which occur with the loss of a loved one, typical reactions to which are such feelings as loneliness, longing, and sexual frustration. There may also occur feelings of anger or resentment toward authority or society. If we couple the emotional reactions to practical and social problems to those caused through inter-personal loss, and we also realise that these emotional reactions may themselves trigger further emotional responses (which themselves may trigger further emotional responses and so on), then we must realise that emotionally, the prisoner's wife may be in a singularly unenviable state.

- (2) Although no single statutory agency has responsibility for the families of men in prison, resources or facilities of various kinds have been established by various statutory and voluntary agencies in order to help these families in some way. In this section we shall look at some of these attempts to help prisoner's families. No attempt is made, though, to offer a comprehensive catalogue of such attempts.

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(a) Prisoners' Wives Groups:

The 1972 NACRO "Prisoners' Wives Group Review" (13) gives a short history of the development of prisoners wives groups. The first group for prisoners' wives was started in 1964 as an offshoot of an experiment carried out by Richard Hauser in H and K wards of Wandsworth Prison. The original intention was for the wives of men participating in discussion groups in the prison to meet together to discuss problems relating to their husbands.

The nucleus of this group formed the basis of the South London Wives' Group run by the Circle Trust, who started their second group in Ipswich in 1966. By 1968 the Circle Trust, realising the extent to which wives of prisoners need support, called a National conference to call attention to the problem.

Since then, the Probation Service has taken a much more active role in encouraging and initiating Prisoners' Wives' Groups, firmly accepting their responsibility in this area.

Vercoe's 1967 survey (2) revealed the existence of twenty-one such groups. By the summer of 1972, the number had increased to fifty-five, and the 1974/5 NACRO manual listed eighty-six groups, forty-three of which were exclusively for the benefit of prisoners' wives, forty three of which were open not only to prisoners' wives but also to, for example, women on probation, wives of men on probation, and other women to which the group might be of some benefit. All but seven of these groups were run by the local Probation and After-Care Service, the others being run by voluntary bodies.

What then, are the purposes of such groups? The 1972 NACRO "Prisoners' Wives' Group Review" (13) lists the most common "aims and objectives" as:-

1. Emotional support - from other members and from Probation Officers and volunteers.
2. Providing a "break" - to give wives a chance to socialise. Clearly an important factor here is:
3. Provision of facilities for children - the provision of toys etc., plus volunteers to supervise / look after the children. Also encouragement of constructive play.
4. Practical support - for example the dissemination of information, help with transport, baby sitting, financial help, liaison with D.H.S.S. and other agencies, etc.
Also:-
5. Teaching practical skills - e.g. cooking, dressmaking, home management, budgeting.
6. Extra Group activities such as Christmas parties for the children, or outings to the seaside were reported by "virtually all" (13) the groups investigated by NACRO in 1972.

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(b) Visitors or Family Centres:

The prototype visitors' centre, is that attached to Winston Green Prison, where "a series of voluntary groups vie with each other in a Church Hall to practice a cheerful and effective back-up to prison visits" (42). Since Winston Green Visitors' Centre opened in the 1960's, a number of similar schemes have become operational, although many have since closed.

Although the facilities offered by a Visitors' Centre vary enormously in situation and in organisation, the one thing that they all have in common is that they exist to make visiting a man in prison easier for those visiting (which are usually his family, which is why some are called "Family Centres"). To this end many centres offer refreshments, "wash and brush-up" facilities, and a creche. A few centres also undertake some degree of social work, in that those operating the facilities will try to help with visitors' problems (e.g. by making referrals to Social Work Agencies, or liaising with other bodies), and some centres also double as information / advice bureaux.

Unfortunately, many centres have closed in the last few years, for varying (usually idiosyncratic) reasons, and with the closure of the Pentonville Visitors' Centre, the Times for the 10.7.78 reports that "with Pentonville gone, there are just five similar schemes left".

Related to visitors' centres, and sometimes incorporated within them, are overnight accommodation schemes, whereby overnight accommodation (usually self-catering), is supplied for visitors travelling long distances (e.g. (22)).

(c) W.R.V.S.:

Vercoe's 1972 survey (2) revealed that about two-thirds of the Probation and After-Care Services which she contacted made use of the W.R.V.S. with regard to prisoners' families. Approximately half of those areas which did use the W.R.V.S., used them only to help "with such tasks as providing clothing, transporting wives to and from prison or court, baby-sitting or helping to look after children at the prisons" (2). In the remaining areas "they are used for making contact of a more sustained kind with individual families". (2), e.g. regular visiting, putting wives in touch with all the relevant agencies etc. - as one Probation Officer said, "welfare proper". He added "they like to do regular visiting to such an extent that the Probation Officers sometimes have to curb their enthusiasm". (2).

Vercoe considers that where the W.R.V.S. are not used extensively, this is largely due to the Probation Service misunderstanding or misconceiving the competence of the W.R.V.S., or to fears that they (the Probation Service) will lose some element of control.

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(d) The Catholic Social Services for Prisoners:

The C.S.S.P. is a National organisation (and a registered charity) which employs both professional social workers and volunteers. The organisation claims that it "is the only Catholic Society in the Country which cares specifically for families of prisoners while the latter are "inside".

It does so by ensuring that these unfortunate people obtain all the help they are entitled to receive from the State.

It also helps where the State cannot, by helping to pay overdue debts (electricity and gas bills, paying H.P. debts incurred by the absent husband, etc.), paying arrears of rent to avoid evictions, referring cases of hardship to Social Services where necessary, putting local priests in touch with families in difficulty.

The Society's Social Workers advise prisoners wives on ways of solving the many problems they have to face: housing, education, budgets and health.

For instance, the Society may provide food vouchers where children seem likely to suffer due to shortage of money. It may re-house evicted families of prisoners through its own housing associations". (43).

Referrals can come directly from wives or from their friends, from local priests or prison chaplains, or from the husband via social work "surgeries" that the C.S.S.P. hold in about 13 different prisons.

Although the name may be misleading, the C.S.S.P. does not restrict its services to any particular religious faith.

(e) NACRO Welfare Fund for Wives and Families of Offenders:

"Part of the money inherited from the National Association of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, together with donations from the general public, enabled NACRO to donate a limited amount each year to assisting individual cases of hardship ... the fund for wives and families of offenders was initially established to relieve the distress of wives and families of convicted men during sentence, but has been extended, so far as income permits, to include the assistance of families of offenders not in prison or after release from prison. It is for use in general only to supplement available funds of statutory services or, in exceptional circumstances, where statutory funds would not be available. In recent cases, grants have been made towards the payment of gas and electricity bills, and to finance visits to the prison by working wives on low incomes". (44).

There are a number of organisations in the London area which help families of men in prison, all of which maintain

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a close contact with one another. These include:

(f) The Prisoners' Wives' Service:

This is a voluntary organisation which is accredited to the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service, and "offers both an emergency service to families, as well as sustained visiting where this is thought likely to be helpful". (2). It was founded by the Lady Chancellor in 1965 after she had become personally acquainted with the wife of a first offender serving eight years, who had sought and failed to find the sort of information and advice that she needed. At first the Lady Chancellor set up the "Prisoners' Wives' Advice Centre", but since this was not a success, and because a report on the work of the centre stated that "wives are seldom willing or able to travel long distances to an advice centre", and that "being lonely or frightened they welcomed a visitor unconnected with prisons or court" (1), this scheme was abandoned, and instead "it was decided to organise a team of voluntary helpers who would undertake the task of visiting the wives at home" (1). In 1965, then, a small number of volunteers were recruited who operated from the Lady Chancellor's home, which was used as the Headquarters of the P.W.S.

In 1966 the P.W.S. became accredited to the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service who assigned one of its female officers to work as P.W.S. Liaison Officer on a half-time basis, her main function being to supervise the work of the visitors, by offering them guidance and support. On 1.10.67, P.W.S. opened its own office, with its own administrative staff. At this time there were thirty-four visitors working for the service. By 1969 the number had risen to "about sixty" (1), and there are currently (January 1978) about eighty volunteers who visit on a regular basis, and whose expenses are paid by the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service. There are now also, two Liaison Officers, each of whom gives six elevenths of her time to the P.W.S.

Referrals to P.W.S. can come from about any voluntary or statutory agency (e.g. prison welfare, probation, health visitor, citizens' advice bureaux, etc.), or from an individual (wife or husband directly). When a case is referred to them, the P.W.S. undertakes to send a visitor within twenty-four hours of the referral being made.

All P.W.S. visitors are invited to attend training lectures arranged by the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service, and visiting speakers attend volunteer group meetings. Visitors are also equipped with printed notes, which give information regarding e.g. D.H.S.S., or problems which may arise from debt, H.P., or rent arrears, etc. P.W.S. visitors are, therefore, able to give some practical advice and assistance to families, and the office staff, working on the basis of the visitor's written report, is able to help with practical problems: "e.g. they may

take action to persuade the appropriate Board to re-connect gas or electricity; they may negotiate with landlords over rent arrears and eviction orders; they may give advice on legal aid; or help with requests for food or clothing".

(1). Since the office staff undertakes to deal with practical problems, this leaves the visitors to concentrate more on the "friendly supportive angle". (2).

The extent to which both practical and "supportive" work is carried out by the visitors depends to a large extent on the perceptions of the particular visitor concerning particular needs of particular clients, - the P.W.S. chose not to clearly define its aims or objectives. As Tomlinson says "because the objectives of the service are deliberately vague, it is possible for each visitor to interpret her role individually within the structure of the service. This we believe, leads to variations in the types of relationship which develop between the prisoners' wives and the visitors, flexibility which may be valuable in so far as it enables the service to recruit visitors with a wide range of skills, suitable to meet an equally wide range of needs presented by the offenders' families". (1). Or as the Lady Chancellor has said "we do not want to define our aims too closely - if we did that we might be faced with a problem that we could handle, but could not touch because it was outside our terms of reference". (1).

As Vercoe suggests, "The P.W.S. appears to offer a service which might be found extremely useful by Probation Officers in the areas outside London". (2)

(g) Prisoners' Wives and Families Society:

This is a voluntary self-help organisation, run by the wives of prisoners and ex prisoners, which began life as the Prisoners' Wives Union in 1973, and became a registered charity in 1975. The Society operates:

1. A small hostel for homeless prisoners families, where families can live on a short term basis until such time they are re-housed in long term accommodation. Overnight accommodation for families travelling long distances to visit London prisoners can also be arranged.
2. An advice centre which gives advice on practical and legal problems (a number of solicitors assist the Society on a voluntary basis). There is much liaison between this centre and Probation and After-Care Service, Prison Welfare Offices, D.H.S.S. Departments, Social Services Departments (and individual Social Workers), and with any other agencies which may be related in some way to the problems of prisoners wives and families.
3. Day nursery facilities for children aged between 2½ and 5. Meals and play facilities of various kinds are provided.

4. Free caravan holidays for a limited number of London families, thanks to the "National Holiday Fund", who purchased a 6 - 8 berth caravan, which is sited at Clacton, for the Society.
5. A scheme whereby good quality second-hand furniture and clothing can be collected and distributed to those families most in need.

(h) Sheriffs and Records Fund:

This service is available only to those prisoners' families living within the Metropolitan Police area. "Most referrals come from Chaplains working in the London Prisons, and the Almoner works through a Committee to whom she makes recommendations for the provision of material and less frequently financial aid to families". (2). The fund donates money to some organisations that assist the families of prisoners (e.g. The Association of Visitors Centres Ltd., and The Circle Trust) and works closely with the P.W.S., who visit those families which the Almoner is unable to see. Apart from practical help the fund also tries to offer "moral support, advice, and sympathetic understanding", (Annual Report for 1966).

Section III - Aim

The objective of this study was to derive some empirical knowledge of the prisoners' families living in the City of Swansea, and of the problems that beset these families, with a view to discovering in what ways the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service might be of some assistance to them.

Researcher (R)

The R was a 21 year old psychology/philosophy graduate.

Subjects (S)

S's were 30 legal wives or permanent cohabitees (at least three months cohabitation prior to imprisonment) of men serving prison sentences. All wives were resident in the area served by the two Swansea offices of the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service.

Method and Design

In order to ascertain how many prisoners' wives were in Swansea, it was first necessary to find out how many men from Swansea were in prison, and then to discover how many of these were married or cohabiting on a permanent basis (for the sake of convenience, permanent cohabitees will be referred to as "wives"). This was done by going through the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care

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Service record cards and noting the names and other relevant details of men who were recorded as being in prison, and the names of the Probation Officers that were apparently associated with these cases. The Probation Officers concerned were then asked whether each man was currently married. In those cases where the Probation Officer could not remember the case, or did not know this fact, or was no longer involved etc., then social inquiry reports and/or other records were consulted. A record of those married men with wives in the Swansea area was thus obtained, and was kept up to date by the R, noting those men who were sent to prison after the record search had been made, as they appeared on the daily Swansea Crown and Magistrates' Court results (or notifications from any other Court etc.). and again checking details of their marital situations, either with Probation Officers or from social inquiry and/or other reports.

It was decided that the most effective means of obtaining the desired information would be for the R to administer a prepared questionnaire (Appendix 1) within the context of a structured interview. It was hoped that as many wives as possible would be interviewed, although no wife was interviewed unless:

1. At the time the interview was to take place the husband was still in prison.
2. At the time the interview was to take place, the husband had been in prison for at least a month.
3. The wife had no objection to the interview taking place. In order to establish that this was the case, prospective interviewees were sent a letter (Appendix 2) inviting them to take part, accompanied by a card (Appendix 3) which was to be returned if a. the wife did not wish to take part, or if b. the time and the date that the R had suggested for the interview would inconvenience her. If this was the case the wife could suggest an alternative time and date.
4. The Probation Officer concerned with the case had no objection to the interview taking place. All Probation Officers were informed when the wives of any prisoner with whom they were associated were to be contacted. If the Probation Officer (for whatever reason) did not wish the wife to be contacted, then this wish was respected and no contact was made.

If an interview was not precluded by any of these conditions, then the R made every attempt to call on the date and time indicated in the letter that was sent to the S's. On those few occasions where reappointments or other unforeseen commitments prevented the R from interviewing an S at this time, then the R Called on the S personally to arrange a different appointment. On those occasions where the S was out when the R called, it was originally hoped that reappointments could be made by letter. Lack of time, however, rendered this plan unworkable.

The questions that were asked by the R were arranged in the form of a questionnaire (Appendix I), upon which spaces were left for the R to record S's replies, so that after each interview, a

completed questionnaire (i.e. questions followed by S's replies) was obtained. The construction of the questionnaire was such that most of the major areas of difficulty for prisoners families, as revealed by previous studies (particularly 3, 9, and 10), were investigated to some extent, although clearly not all could be studied in any depth. Wives perceptions of the value, to them of various social work agencies, and of proposed schemes or facilities that might be operated by the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service were also looked at. A large number of the questions asked were "open ended" (i.e. where the S would reply "in her own words". see 15), although some were "closed" (i.e. where the R "restricts the form, length, and context of possible responses". 15), since this seemed to be the most appropriate way of investigating this particular subject. It was hoped that a time scale (number 1 - when on remand and/or immediately after sentence began; number 2 - the duration of a sentence; number 3 - immediately before/after release), and a rating scale (number 1 - not serious (easily dealt with); number 2 - serious (can be dealt with, with difficulty); number 3 - very serious (cannot be dealt with, or only with extreme difficulty)), might help to clarify the recorded data. In practice both scales were found to have only limited use.

Before each interview the R took pains to ensure that the nature and purpose of the study, the nature of the confidentiality attached to the questionnaire, and the requirements of the interview (e.g. S's were told that if they did not wish to answer any questions then they were perfectly free not to do so etc.), were adequately explained to the S's.

Results

Many results from earlier studies will also be mentioned in this section. It will always be made clear when this is being done.

N.B. Many results are responses to open ended questions. We cannot, therefore, assume knowledge of some S's on the basis of information derived from other S's (e.g. if 10 wives state a certain opinion, then we cannot assume anything about the opinions of the other 20 wives on the basis of this one result).

Details of Example

The population of Swansea is approximately 190,000 (Home Office statistics 1977 estimate). This study revealed that from the 26th to the 31st January 1978, 123 men who usually lived in the Swansea area and who were known to the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service, were in prison somewhere in the country. Of these 123 men, 55 were married (or cohabiting on a permanent basis. For the sake of convenience, permanent cohabiters will be counted as wives;) 67 were single, separated or divorced; and no information could be found on 1. This figure does not include those offenders whose prison sentences would not normally be shown on the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service records (e.g. sentences for non-payment of fines), or any offenders sentenced to less than two months imprisonment.

As Vercoe says "no national figures are available which provide information about the marital status of men in prison" (2).

The only figures that Vercoe mentions are derived from questionnaires sent to prison welfare offices, so no comparison can be made between them and those of this study because of obvious sample differences. In any case, comparisons would probably be misleading since the results of those few studies made do not seem to agree - e.g. Vercoe 1967 study (2) found 53% of prisoners were married, whereas Walmsley's 1972 study (16) gives a figure of 35%.

Of the 55 wives who were discovered, 28 were contacted by letter, with a view to obtaining an interview. Of the 27 wives not contacted, in 18 cases the husband had left prison by the time an interview could be arranged; in 6 cases the Probation Officers concerned requested that no contact be made; in 2 cases the wife had no fixed address and therefore, could not be traced; and in 1 case the wife was also in prison.

20 of these 28 wives contacted were interviewed; 6 were out when the R called (and lack of time prevented re-appointments being made); 1 did not wish to be interviewed; 1 was unable to guarantee a time when she would be free to be interviewed (owing to family commitments).

A further 11 wives were contacted whose husbands had been sent to prison after the record search (26th - 31st January 1978), had been made. Records of only married prisoners were made after this date. 10 of the 11 wives contacted were interviewed (making a total of 30 interviews), and only lack of time prevented the other wife from being interviewed.

27 of the wives interviewed had children; 4 were pregnant when their husbands were sent to prison (at the time of the interview, 2 had given birth, 1 had had a miscarriage, and 1 was still pregnant). There was a total of 63 children. 17 mothers had a total of 35 school-age children and 18 mothers had a total of 23 pre-school-age children.

Whereabouts of Husband

At the time their wives were interviewed, 17 husbands were in Swansea prison; 3 were in Dartmoor; 3 were in Leyhill; 2 were in the Verne; and Bristol, Longlartin, Gloucester and Cardiff each contained one S's husband.

Work

3 wives stated that they were working full-time (2 were fully self-employed and 1 worked for the family business); 2 that they were working part/time (earning £6.00 per week - the maximum allowed before D.H.S.S. Benefits are reduced); and 3 that they had stopped working since their husbands were imprisoned (2 to look after the children, and 1 because she could not find suitable employment). No wife stated that she was not working before her husband's imprisonment, and had since started work. Pauline Morris' study (3) showed that 30.2% of her sample of prisoners wives were working full or part/time. This figure obviously does not compare with the results of this

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study. Morris' study showed that about 12% of those wives with pre-school age children worked. In this study no wife with pre-school age children worked.

All those wives with pre-school age children, and one of those with older children, stated that they had not really sought work because of their commitments towards their children - the rest simply stated that they were "not bothered" with finding work, and had not really tried.

Only one wife (working) declared that she had any problems concerned with work. This area does not therefore seem to be one that caused major difficulties, though, as might be expected, many wives with small children "wished" that they were able to work.

Housing

Very many of the earlier studies which have dealt with the problems of prisoners families mention that housing (or lack of it) can be a major problem (e.g. numbers 3, 5, 9, 14.), and this study is no exception.

The majority of the sample (17) lived in Council owned accommodation; 7 owned their own homes; 4 lived with their parents; and two lived in privately rented accommodation.

26 wives felt that since their husbands had been incarcerated they had experienced (or were experiencing) problems of one sort or another that were connected with their accommodation. The most common problem (affecting sixteen homes) was the need for decoration and/or repair. Damp (affecting ten homes) was also a major difficulty. Problems concerned with the roof (affecting four homes); electrical faults (affecting two homes); the central heating (affecting two homes); The plumbing (affecting two homes); and the windows (affecting two homes), were experienced by many of the sample. Also mentioned were problems concerned with the garden, and intimidation from the landlord. (For rent or rates arrears as a problem, see later - "money problems").

Three wives had moved house since their husbands had been sent to prison; six were about to do so; two wished to move but were unable to do so; and six stated that they would like to move after their husbands had been released. Of the ten wives who had moved or were about to do so, the reasons given for doing so were that:

They wanted a "place of our own".

A "fresh start".

Dislike of area.

Present accommodation was sub-standard.

Those who wished to move upon their husbands' release typically wished to get away from the area in which they lived and/or its influence upon their husbands. There was no case recorded where a wife disliked either the area or the neighbours and did not wish to move (either immediately or upon her husband's

release), or had not already done so.

This study would seem to agree with earlier findings that accommodation can cause very real problems for prisoners' families.

The problem of homelessness was not recorded on our date, but then this would probably not have been "picked-up", simply because homeless prisoners' wives would probably not be easily traced and interviewed - of the original potential sample of fifty-five prisoners' wives, two women were of No Fixed Abode, and could not be found.

Visiting

Prison visiting is another area that is much mentioned in the studies dealing with prisoners' families (e.g. in 10, 18,), and some studies have looked at this area in some detail. (e.g. 3, 19). Other studies have dealt specifically, or almost specifically, with visiting (sometimes from a particular theoretical or moral position), often with a view to reform (e.g. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26).

Twenty-three wives stated that they visited every time they were allowed a V.O. Four wives did not visit at all (three because their relationships with their husbands had ended since they had been in the prison, and one because she was unable to travel the distance involved owing to family commitments); one wife "saved-up" visits; and two wives had visited only once - one because she was unable to travel the distance involved owing to family commitments, and the other because she did not consider visiting to be worthwhile.

This study found that the most common practical difficulties were expense (seven cases): the demands of the journey (four cases); taking the children (three cases); and finding a baby sitter (three cases). Also mentioned were difficulties experienced in "travelling alone", arranging transport, leaving the business, and making arrangements at home for the time spent away. We can, perhaps, compare these findings with those of Monger and Pendleton (21), who found that "taking the children" was the most common difficulty with "demands of the journey" second, and expense third.

Emotionally, visiting seemed to be even more trying. Eighteen wives stated that they found the experience depressing, whereas only three stated that they did not find the experience depressing. Eleven stated they liked visiting and/or thought it was worthwhile.

Of the visit itself, nine wives said they disliked ("or hated") the "atmosphere"; seven said that they found difficulty in communicating with their husbands; and four said they found difficulty in relaxing or "unwinding". Three wives stated that they considered the experience of visiting to be upsetting for the children, and sentiments to the effect that visits were "degrading" and "pointless" were also expressed. Eight wives stated that they considered the frequency and/or the time

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allowed for visiting, to be inadequate.

Visiting certainly should not, then, necessarily be viewed as a particularly pleasant or constructive exercise.

Reactions to Initial Imprisonment

A number of studies, (e.g. 7, 10), have looked at the situation in which prisoners' families find themselves as a crisis. If we accept a crisis orientated view, then it seems worthwhile to look at the wives' immediate reaction to the crisis of imprisonment - i.e. the wives' reaction to the initial period of imprisonment, whether it be imprisonment due to remand or sentence. Schwartz and Weintraub (10) go so far as to say that "imprisonment produces a double crisis for the family: demoralisation plus dismemberment.....many of the problems encountered are similar to those encountered when a family member dies", and argue that crisis intervention techniques are the most appropriate form of social work intervention.

It would seem to be the case that for many wives the imprisonment of their husbands comes as a shock - sixteen of our sample said they were surprised or shocked when their husbands were imprisoned, whereas only six said they were expecting this to happen. Twenty-four wives stated that they became depressed following their husbands' imprisonment. Nineteen stated that this depression was serious (see "Health" for any treatment etc., given). Of these nineteen wives, eleven stated that they also suffered from behavioural problems of some sort consequent to their husbands' imprisonment (e.g. insomnia, psychosomatic illness, heavy drinking, apathy, "nervous breakdown").

Fourteen wives felt anger, antagonism or resentment directed towards the police (ten cases) or towards "authority" (four cases).

It would seem then, that this data would support the idea that imprisonment can be seen as a "traumatic experience" or as a "crisis" for wives of the men in prison.

Friends

If we look at our earlier discussion of the "social problems" faced by prisoners' families, then we can see that the friends of prisoners' wives have an important role to play in the social functioning of these women.

Although it is often expressed or implied (e.g. 1, 17, 25) that prisoners' wives may become isolated or even "social outcasts" (1) because of their situation (Pauline Morris (3) reports that "a great many (prisoners' wives) said that they had no friends"), the general trend revealed by research seems to be that friends of prisoners' wives tend to be helpful and sympathetic (3, 6). The social class or ethnic group to which the wife belongs, of course, will affect the degree to which she may become alienated - Scheller (5) for instance found that among negroes a husband's imprisonment made little or no difference to the wives' social acceptance; whereas the PWS

are of the opinion that Asians and Turks in London tend to isolate themselves because of shame.

This study showed that twenty-five wives considered their friends had been (and were being) sympathetic, helpful and supportive. Five wives considered that they did not have any "real friends". We must be careful in trying to draw any conclusions from a sample as small as this one. Nevertheless, this figure would seem to agree with Morris' (3) finding that the majority of prisoners' wives received support from their friends, but that there is a sizeable minority (16½% in the case of this study) with no real friends at all.

Neighbours

Since the friends of a prisoner's wife are her friends, then they are likely to "stick by her" (see "Friends"). The reactions of neighbours, though, may well be more typical of these expressed by the community at large, and may well reflect the stigma which attaches to the wives of men in prison. Morris (3) found that "hostile behaviour and lack of sympathy by immediate neighbours was far more wounding than similar attitudes from others" (3) because of their permanence and proximity, and we might therefore suppose that relations with neighbours might well constitute a social problem.

Morris found that 20% of wives considered that their neighbours were unsympathetic or hostile, but unfortunately there seems to be very little other available data on this particular subject.

This study showed that 12 wives considered that their neighbours had been sympathetic, helpful or supportive; 13 wives had not noticed any real difference in the behaviour of their neighbours (although 6 suspected that they gossiped); 7 (23%) wives had experienced unpleasantness or hostility (directed towards themselves or towards their children) from their neighbours, whether this be in the form of sexual "pestering" from the men, "picking on the children", "rubbing it in or gloating" etc - 6 of these 7 wives considered the situation to be serious enough to constitute an emotional problem.

Of the 7 wives that had experienced difficulties concerning their neighbours, 2 had moved house since their husbands had been in prison (and were referring to previous neighbours), and 3 wished to move (2 were moving shortly, and one wished to move when her husband was released). The reason given by 3 of these 5 wives for wishing to move was that they desired to get away from the area. It would therefore seem likely that in each case a bad relationship with neighbours might have been a major factor in influencing a wife's decision to move. The other two wives wished to move either because they desired a "place of our own" or a "fresh start" (away from the husband!), so it would seem that the neighbours could only have been a secondary influence in these cases.

It seems then, that this study revealed a sizeable minority of prisoners wives in Swansea had suffered (or were suffering) emotionally as a result of hostility directed towards them (and/or their family) from their neighbours.

FAMILY

In times of crisis it is often to one's family that one turns, so we would expect that the relationship between a prisoner's wife and her family (including her in-laws) will be an important factor with regard to the way in which she tackles the "crisis of imprisonment" (10).

Wife's Family

Previous research has shown that the family of a prisoner's wife is often an extremely helpful and supportive group - "it is undoubtedly true that were it not for help from their families most wives would be seriously deprived, both financially and emotionally" (3).

This study revealed that 26 of the 30 wives that were interviewed had received, and were receiving, much support, help, and sympathy from families with which they "got on well", and with which they were in frequent contact. Although the parents were the major source of support in the majority of cases, 5 wives stated that they were not on good terms with their parents, and that any support given was derived from other members of the family.

Of the 4 wives that were not receiving support of any kind from their families, only one was not on good terms with her family. Families of the other 3 wives were living a long distance away, and none had been told of the husband's incarceration.

In 16 cases the wife stated that her family "got on well" with her husband. In 4 cases they were indifferent towards each other; in 8 cases there was some degree of animosity between them; and in 2 cases the wife "didn't know" what the relationship was like. There was no support for the theory that families might try to put pressure on the wife to divorce her husband (e.g. 10).

Only 2 wives stated there were, or had been, any problems connected with their families: one wife found it difficult to get on with her mother, and yet was forced to live with her because she (the wife) had been evicted from her own home (prior to her husband's imprisonment); and one wife was worried that her family might find out about her husband's incarceration.

This study then, would seem to agree with previous research findings the family of a prisoner's wife may be the most important source of support, sympathy and help available to her.

Husband's Family

Unfortunately, the in-laws of a prisoner's wife do not seem to be as useful social and emotional contacts as do the wife's own family. In fact, one study is of the opinion

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that "the major pattern observed in the relationship of the wife to her in-laws is a reverse of that which is seen with her own parents" (10). It goes on to say that the in-laws may blame the wife for her husband's incarceration, and where contact is maintained the in-laws may become hyper-critical of the wife. The wife may, in turn, blame the in-laws for the "very psychological difficulties that have resulted in the husband's imprisonment". Eventually "a generally hostile relationship develops" (10). Morris, however, found that there was "some hostility" between a wife and her in-laws, but that "in most cases this dated from long before the imprisonment", and that "where such negative relationships existed, they constituted far less of a problem, than did any hostility on the part of neighbours". (3).

Of our sample, 11 wives felt that they "got on well" with their husband's families (with which they were in frequent contact), and that they had received much help, sympathy and support from them. A further 3 wives "did not get on" with their parents-in-law, but received some (small) measure of support and contact with other members of their husband's families. 5 wives stated that they simply "did not get on" with their husband's families. In 6 cases physical distance prevented the formation of any relationships, and in the remaining cases the relationships were not close, although they were not hostile.

In 22 cases the husband was said to be on good terms with his family; in 5 cases he was said not to be on good terms with his family; in 2 cases he was said to "get on with" only members of his family other than his parents; and in the remaining cases the wife did not know what sort of relationship existed.

3 wives stated that they had experienced problems which directly involved their in-laws - one wife complained that her mother-in-law attributed the blame for her husband's incarceration to her; one wife complained that her mother-in-law had accused her of mistreating her children; and one wife complained that she and her children had been rejected by her husband's family at a time when they were most in need of support.

We can perhaps see that although there are serious problems arising through relationships with in-laws, for a minority of wives, it would seem that lack of support rather than the creation of problems is more characteristic of relationships between prisoner's wives and their in-laws. We must not forget though that over one third of the wives interviewed in this study, were receiving active support from in-laws.

Husband's Criminality

Morris (3) has shown that a wife's picture of her husband's criminality may well not be an accurate representation of the truth, and other studies (e.g. 27) have supported this view. Factors arising from this misperception may, of course, give rise to difficulties of varying kinds for the wife.

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16 wives, when asked if they thought that their husbands should have been sent to prison, replied in the affirmative. The majority of these, though, considered that their husband's had been unfairly treated (9 considered the sentence given to be too harsh; 3 considered it to be fair; and 3 considered it to be lenient). 12 wives thought their husbands should not have been incarcerated (6 considered that the sentence given was too harsh, and 6 were of the opinion that their husbands were innocent); and 2 wives stated that they did not know enough about their husbands cases to be able to make a judgement.

3 wives stated they had problems connected with their husbands imprisonment. 2 were concerned with the wife's relationship with her husband. (Both husbands blamed their wives for their imprisonment: one because the wife had not gone to Court and "spoken for him", and one because the wife was the person that had reported him to the police following an argument); and one was concerned with the wife's feelings of bitterness because she considered her husband to be innocent.

When the sample were asked why, in their opinion, their husbands had committed an offence (or offences), the most common reason given (13 cases) was that the offence had been committed "for the money" (in 8 cases because of greed, and in 5 cases in order to help the family). The second most common reason was that the husband was unemployed (7 cases). 6 wives considered that their husbands had committed offences because of emotional factors such as depression, or "a lost temper". 5 wives blamed the fact that their husbands were "easily led; or under the influence of alcohol (4 cases); or were mentally unstable (2 cases); or habitual criminals (2 cases). Altruism, gambling, self-defence, and upbringing were also mentioned.

Because of differences in classification, these figures cannot readily be compared with those of Morris. (3).

The extent to which wives felt to blame for their husband's imprisonment was also investigated. 23 wives stated that they felt no blame whatsoever. 7 wives stated that they felt blame "sometimes" - usually when depressed. No wives considered that they might really be to blame.

2 wives considered that they had experienced problems concerned with blame - one felt that she was being blamed and "classed as a criminal" by society, and one had felt "tremendous guilt" at the time of her husband's imprisonment, but had since overcome these feelings.

Loneliness (Including Sexual Frustration)

Almost every study that has dealt with the problems of prisoners wives emphasises the extent to which loneliness is felt by this group, and often constitutes a problem. This is really no insight, though, since it is obvious that if a loved husband is taken away from a wife then he will be sorely missed.

In so far as many of the problems which are experienced as a result of imprisonment are due, to a large extent, to the physical absence of the husband, then it is perhaps misleading to attempt to quantify the extent

to which loneliness is felt. Nevertheless it was thought worthwhile to investigate the extent to which loneliness was experienced by the sample, in case anything unusual was discovered - this however was not the case.

When asked if they were sorry that their husbands had been sentenced to prison, twenty-seven wives stated that they were, and three stated that they were not. (Two because they felt it might reform him, and one because it gave her the chance to end the marriage).

Twenty-eight wives stated that they missed their husbands (twenty stated that they missed them very much indeed), for both practical and emotional reasons. (Including sexual frustrations). Only two wives stated that they did not miss their husbands - one had ended their relationship, and the other considered that she managed considerably better without him.

Also, see later "biggest problem" where loneliness is rated second only to money problems.

Trouble with officials: (See also "Contact with Welfare Organisations")

Turning again to practical problems (see Introduction), it was considered that prisoners' wives might have found difficulty in dealing with officials (of any sort). Little empirical research into this matter seems to have been carried out. Since, however, liaison with official voluntary or statutory bodies seems to be an important function of some of the organisations which help prisoners' families (e.g. 1, 28, 29), then an investigation of the difficulties encountered by prisoners' wives dealing with these bodies seems to be justifiable.

Twelve of the sample stated that they had encountered no difficulty with officials (or official bodies), whereas eighteen of the sample stated that they had experienced difficulty. (If we include complaints against the Police, then this figure becomes twenty-three).

The most common source of complaint was D.H.S.S. (fourteen cases), - there were seven complaints about failure to supply grants; four about delays in sending money; and one each about not giving the correct amount of money; not sending rent to the local housing authority; delays when changing books; failure to pay debts; being "negative"; not giving good advice; and about "putting you down".

Thirteen wives complained about the Police. It is debatable though, whether these should be included, since the majority of complaints refer to incidents which took place prior to imprisonment. Nevertheless, ten wives complained about the general attitude of the police while searching their houses etc.; five wives complained about the police being unduly destructive while searching their homes; three wives complained of the ways in which their children have been treated by the police; two wives complained that articles removed for forensic analysis had not been returned; two wives complained that house searches had been carried out without warrants; two wives complained that police statements were grossly exaggerated; two wives complained that the police had not informed them of their husband's whereabouts when in custody (after informing the husbands that they would); two wives complained that their possessions had been taken from them after the police declared (wrongly) that they were stolen; one wife complained about the police harassing her husband into a (false) confession.

Two wives complained about the Social Services: in both cases because after being contacted about supplying children's toys for the wives' children, none were forthcoming.

Two wives complained about the Local Authority Housing Department, in one case because the wife was sent an eviction order when she owed rent, and in the other case because they would not find the wife alternative accommodation.

Complaints were also recorded about the Probation Service ("they only think of the man and not his family"); the Local Rating Authority (Because they had sent a rate bill covering a period of time when the wife in question was no longer the tenant of the property concerned); the local Education Authority (for taking three months to deal with an application to deal with free school meals); and a Police Warrant Officer (for taking a wife into custody because of non-payment of fines).

The extent to which these complaints are justified is, of course, debatable. What is clear, though, is that the majority of complaints are not concerned with the difficulties of an individual in understanding or manipulating complex bureaucratic structures, but with the ways in which an individual may be inconvenienced by the every-day workings of these structures - particularly when they cannot be of use in a material sense.

Money

It is typically found by researchers (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc.), that money (or rather the lack of it) constitutes the biggest problem with which prisoners' families must deal. Income for twenty-seven wives (i.e. all wives other than those working full time) was found to be supplementary benefit from the D.H.S.S. Of these twenty-seven wives, two were earning an extra £6.00 through part/time work; two were receiving maintenance (for children) from ex-husbands; and one was "letting" part of her house and was receiving rent. Five wives stated that they were receiving regular financial assistance from their parents. Fourteen wives had applied for exceptional needs grants, from the D.H.S.S., and nine wives had received one or more such grants.

Two wives (both working full-time) considered that they had no money problems; five considered that they were "managing alright", because of good budgeting; seven said that they were managing with difficulty; and sixteen considered that they were having considerable difficulty in "making ends meet".

Debt

Seventeen of our sample were in debt (or had been in debt at some time since their husbands were imprisoned). The remaining thirteen wives were not in debt when interviewed and had not been in debt at any time since their husbands were imprisoned. Nine wives owed money to the Electricity Board; six owed rent; five owed money to the Gas Board; three owed money either to individuals or finance companies; three owed television rental; three owed hire-purchase arrears (H.P. was only counted as debt if there were arrears); two owed rates; two owed mortgage repayments; two owed money to the coalman; two owed money to the milkman.

Re-payment of Debt

Nine wives were having the weekly rent and/or rent arrears deducted at source (i.e. from their supplementary benefits); seven wives were having other debt deducted at source; and nine wives stated that they were regularly paying back their debts out of their incomes. Four wives stated that they could not afford to pay off any of their debts, and were therefore not doing so.

It can be seen, then, that for many of the prisoners' wives who were interviewed the management of their incomes constituted a very serious problem indeed. It is, of course, possible that such money problems may have been as bad, or even worse, before the husbands were incarcerated. This was not, however, shown to be the case - only three wives said that they had found it easier to "make ends meet" since their husbands had been in prison (in each case because it was now they who managed the family income); five stated that there was no real difference, because they were dealing with roughly the same amount of money; and twenty-two wives stated that they had found it harder to manage the family budget, - four because they were now solely responsible for organising the family's finance, and eighteen simply because they were now in receipt of less money than when their husbands had been with the family.

Health: (Wife's)

Morris (3) found that 12% of prisoners' wives mentioned ill-health as a major source of difficulty. No such figure could be found by this study, because it became impossible to adequately define the necessary criteria. A degree of codification was however possible.

The most common health problem for prisoners' wives discovered by Morris (3) and others (e.g. 1) was that of "nerves", and these findings were supported by this study. Twenty-four wives considered they suffered (or had suffered) from depression or "nerves" (one wife stated that she had experienced a "nervous breakdown"); twenty-two considered that their problem was serious enough to warrant seeing a doctor about it, and twenty had done so (the other two were "frightened" to see a doctor in case he gave them tranquillisers, which they did not want). Eighteen of these wives had received (or were receiving) treatment (the doctor would not prescribe in one case because the wife was pregnant, and in the other because he considered prescription to be inappropriate).

Although some difficulties were found in discovering what sort of treatments were prescribed (chiefly because of memory or ignorance) it appears that sixteen wives were treated by means of minor tranquillisers (benzodiazapines of one sort or another), and two were given "tonics". In addition to the behaviour problems mentioned earlier (see "reaction to initial imprisonment"), two wives complained of frequent headaches caused by nervous tension, and one wife complained of "nervous asthma".

Eleven wives complained of illnesses which had no immediately apparent "nervous" origin (only illnesses that had received medical attention were counted) - four wives complained of "kidney trouble" (one had been into hospital and three were awaiting admittance); and there were single complaints of meningitis, a heart murmur, a dermatological complaint, a gynaecological complaint (the wife was awaiting admission to hospital for treatment), a cyst (the wife had received hospital treatment), anaemia,

"black-outs", "stomach ulcers", and "gall bladder trouble" (this wife was awaiting admission to hospital for treatment).

Four wives considered that their health had been "alright" since their husbands had been in prison and two wives considered that it had been better.

It would certainly appear, then, that ill-health of one sort or another constituted a problem for a large number of the wives interviewed.

Children

Morris (3) has suggested that "it is perhaps amongst the children, rather than the wives of offenders, that one might expect to find the impact of the fathers' separation and/or criminality to be the greatest". (3). In practice, however, Morris found it impossible to distinguish between the effects of imprisonment and the effects of separation, and this distinction has been the major difficulty that has faced subsequent researches into the problems of prisoners' children (e.g. 30, 31, 32, 33).

It is typically found that the behaviour of many prisoners' children undergoes an adverse change when their fathers are imprisoned. Morris, for example, found that 48.9% of the children in her sample showed some degree of deterioration in behaviour (3). Typical examples were truancy, deterioration in school performance, delinquency or general unruliness.

There is a body of evidence (e.g. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40) that shows that similar behavioural problems readily occur in many other instances of child/parent separation (e.g. divorce or armed service). In the case of prisoners' children there are also the possibilities that the children are either merely reacting to (or reflecting) the family crisis that has taken place, or that they are responding to differences in the mothers' behaviour (including discipline).

Since any sort of investigation of these theoretical possibilities lay beyond the scope of this study, it was decided merely to collect empirical data concerning the behaviour (and behavioural changes which had taken place since the fathers' imprisonment) and problems of prisoners' children in the Swansea area; and data concerning how their mothers' were "managing with the children".

For the sake of convenience the following analysis counts all step-children as "children", and all step-fathers as "fathers".

We shall first turn to wives' statements concerning how they were "managing with the children". One wife stated that she was managing better since her husband had been in prison; nine stated that they were managing well, but with some difficulty; and eight stated that they were experiencing difficulty. Three wives stated that they felt their children were "taking advantage" of them, since their fathers' had been in prison; three wives stated that their children "needed a father"; and one wife stated that she had tended to "take it out on them" when they "got out of hand".

Since the situation described above may have existed prior to imprisonment, it is important that we consider the differences that were reported as having occurred in the children concerned. Seven wives reported that they had not noticed any changes in their children's behaviour, whereas nineteen reported that they had - fourteen wives reported that their children

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had become more difficult to control or discipline, whereas three reported that their children had become better behaved since their fathers had been in Prison.

Of the nineteen wives who reported that their children missed their fathers, ten reported changes in the children's behaviour - six reported that their children had been "crying", "pining" or generally "grieving" in some manner; three reported that their children had stopped eating for a time; three reported that their children had become more introverted; two reported that their children had been calling and searching for their fathers; and one wife reported that one of her children had begun "wetting the bed" and had developed "nervous asthma". Mood-swings and attention-seeking behaviour were also reported (each by one wife). Five wives reported that one or more of their children did not miss their fathers. These were reported as not being so because:

- They didn't like him;
- They rarely saw him;
- They preferred his absence;
- They were too young to notice any difference caused by his absence.

Of the seventeen mothers with school-age children, eleven reported no difference in their children's School performance or attendance, whereas six did report differences:

- Five mothers reported that their children had begun truanting (or were truanting more frequently), with a subsequent drop in their School performances;
- One mother reported that one of her children had become truculent in School, and was frequently in conflict with his teachers.

Nineteen mothers reported no difference in their children's health, whereas seven did report differences. Of these, though, only two conditions (nocturnal enuresis and "nervous asthma") could be in any way readily associated with the father's imprisonment.

If we are to attribute any of the above results to the influence of father's imprisonment as opposed to other forms of separation from the father, then we must look at how many children knew of their father's whereabouts. Sixteen mothers reported that all their children knew where their father was (two had been informed by peers rather than by the mother). A further three mothers had told only older children. Three mothers stated that they had not told any of their children where their fathers were - two mothers did not want them to know in case it affected their relationships with their fathers, and the other mother stated that she could not "bring herself" to say. Of those mothers who had not told the truth to their children, all had either told them that their fathers were "working away" or were "in hospital". For eight wives, the question of what to tell their children was inappropriate, either because they had no children or because their children were too young to understand the situation even if it had been explained to them.

We must be aware of the possibility that the children's behaviour had altered simply because they were responding to changes in their mother's parental style (whether caused by crisis, inexperience, or any other factor). That differences had occurred in parental style since the incarceration of the children's fathers was, in fact, reported - eight wives stated that they had been "harder" to the children since their husbands had been in prison; eight wives stated that they had been

"softer" to the children; and two wives stated that they had been both "harder" and "softer" to some extent. Typical reasons given by the mothers for these changes in parental style were, for example, that more firmness was needed because only she was now able to discipline the children, or that more "softness" was needed because the children's father was absent, and was being missed by them.

It is clear that because of lack of experimental controls, it is impossible to suggest a theoretical explanation of why these changes of behaviour may have taken place. It is equally clear that their children can constitute a considerable problem for prisoners' wives, and that their children can also find themselves with many problems of their own.

The influence of peers might also have been a casual factor of some sort. Seven mothers were aware that their children had suffered some degree of taunting, abuse etc., because of their fathers' imprisonment. It is, of course, impossible to say how many mothers were unaware of this when it had, in fact, taken place.

An important point to remember is that the information in this section, was derived from statements made by the mothers of the children in question, so in some cases, it could be inaccurate, biased or distorted, through ignorance, emotion or any number of other factors.

Social Life (Wife's)

Turning again to social problems (see Introduction), if we consider the number of wives with small children (see "details of sample") and the monetary problems which beset many wives (see "money"), then it is not difficult to see that the social life of many wives may be severely restricted. This is a typical research finding (e.g. 3, 6). Morris (3) found difficulty in establishing the amount of change in social activity that had taken place subsequent to the husband's imprisonment, and since this was the area in which we were interested, then this was the direction in which the emphasis of this study lay. As might be expected, the majority of wives (i.e. twenty-one), indicated they "went out" socially less after their husbands' were in prison; five wives indicated that they "went out" socially to roughly the same extent as before; and four wives indicated that they "went out" socially more often.

One of the four wives who "went out" more often, stated that she had received more invitations from friends since her husband's incarceration, and that she now visited them, or went to dinners etc. with them approximately twice a week. The other three wives were of the opinion that their social lives had been restricted by their husbands, and their attitude was rather one of "he's not here to stop me". Of these three wives, two had begun visiting Swansea night-clubs every week (one went twice a week) with friends, and the other had joined the local ladies' darts team.

Of the five wives who went out to the same extent, three simply meant they never used to go out before their husbands were imprisoned and since they still did not "go out" then there was no difference; one still went to bingo three times a week with her mother-in-law; one still went to the local social club about once a week with her mother.

Of the twenty-one wives that went out less, eleven stated they did not go out socially at all (not including visits to family, family outings etc).

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Of the remaining ten wives, three had gone out socially only once since their husbands had been incarcerated - "out with the girls" at Christmas. Of the remaining seven wives, five went to the local social club, pub, or community centre (three with friends and two with their families) weekly (two cases), fortnightly (two cases), or monthly (one case); and two went to bingo fortnightly, one with friends and the other with her mother.

It would appear, then, that very many of the prisoners' wives who were interviewed, enjoyed little or no social life. Visits to family, friends, or family outings etc., were not included in the analysis, since the data collected on these topics was too vague to be accurately analysed. Even if we assume that contact between wives and their families and friends took place (see "family" and "friends"), then this data would still suggest many prisoners' wives socialise only infrequently, if at all.

Emotional States:

As we have said (see "Introduction") a prisoner's wife may well be in a "singularly unenviable emotional state". We have already looked at some practical, social, and emotional factors which may adversely affect a wife's emotional state (e.g. money, loneliness, "the crisis of imprisonment" - see back), and in the next few sections we will be more closely examining particular aspects of this state - feelings towards the husband and the marriage; feelings that "things are getting on top of you", or of being unable to cope; feelings of fear, worry and anxiety.

Feelings concerning husband and the marriage

A number of studies show that both the marriage of prisoners and their personal relationships with their wives (among others) often suffer as a result of imprisonment (e.g. 3, 17, 18, 19). We must consider, though, the circumstances that existed prior to incarceration (Morris (3), for instance, found that the marriages of over 40% of her sample were assessed as containing "some friction/tension", and a further 14% were assessed as being "on the rocks"). Since this study could not adequately investigate prior conditions, then the emphasis was laid on the changes which had taken place since the incarceration of the husband.

Thirteen wives stated that their feelings towards their husbands had not changed since their husbands had been incarcerated. Three wives stated that they felt "much the same" but had "drifted apart" to some extent because of separation. Four wives stated that they thought less of their husbands since they had been in prison - in two cases the wives had ended their marriages. Ten wives considered that their husbands' imprisonment had improved their relationships, and that they felt "closer" or "more in love" than prior to imprisonment. Three wives stated that they had become "more independent".

The fact that a third of the wives interviewed found that they had become "closer" to their husbands since their imprisonment, should not be considered surprising. Brodsky (19) for instance, found that 37% of imprisoned husbands felt that their "relationships and feelings towards family members" had "become closer". It is, of course outside the scope of this study to theorise as to why this improvement in relationships might occur. We are all aware, though, of the old adage "absence makes the heart grow fonder", and it is certainly true that forced separation gives both partners a chance to

"take stock", and perhaps "count their blessings". The removal of factors which might cause strain in a marriage (e.g. drink, sex, etc.) may also contribute to this improvement in relationships. The small amount of contact which partners are allowed is also likely to facilitate the formation of unrealistic attitudes - husbands particularly, may become frequent writers of affectionate letters and poems (19), which certainly may influence wives to form more favourable, but less accurate, opinions of their husbands.

Since it has been shown (e.g. 3) that feelings of shame directed towards the husband are sometimes a problem for prisoners' wives, then our sample were questioned on this topic. Nine wives stated that at some time since their husband's imprisonment they had felt ashamed of them. This shame was only connected with imprisonment, though, in four cases, and was not seen by any wives to constitute a problem.

Wives' feelings about their marriages were found to be more difficult to tabulate than those concerning their personal relationships with their husbands. This was largely because many wives were unsure as to exactly what their marriage constituted while their husbands' were in prison. Some degree of tabulation was, however, possible.

Four wives stated that they considered the incarceration of their husband to have improved their marriage (although in two cases the wives had simply stated that it was "better when we are apart"); eighteen wives considered that their feelings towards their marriage had not changed (twelve wives considered that they had good, stable marriages, and six considered that their marriages were insecure); two wives considered their marriages had weakened since their husbands had been imprisoned, because they had "drifted away" from them (although one felt that, in the long run, her husband's imprisonment might strengthen the marriage); three wives stated that their marriages had weakened, in that they were now only willing to continue their relationships on a "last chance" basis. ("If he goes back in he is not coming back here"); and three wives stated that their marriages had ended since their husbands had been imprisoned.

It is unfortunate that we cannot readily compare the findings of this study regarding wives' feelings towards their husbands and their marriages, with those of earlier studies. Sample differences (e.g. a number of probation officers refused permission for an interview with a wife to take place, because of her (or her husband's) marital difficulties, or a pending separation), however, preclude this comparison.

Wives' feelings of being "unable to cope" or of having "let things get on top of them".

In looking at the emotional states of prisoners' wives, it was hoped that some insight into the extent to which these people felt incapacitated or overwhelmed by circumstances, events or emotional reactions, could be gained by questioning them on the extent to which they felt they had "let things get on top of them", or felt that they were "unable to cope".

Six wives stated that they had not felt they had "let things get on

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top of them" since their husbands had been in prison. Three wives stated that they had "occasionally". Nineteen stated that they had often felt that they had "let things get on top of them".

Six wives stated that since their husbands had been in prison, they had not felt that they "couldn't cope". Six wives stated that they had, but "only once or twice". Five wives stated that they had "occasionally". Thirteen stated that they had often felt they "couldn't cope".

Both these sets of findings would certainly suggest that many of the prisoners' wives interviewed, had experienced, since their husbands had been in prison, times of severe emotional strain. Many of our earlier findings, (e.g. see "reactions to initial imprisonment", "children", "health" etc.) would, of course, suggest this. This subjective verifications is, though, invaluable.

Feelings of fear, worry and anxiety

It was hoped that by looking at wives' feelings of fear, worry and anxiety that occurred subsequent to the husbands' imprisonment, and thereby discovering the reasons for these feelings, some indication of the emotional effects of some of the various social, practical and emotional circumstances that were looked at in other sections of this report (e.g. "friends", "money", "reactions to initial imprisonment" etc.), would be obtained. This was found only partly to be the case, since, unfortunately, the "open-ended" question form that was used allowed too many idiosyncratic interpretations of the emotional concept in question, and of the frames of reference utilised in answering the question to occur. Nevertheless, some insights were gained

Three wives stated that they had not experienced any fears, worries or anxieties that they would not have experienced if their husbands had not been in prison, whereas twenty-seven wives stated that they had experienced these emotions, and would not have done so had their husbands not been in prison.

The most common fears, worries or anxieties expressed were concerned with being "alone" at night (ten cases). Fears, worries or anxieties concerned with debts or money were expressed by three wives, as were those connected with possible effects on children of their fathers' imprisonment. Fears, worries or anxieties concerned with business; husbands' health or welfare; the possibility of "finding someone else"; children's welfare; stigma; and being sexually "pestered", were each expressed by two wives. Fears, worries or anxieties concerned with the home; husbands' return; lack of communication with husband; dealing with officials; being "watched" by husbands' friends; possible breakdown in relationships; and obscene 'phone calls, were each expressed by one wife.

We can see, then, that the majority of the prisoners' wives interviewed had experienced fears, worries or anxieties that would not have occurred had their husbands not been in prison. Although many of the causes of these emotions were idiosyncratic, almost all of them referred to areas of difficulty which were examined by this study, and which are described elsewhere in this report (e.g. loneliness, "money", "children", etc.).

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Contact with Welfare Organisations

In so far as prisoners' families experience problems, it would seem to be worthwhile examining the nature, extent and effectiveness of the various voluntary and statutory agencies which profess to help such people.

The value, to prisoners' wives, of welfare agencies has not been extensively investigated, but wherever an examination has been conducted (e.g. 3, 9, 10) the conclusion always seems to be that more should be done.

This study attempted to establish how much contact prisoners' wives in Swansea had had with "welfare" organisations, and the extent to which these organisations were perceived by the wives as useful (or useless), in terms of help, support and the dissemination of useful information (it was not found possible to accurately analyse the extent to which some agencies were perceived as useful disseminators of information. We shall therefore look at "information" as derived from welfare agencies, in more general terms, later in this section).

As might be expected, the "welfare" organisation with which most prisoners' wives came in contact was the D.H.S.S. Of the twenty-seven wives who received supplementary benefit, ten had had only minimal contact with the D.H.S.S. - i.e. only enough contact to maintain S.B. payments. Of the remaining seventeen wives, the only other contact that they had had were their applications for exceptional needs grants. Nine had received one or more grants, and five were refused any. Needless to say, the five who were refused did not express a favourable opinion of their dealings with the D.H.S.S. Only three of those who has received grants, considered that D.H.S.S. had been helpful - the other six were of the opinion that they had not had enough, and that more should have been given to them or done for them. One wife who was not on supplementary benefit, and had gone to the D.H.S.S. for advice and information, stated that she had found them very negative, and not at all helpful.

Twenty-four wives stated that they had had some sort of contact with the Probation and After-Care Service, although in three cases this contact amounted to one visit by a Probation Officer concerning the preparation of the husbands Social Inquiry Report. Ten wives stated that a Probation Officer had called to see them "once or twice"; nine wives stated that they had called to see the Probation Officer "once or twice" (in two cases the Probation Officer had sent a Volunteer (who called regularly) but had not seen the wife himself; and one wife was herself on Probation.

It was not found possible to obtain a very accurate picture of the sorts of tasks Probation Officers had undertaken in relation to prisoners' wives, although liaison with D.H.S.S., Social Services, Housing and other Agencies seemed to figure largely. Efforts to obtain transfers to or from prisons were much in evidence, and good reports, whether in relation to Court cases or Parole, were much appreciated.

Twelve wives considered that the Probation Officers with whom they had come into contact had been helpful, and twelve wives considered that they had not. Six wives considered that they had been

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supportive, whereas eighteen considered they had not. Fourteen wives stated that the Probation Service had not helped them in terms of dissemination of useful information, whereas ten stated that it had been useful in this respect - four wives had received "general information" which they had found useful; three had been given information regarding their husbands' appeal; two had been given information about parole; and one had been told of arrangements for prison visiting.

Two wives, at the time they were interviewed, were being regularly visited by Voluntary Associates of the Probation and After-Care Service. Both wives stated that they had found this relationship helpful in both practical (e.g. obtaining "carry-cot" from Oxfam) and emotional ("nice to have someone to talk to") terms. A further two wives had been visited by V.A.'s, but contact had since ceased. In one case because of a personality clash ("middle class volunteers are no use"), and in the other because the wife "didn't see much point in it".

Eight wives stated that they had not accompanied their husbands to Court; eighteen stated that they had (of these, fifteen had accompanied their husbands to Swansea Crown Court); and there was no information obtained on four. Of the fifteen who had accompanied their husbands to Swansea Crown Court, four of these had been seen at the Court by either the Crown Court Liaison Officer or a V.A. performing a similar function. Of these four wives, only one said she had considered this meeting to be in any way beneficial. (She considered that she had been given useful information). The other three wives stated that they had merely been "comforted" and "told to see the Probation Officer if there were any problems", - that two of them had done so would suggest, though, that this advice certainly was useful.

Three wives accompanied their husbands to the Swansea Magistrates' Court. Of these three wives, one was told by a Court Ancillary that if she had any problems, then she should see a Probation Officer (which she did). One wife had also received a home visit from an ancillary, but she did not consider this to have been worthwhile. These were the only two recorded contacts with Ancillaries.

Six wives stated that they had had some sort of contact with a Prison Welfare Officer. Two wives had "had a chat" with a prison welfare officer at the prisons to which their husbands had been sent. (In one case a prison welfare officer had convinced the wife that her husband was "better off" at the prison he was then at, and that she should stop campaigning for his transfer); two wives had, at the request of their husbands, been visited at home by prison welfare officers - one because of matrimonial difficulties, and the other because a prison visit would have been missed if the wife had not been quickly contacted; and two wives had spoken to prison welfare officers on the telephone - one wife had 'phoned the prison welfare office because of matrimonial difficulties, and the other had, at her husband's request, been 'phoned by the prison welfare officer to "see if everything was alright".

Three wives considered that their contact with prison welfare officers had been worthwhile - in all cases because they had been given useful information. The other three wives considered that their contacts

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had been of little or no value.

Thirteen wives stated that they had had contact with the Social Services. In four cases a Social Worker called occasionally; in three cases, one or more of the children was under a Supervision Order, or a Care Order; three wives had contacted the Social Services about supplying Christmas toys for their children (only one wife received any); one wife had received help with finding accommodation; and one wife had sought advice from a friend's Social Worker.

Nine wives considered that their contact with the Social Services had not been worthwhile. Of the four wives who considered that it had been worthwhile all had received some sort of material benefit, (children's toys, grants, housing etc.). Only three wives considered that the Social Services had been supportive, but again all had received some material benefit. All thirteen wives felt that the Social Services had not been useful in terms of information dissemination - all stated either that they had received no information, or that any information they had received was found to be inadequate or incomplete.

Seven wives stated that they had been in contact with local Churches or Chapels. In four cases a Minister had called to see the wife; in two cases the wife had called to arrange a religious ceremony (marriage or baptism); and in one case the wife had called to see a Minister about her problems. Only in the latter case did the wife feel that she had received any amount of help or support from the Church. In no case was the Church seen as providing useful information.

Two wives stated that they had received visits from Health Visitors. One wife considered that her contacts with the Health Visitor had been worthwhile (primarily because the Health Visitor had contacted the Social Services, and the wife had been allocated a Social Worker). The other wife considered that the Health Visitor "did her best", but that there was "not really much she can do". Neither wife saw the Health Visitor as being supportive, or as supplying useful information.

Three wives stated that they had visited the Citizens' Advice Bureau for information - they had gone as a group and were all directed to the Probation Office, where their queries (about appeals) were answered. These three wives, therefore, saw the Citizens' Advice Bureau as providing a useful service.

Information:

A number of studies (e.g. 1, 3, 10, 27), point to the ignorance of many prisoners' wives in the face of a changed situation. Schwarz and Weintraub (10) go so far as to say that "they do not receive the minimum information necessary to make a reasonable assessment of their situation. Their world is a Kafka-esque one, in which important events that will profoundly affect their lives are taking place, but they are not receiving the facts necessary to interpret these occurrences". The implication, certainly, is that a prisoner's wife should be made as aware as possible of what is likely to happen to her husband (and to herself) as quickly as possible. Schwarz and Weintraub suggest that such information would make a significant contribution in helping her to deal with the trauma of imprisonment (see "reactions to initial imprisonment").

It is not only in this respect that prisoners' wives lack crucial information. The extent to which voluntary and statutory bodies liaise with other agencies on behalf of prisoners' families (e.g. 1, 2, 9, 13, 28), and our own findings (see "trouble with officials"), would indicate the extent to which ignorance of bureaucracies, and of the British "Welfare" system exists.

It is perhaps significant that with the exception of the Probation Service (including the Prison Welfare Service), no social work agencies were perceived as disseminating any useful information. That the dissemination of information concerning the prison system should be left to the Probation and After-Care Service (including Prison Welfare) is perhaps correct, but that such organisations as the D.H.S.S. and the Social Services were not perceived as adequately explaining the rights and benefits to which prisoners' wives are entitled, is certainly unfortunate.

One of the difficulties experienced by Morris (3), and by this study, was the tendency of prisoners' wives to confuse the various "welfare" agencies with which they had dealt. This, in itself, is an indication of the need for clarification through explanation. Indications that lack of information is an important issue to prisoners' wives can also be seen in the next two sections of this report, when we look at some suggestions made by prisoners' wives of ways in which "welfare" organisations could "improve their service", and examine the responses of prisoners' wives to descriptions of possible schemes which could be implemented by the West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service.

Ways in which Welfare Organisations could "Improve Their Service" - Suggestions made by S's.

The S's perceptions of the value to them of the "Welfare" organisations with which they had dealt, can usefully be argued by looking at any suggestions they made as to possible improvements which could be made by or to these organisations. Unfortunately, S's tendency to "bunch together" and confuse the various organisations, does not make it possible to analyse the suggestions per agency.

Ten wives stated they could not offer any suggestions for improvements, either because they did not know enough about the operations of the "welfare" organisations with which they had dealt, or because they considered there was nothing these organisations could do for them.

A further eight wives stated that more advice from and information about "welfare" organisations, would be an improvement. Eighteen wives, then, considered their knowledge of "welfare" organisations to be inadequate (since this was an "open-ended" question, we cannot assume anything about the other twelve S's).

Twelve wives considered that "welfare" organisations should "take the initiative" (e.g. ~~make home visits~~), since they, the wives, either felt apprehensive about ~~visiting~~ ~~because of~~ lack of experience, or courage etc.), or were unable to do so because of domestic commitments. Two wives considered there should be more "open-ness" (e.g. that explanations should be given by D.H.S.S. as to why discretionary payments are not made). Two wives suggested that there could be more "co-ordination" between

"welfare" organisations, so that the same tale would not have to be continually repeated. Also suggested (in each case by one wife), were improvements in prison facilities, more "personal attention" more "flexibility", and more "understanding".

In terms of material aid, five wives considered they should receive more money, (either increased supplementary benefits or more exceptional needs grants); three wives considered that more should be done for their children (e.g. Christmas toys or holidays); and two wives considered that the D.H.S.S. should lend money to pay off outstanding debts, which would then be paid back by means of weekly deductions from supplementary benefits.

Reactions to Proposed Schemes

1 - Visitors and Family Centre

The sort of visitors and family centres which were looked at earlier (see back), and the now closed "Swansea Family Centre", were described to the S's who were asked their opinions on this sort of facility, and whether they would, themselves, make use of a similar centre.

24 S's expressed favourable opinions, and stated that if this facility existed then they would use (or would have used) it. Four S's expressed favourable opinions but said that they would not use (or have used) it, because they preferred to take their children in to visit, or because they had no difficulty in finding baby sitters. One wife expressed an unfavourable opinion.

Of the 8 wives that were found to have been able to have used the Swansea Family Centre before it closed, only 2 had done so - 3 had not known of its existence and 3 were reluctant to use the facility since they were unsure of its purpose.

2 - Voluntary Associates (see also "Contact with Welfare Agencies").

The sort of work that trained V.A.'s do (in particular the V.A.'s of the Prisoners Wives Service - see back) - was described. S's were asked their opinions, and whether or not they would like (or would have liked) a trained V.A. to visit on a regular (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) basis.

25 wives expressed favourable opinions, and stated that they would welcome (or would have welcomed) visits. 4 wives expressed favourable opinions, but said that they would not welcome (or have welcomed) visits, because they already had adequate support from family and/or friends. One wife expressed an unfavourable opinion,

3 - More Casework

S's were asked their opinions on whether or not they would welcome (or have welcomed) regular (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) visits from a Probation Officer. 17 S's expressed favourable opinions, and stated that they would welcome (or would have welcomed) visits. One wife expressed a favourable opinion but stated that she did not think visits would be (or would have been) of any use to her. Nine wives expressed unfavourable opinions, and stated that they would not welcome (and would not have welcomed) visits. Three wives stated

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that they "didn't know" of what value visits would be (or would have been).

4 - Wives Groups

The sort of wives groups that were looked at earlier (see back), were described to the S's. They were asked their opinion on this sort of facility, and whether or not they would join (or would have joined) a similar group.

Seventeen wives expressed favourable opinions, and stated that they would probably join (or would have joined) a Wives Group. Twelve wives stated that they would not join (10 because they tended to dislike group functions, and 2 because they could not "spare the time"), although they did consider that this facility might be of benefit to others. One wife was unsure of her opinion.

5 - Immediate Pick-up

This possible scheme was devised with the intention of combating the initial trauma of imprisonment (see "reactions to initial imprisonment", and "contact with "welfare" organisations - information"). Wives were asked if they would have welcomed a trained volunteer to have called on them within 24 hours of their husbands being sent to prison, in order to explain something about her husband's situation (what was likely to happen to him etc.), and about various voluntary and statutory social work agencies in which she might be interested; to offer help or support; to ascertain whether the wife required casework, or a volunteer to call on a regular basis; and to answer any questions she might have.

Twenty-nine wives expressed favourable opinions, and stated that they would have welcomed these visits. One wife felt that this sort of visit would not have benefited her.

6 - Information/Advice Centre

The sort of information/advice centre that is run by the Prisoners Wives and Family Society (see back), and which gives information and advice about both practical and legal matters, was described to the S's. They were asked their opinions, and whether or not they would use (or would have used) a similar centre.

Twenty-eight wives expressed favourable opinions, and stated that they would use (or would have used) this sort of facility. One wife expressed a favourable opinion, but added that she would not use this sort of facility. One wife stated that she would not have needed such a centre. She would not commit herself to expressing any opinion.

Since the suggestion of this facility appeared to elicit favourable responses, as did that concerned with the intervention of a volunteer very soon after the husband's conviction (immediate pick-up), then R added another suggestion which was connected both with the dissemination of information, and with tackling the initial trauma of imprisonment (see "reactions to initial imprisonment" and "contact with welfare organisations - information").

7 - Literary Information

S's responses to a suggested scheme whereby prisoners wives would be sent immediately upon their husbands incarceration, pamphlets, booklets etc., explaining the workings of the prison system, social services, D.H.S.S., Probation Service, and other voluntary and statutory agencies that would be of interest, were recorded.

Since this suggested scheme was added to those originally conceived after some S's had already been interviewed, the responses of only 25 S's are recorded.

24 S's expressed favourable opinions and stated that they would have welcomed such an "information packet". One wife considered that such a "package" would be "not much good".

Future

We cannot assume that problems experienced by prisoners wives will disappear when their husbands are released. Morris (3) for instance, found that fears or concern regarding the husbands return were common, and that "the most widespread cause of concern regarding his return centred around the problem of his work, but there was also considerable overt anxiety about marital adjustment". Debt, drink, gambling, housing etc., were also mentioned as possible sources of difficulty.

This study considered it to be worthwhile not only to investigate those areas in which wives foresaw difficulties, but also to examine S's "plans for the future", and "feelings about the future".

Areas of Difficulty

In order to investigate possible "areas of difficulty", wives were asked to consider what would be the most serious problem (or problems) that would be experienced upon their husbands release. It was thus hoped to prevent wives from mentioning areas of difficulty that would not constitute problems of any gravity.

Twenty-five wives considered that there would be some areas of difficulty after their husband's had returned, and only 5 wives considered that there would not be.

Thirteen wives considered that the "biggest problem" would be "readjustment" (whether of the wife, husband, or both); 8 considered that it would be finding employment (for the husband); 4 that it would be money; 2 that it would be the husband's "jealousy", concerning how they had spent their time while he had been in prison; 2 that it would be keeping their husband's away (both wives had ended their marriages); one that it would be the neighbours; one that it would be the children; and one that it would be getting the "husband's" legal wife to agree to a divorce.

Plans for the Future

Twenty-seven of the wives interviewed stated that their husbands were returning to the matrimonial home on release. Three husbands were not returning, since their wives considered that their relationships had ended.

cont.....

We have already looked at the number of wives that planned to move house in the immediate future, when their husbands returned from prison, or when they became eligible for transfer (see "housing"). The only other plans that were expressed by other than individual wives were to:-

return to full-time employment (5 wives),
get legally married (4 "wives").

Individual wives stated that they planned to "save some money"; "pay off all our debts"; "do up the house"; and "run the business together"; when their husbands returned.

Rather than "plans", a number of wives expressed "hopes" - hopes that their husbands would find employment (6 wives), or would be "more responsible" (9 wives) when they returned. One wife hoped to "feel more secure".

Feelings Concerning The Future

Notwithstanding the possible areas of difficulty that were mentioned, 22 wives considered that they felt "genuinely hopeful" about the future; 3 wives were not hopeful (not the same 3 wives that had ended their marriages); one wife considered that various problems would make things "very hard"; and 4 wives considered that they could not foresee what the future might bring and were emotionally non-committal.

We can see then, that although the majority of wives felt "generally hopeful", regarding the future, many areas of difficulty were foreseen, which were considered by the wives as likely to constitute serious problems of some kind or another.

Biggest Problem

Unfortunately most of the studies that have looked at the problems of prisoners wives (see Introduction) have made no attempt to look at the perceptions of these wives regarding which problems they regarded as the more serious. This study, therefore, made an attempt to explore this avenue - wives were asked what they considered was, had been, or was likely to be, their "biggest problem" since their husbands had been in prison.

10 wives stated that their "biggest problem" was money; 6 that it was "loneliness"; 6 that it was "coping alone" (this included problems concerned with the family and/or the children); 2 cited "business worries" as their major problem; and individual wives cited "visiting", "illness", "neighbours", "waiting for husband to be released from prison", "readjustment" upon release, and a pending divorce as constituting their biggest problem. Three wives stated that they could not judge which of their problems had been "the biggest".

An Afterthought

In order to help prevent the omission of any important area of interest or difficulty, S's were asked if there was "anything else important" that had not been touched upon by the questions that they had been asked, that they would like to mention.

cont.....

Nineteen wives considered that there was nothing they would like to add; 2 asked for legal advice (or advice on where they could find it); 5 criticised the penal system, and suggested possible improvements (e.g. conjugal visits); one complained that her husband should have received the psychiatric help that he had asked for (prior to imprisonment); one stressed her husband's need for social work support upon his release; and one complained that she and her children had been discriminated against by H.P. companies, although they had "clear records".

We can see, then, that no major area of interest or difficulty that had not been explored was uncovered.

Section 4

Methodological and Design Problem

1 - Validity and Bias (This section owes much to the work of C.F. Cannell and R.L. Kahn - 15)

Because of the limitations imposed in terms of time and research orientation, the validity of this study is open to question. The "face validity" of the questionnaire that was used (appendix I) would seem to be obvious - the questions were in no way "projective" and no complex inferences were drawn from S's responses - but in the absence of any means of establishing any form of "convergent validity" perhaps we can assume nothing. Nevertheless, any invalidity would seem to be more likely to have been caused by bias of various kinds,

The problem of bias in questionnaires is too complex to discuss here in any great depth. The R was aware, however, of such possible sources of bias as (see 15):

- a. The accessibility of the required data to the S's. Data may, for example, be forgotten or repressed, or the terms and categories in which the information is sought may be such that the S does not understand what is required of him.
 - b. S's cognition (or understanding) of his/her role and of the informal transaction required. S's must know what constitutes successful completion of role requirements and be familiar with concepts and terms of reference being used.
 - c. Motivation of S's to accept their role and fulfil its requirements.
 - d. Interviewer attributes e.g. age, sex, skill, perceived status etc.
- and of some of the ways this sort of bias can be avoided e.g:
- a. Question formation credible in terms of cognitive factors such as language, frames of reference, and conceptual level (including the concept of "the single idea" and the omission of "double barrelled" questions).
 - b. Question formation in terms of maximising data accessibility e.g. the construction of secondary questions that help S's to accurately reconstruct the past.

cont.....

- c. Question formation in terms of motivation - questions should help motivate S's, and not make them seem poorly informed, socially unacceptable etc. Emotionally laden words and phrases should be avoided; balanced, neutral wording should be used.
- d. "Open ended" versus "closed" questions - each is more appropriate in particular cases.
- e. "Direct" versus "indirect" questions - each is more appropriate in particular cases.
- f. Organisation and sequence of questions can, for example, avoid positional bias (etc), and help motivation (e.g. if questions "lead on" to each other sequentially).
- g. Interviewer technique. Different techniques are more appropriate in some situations.

Wherever possible every attempt was made to avoid bias.

No. 2 - Sample

- a. Size. Since the study did not attempt to obtain statistical significances (in the absence of controlled groups any attempt to do this would itself have been of questionable validity), then a sample size of $N = 30$ would seem to be adequate.
- b. Selection. The restrictions that were imposed on sample selection (see "method and design") may have biased the results of this study. Unfortunately, we cannot determine whether this was the case.

No. 3 - Lack of Control Groups

This study has shown something of the lifestyles and problems of prisoners families. We cannot say, though, to what extent these findings are not typical of the population in general, or of particular populations.

In order that the particular problems of prisoners families could be isolated, we would have needed to have compared our findings with those derived from at least the following control groups:

- a. Families living in the same area, and belonging to the same economic and social classes as the S's.
- b. Single parent families.
- c. Service men's families (when the husband is away).

Conclusion - Suggestions of possible forms of support.

To recap, we have looked at many of the practical, social and emotional (with reservations - see Introduction) problems which beset the families of men in prison. We have seen in particular that many problems of various kinds (see "housing", "visiting", "loneliness", "children", etc.) are experienced by these families, and that many prisoners' wives feel that the help they receive from National or Regional Voluntary or Statutory Social Work Agencies (if they receive any at all) is inadequate (to say the least), particularly in terms of the dissemination of useful information.

Although problems are often experienced by prisoners' families for most of the time that the man is in prison (and afterwards - see "future"), it appears that the period of time immediately following incarceration is often the worst (see "reactions to initial imprisonment").

cont.....

In this section we shall look, briefly, at some possible ways in which these families might be helped in terms of practical support, emotional support and crisis intervention.

If we accept that the period of time immediately following imprisonment of a man will be a particularly unpleasant time for his family (see above and "reactions to initial imprisonment"), and that a significant contribution towards helping a family to cope with the trauma of imprisonment can be made by supplying useful information at this crucial time (e.g. 10), then we can see that this would appear to be an obvious way in which prisoners' families can be helped.

We shall look at two ways in which useful information can be provided to prisoners' wives very soon after the imprisonment of their husbands.

1. Volunteers "immediate pick-up"

As we have seen (see "reactions to proposed schemes - immediate pick-up"), the suggestion of a scheme whereby trained volunteers would call upon prisoners' families within twenty-four hours of a man being imprisoned, received very favourable responses from many of the wives interviewed for this study, and would, therefore, appear to be a likely success. These volunteers would not, of course, act only as disseminators of information but would also offer the wives more long-term support in the form of regular visits from a (perhaps different) volunteer.

2. Information Package:

If volunteers are utilised in the type of scheme (crisis intervention by information dissemination) outlined above it is clear that the degree and extent to which any information received by a prisoner's wife is "taken in" and/or remembered will depend on a number of factors - intelligence, perception, memory, areas of interest, stress, etc. It may also be that important questions are only remembered when the volunteer has left. It is clearly important, then, that the wives who are visited by a volunteer are left some sort of "information package" to which they can refer at any time. Ideally, this package should contain information about all the various National and Local Statutory and Voluntary Social Work (and other) Agencies, Bodies or Organisations with which the wives in question would be likely to come into contact. Of particular use would be "localised" information, e.g. names and telephone numbers to contact.

We have already seen (see "reactions to proposed schemes - literary information") that this kind of package would have been much appreciated by the prisoners' wives interviewed.

We shall also look at more long-term types of possible support.

3. Volunteers:

The sort of support which is derived from regular visits from trained volunteers was shown earlier (see "Reactions to Proposed Schemes - Voluntary Associates") to have illicit an enthusiastically approving response from the wives that were interviewed. We shall not describe or discuss here the sorts of work that are done by, or the sorts of support that can be

gained from the work of these people, since we have already done this elsewhere (see "Introduction - The Prisoners' Wives Service, WRVS, Catholic Social Services for Prisoners etc.").

4. Advice/Information Centre:

We have already seen (see "Reactions to Proposed Schemes - Information/Advice Centre") that an information/advice centre based on the lines of the centre operated by the Prisoners' Wives and Families Society (see "Introduction") would appear to be a likely success with the wives that were interviewed.

Practical support could also be provided if the centre could "take on" problems (e.g. liaison with organisations etc.) in the same sort of way as does the office of the Prisoners' Wives Service (see "Introduction").

The relatively small number of prisoners' wives in Swansea would seem to indicate that should such a facility be established, then it would be unlikely to survive if it were exclusively for the use of prisoners' wives.

5. Wives Group:

Although the response from S's to the suggestion of a prisoners' wives group was not as enthusiastic as that to suggestions of some other forms of support (see "Reactions to Proposed Schemes"), it would appear to be positive enough to warrant the provision of such a facility. We have already discussed these groups in some detail (see "Introduction - Prisoners' Wives Groups"), so we will now only add that the relatively small number of prisoners' wives in Swansea, and the response of those interviewed, would suggest that should a group be set up, then it should (like the information/advice centre mentioned above) not be exclusively for the use of prisoners' wives.

6. Visitors Centre - Child Minding Crèche:

Response from the S's that were interviewed suggest that a visitors centre with child minding facilities might be successful (see "Reactions to Proposed Schemes - Visitors and Family Centre"). Bearing in mind, though, that such a centre has already failed in Swansea (41), and that such centres are failing elsewhere (see "Introduction - Visitors or Family Centres") it is clear that the sort of facility needed will require a high level of commitment from those operating it, and will probably need to include elements of an information/advice centre and wives group, as well as offering individual support. Very good links would also have to be established with the prison officers at the prison concerned.

Another possible suggestion is the provision of a child minding crèche "on the patch". Mothers would be able to make use of this facility not only for visiting, but also for shopping etc. without being encumbered by their children. Again there is no suggestion that this facility should be restricted only to prisoners' wives.

7. Future:

There is no suggestion that any of the above forms of aid should be withdrawn from a family when the husband returns. In many cases, though, we may well find that they, in fact, become no longer necessary. We have seen (see "Future") that many wives consider that there will be problems to be faced when their husbands are released from prison. The extent to which the sorts of schemes outlined above may be useful in helping deal with these sorts of problems remains to be seen. It may well transpire, for instance, that specialist family case-work of some sort would be useful in helping families cope with problems concerned with readjustment.

8. Children:

Since we have already shown that many prisoners children experience problems of their own, then it should follow that they may require some sorts of aid. It is true that there is no suggestion that the above schemes should exclude prisoners' children (except the wives group), but children may nevertheless require specific sorts of support. As with their mothers, perhaps this support is best provided by a volunteer who calls regularly and who may, for example, in addition to providing emotional support, inform a school of the situation if a child is being taunted, "made fun of", bullied, or is truanting etc; or liaise with and/or introduce children to local boys clubs, youth clubs, youth organisations etc.

Since few of the above schemes would be exclusively for the benefit of prisoners' wives, there is much scope for involving other national or regional statutory or voluntary agencies, organisations or bodies who may wish to become involved in the development and/or operation of such schemes.

All the above schemes rely heavily upon volunteers. The recruitment, selection and training of these people are clearly important issues. Any discussion of these matters is, though, clearly outside the scope of this document.

SWANSEA PRISONERS' WIVES AND FAMILIES PROJECT.

TIME SCALE (To be used where applicable)

1. When on remand and/or immediately after sentence began.
2. The duration of the sentence.
3. Immediately before/after release.

RATING SCALE (To be used where applicable)

1. Not serious (Easily dealt with)
2. Serious (Can be dealt with, with difficulty)
3. Very serious (Cannot be dealt with, or only with extreme difficulty)

1. (a) FULL NAME

(b) Do you have any children? If "Yes"

(i) How many

(ii) Full names and ages.....

.....

.....

(iii) Names and addresses of schools and places of work

.....

.....

(c) Which prison is your husband now at?

2. (a) (i) Are you working now?

(ii) If so, where?

(iii) Past

(iv) Future

(b) (i) Any problems? (e.g. At work; getting employment; school holidays etc)

.....

.....

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

3. (a) (i) Have you moved (house) or wished to move since your husband went to Prison?

.....

(ii) Is so, when?

.....

(iii) If so, why?

3. (b) (i) What sort of problems (if any) do you have, to do with the house?
e.g. Landlord, mortgage, rent, etc.)

.....
.....

(ii) Past

.....

(iii) Future

.....

4. (a) (i) How often do you visit your husband?

.....

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(b) (i) What sort of problems do you have with visiting?

.....

.....

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(c) (i) How do you feel about visiting? (e.g. Worthwhile? Depressing? etc.)

.....

.....

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

5. (a) (i) How did you react when your husband went to prison/was remanded in
custody?

.....

(ii) Present

.....

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems? (i.e. to do with your reaction)

.....

.....

5. (b) (i) How did your friends react?

.....
(ii) Present

.....
(iii) Future

.....
(iv) Any Problems

.....
(c) (i) What about the neighbours (i.e. How did they react?)

.....
(ii) Present

.....
(iii) Future

.....
(iv) Any Problems

.....
(d) (i) How do you think your family feel about your husband going to prison?

.....
(ii) Past

.....
(iii) Future

.....
(iv) Any Problems

.....
(e) (i) How are things between you and your family? (i.e. How well do you get on with them?)

.....
(ii) Past

.....
(iii) Future

.....
(iv) Any Problems

.....
(f) (i) What about your husband's family? (i.e. How well do you get on with them?)

5. (f) (ii) Part

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems

(g) (i) What about your husband?

i.e. A. How well does he get on with his family?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems

and B. How well does he get on with your family?

(vii) Past

(viii) Future

(ix) Any problems?

6. (a) (i) Do you think that your husband should have been sent to prison?

(ii) Why/why not?

(iii) Any Problems

(b) (i) Why do you think your husband committed an offence?

(ii) Past

6. (b) (iii) Future

(iv) Any problems?

(c) (i) Many wives feel that they're in some way to blame when their husband is sent to prison. Have you ever felt like that?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

7. (a) (i) Are you sorry that he's been sent to prison?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

(b) (i) Do you miss him?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

8. (i) What sort of trouble (if any) have you had in dealing with officials of any sort (e.g. Police, Probation, DHSS, Social Service, Schools, etc.) since your husband went to Prison?

8. (iii) Future

9. (a) (i) Many wives find that they have money problems when their husbands are in prison. How much trouble (if any) are you having to "make ends meet"?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(b) (i) Are you finding it easier/harder (no difference?), since your husband went to prison?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

10. (a) (i) How has your health been since your husband went to Prison? (or How is your health?) Includes depression

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

11. (a) (i) How are you managing with the children?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

11. (b) (i) Do you think that you've been harder/softer to the children since their father went to prison?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

(c) (i) Do the children know where their father is?

(ii) When and why were they told/not told

(iii) Any Problems?

(d) (i) How are the children? (i.e. Do they miss their father? etc.)

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

A: With them (How are they behaving? etc.)

B: Of their own (e.g. health, school performance, peer reaction etc.)

12. (a) (i) Are you able to go out as much now as you did before your husband went to prison?

(b) (i) How often do you manage to go out now? (and where do you go?)

(ii) Past (including before imprisonment)

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

(c) (i) With whom do you go?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

13. (a) (i) In what ways have your feelings towards your husband changed since he was sent to prison?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

(b) (i) Have you ever felt ashamed of your husband (for instance)?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

13. (b) (iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

(c) (i) What about your marriage?

i.e. A: In what ways have your feelings towards your marriage changed?

and B: What are your feelings about your marriage?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

14. (a) (i) What sort of contact have you had with welfare organisations since your husband went to prison? (e.g. NSPCC, Churches, Probation, Social Service)

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

(b) How do you feel about the amount of A - Help

(i) Past

(ii) Present

14. (b) (iii) Future

B - Information

(iv) Past

(v) Present

(vi) Future

C - Support

(vii) Past

(viii) Present

(ix) Future

(x) Any Problems?

(c) (i) In what ways do you think the above might have been of more use?

(ii) How do you think the above could improve their service?

(iii) What are your feelings about (and would you make use of, or have made use of) the following:

1. A family centre
2. Volunteers
3. More casework (+ immediate pickup)
4. An information/advice centre
5. Wive's Group

15. (i) Since your husband was sent to prison have you been afraid, worried or anxious about anything that you weren't before ? (e.g. gossip, effect on children, his welfare etc.)

15. (ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

16. (i) How often have you felt that you've "let things get on top of you" since your husband went to prison?

(ii) Past

(iii) Present

(iv) Future

(v) Any Problems?

(b) (i) How often do you feel that you can't cope?

(ii) Past

(iii) Future

(iv) Any Problems?

17. (i) Looking back on what we've chatted about, and anything else you think is important, what do you think are, were or are likely to be your biggest problems since your husband went to prison?

(ii) Why?

(iii) Past

17. (iv) Present

(v) Future

18. (a) (i) What are your plans for the future?

(ii) Why?

(iii) Any Problems?

(b) (i) Will your husband be coming back to live with you when he's released?

((ii) Why not? (if applicable)

(c) What are your feelings about the future?

19. (i) What do you think are likely to be the biggest problems when your husband returns from prison?

(ii) Why?

(iii) When?

20. Is there anything else you'd think is important, and would like to mention?

NOTES:

Dear

West Glamorgan Probation and After-Care Service are at present carrying out a survey into what happens to a man's family when he goes into prison, and we would very much like to discuss the matter with you.

Very little is known about what happens to the families of men in prison, and we should like to try to find out just how they manage, what sorts of difficulties arise, and whether any help they receive is adequate.

I wonder if you would help us by allowing me to call to talk to you on about the problems as they affect you. Naturally, all the information that you give will be confidential and will not be divulged to any other agency without your permission.

If you do not wish me to call, or if the time that I have suggested is inconvenient, would you please return the enclosed card (in the envelope provided), giving your reasons for refusal, or suggesting an alternative time.

Yours sincerely,

Family Support Development Officer.

Enc.

APPENDIX III

SIDE A

I do not wish you to call at any time, because

.

.

.

.

.

Signed

SIDE B

I am not available at the time that you suggest. If
possible, could you please call at

. (Time) on

. (Day and date).

Signed

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Department of Social Policy
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University College of Swansea.

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