



Annual Report



CHAIR'S REPORT

At this point last year we were concerned that the turmoil in the financial system would severely affect our funding and that in turn this would make it difficult to continue to provide our services to our families. I am very pleased to report that our funders have continued to support our vital work and thanks to the efforts of our staff and volunteers we have ended the year on a high note and full of optimism for the future of our organisation.

The most visible change is that we have re-launched our website www.pffs.org.uk and redesigned our

leaflets and other publications. We believe that it is essential that the information we provide should be in an attractive and readable form and that the website should act as the organisation's front window providing all the initial help required by those affected by sentence as well as a resource and link with all our volunteers. All our staff are now using the website in their areas of work; for example all volunteer recruitment is done via the website, all fact sheets are on the website and all family centre activities are there too. This is our platform for the future and we are most grateful to the Nationwide Foundation who funded the new site and as importantly the provision of consultancy advice. The Nationwide Foundation also funded the production of a dvd "Families on

Trial", the purpose of which is to heighten awareness of the issues facing family members when a member of the family becomes involved in the judicial process and sentence. Our Director Alan Hooker led the team producing the dvd and it is clear already that this is stimulating interest in the media. In these films, family members tell their own moving stories of the impact of arrest, sentencing and imprisonment. The films can be viewed at www.familiesontrial.org and also be ordered free of charge from our website; they can be used for professional training purposes or for raising awareness.

We are most grateful not only to the Nationwide Foundation but to all our supporters for continuing to fund our work and we deal with this in more detail later in this report.

I would not like you to think however that our work on communications this year has in any way lessened our commitment to the provision of our services.

The Court Project continues to deliver first instance advice to prisoners' families in 14 London courts, through the services of trained volunteers. We reach more than 1500 families each year. Our newly revised 'Court to Custody' booklet is distributed widely to solicitors, courts and families. Court volunteers receive continuing support and training throughout the year to help them in their work with families at court.

The Swan Centre provides a safe haven for prisoners' families offering essential information, advice, friendship and support. Families receive support, information and advice in a caring, non-judgmental environment where a programme of activities is aimed at empowering and strengthening them by providing them with the information, advice and **»»»**

“ I HAVE RECEIVED NOTHING BUT 100% SUPPORT FROM MY BEFRIENDER AND YOUR ORGANISATION FOR OVER TWO YEARS NOW.”

Telephone befriended family member



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sometimes advocacy which they need. A new partnership with the St Giles Trust, funded by the Nationwide Foundation, has allowed us to develop the resettlement support we provide for families and their relative who is about to be released (or recently released).

The helpline continues to be there for families who need information, advice and emotional support over the phone. More than 300 callers to the helpline each month have received information, advice, emotional support, and where appropriate referrals to other agencies. Alongside the helpline, we provide 25 fact sheets that we have written; our staff and volunteers have a wealth of experience which is drawn upon to advise and assist families

Our befriending service gives family members one to one friendship and emotional support for the length of the prison sentence. Our trained volunteers visit the family home, or telephone them approximately once a week, providing a listening ear into which the family member can off-load the worries and stresses of their life. The befriender provides information, advice, advocacy and support directed at reducing the likelihood of the family unit disintegrating under the pressures to which it is constantly subjected by the imprisonment of the husband, partner or son. We provide ongoing support to over 100 families each year.

Our overall mission remains unchanged but with seemingly ever greater demand – to provide a high quality service for partners, close relatives or friends of prisoners by promoting their interests and offering friendship, support and advice and information which is free, confidential and appropriate to their needs. **Peter Droop**



From left to right:
Alan Hooker, Julie Howlin,
Margaret Vallance,
Theresa Francis

PHOTO BY DAVID LEVANTIS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Prisoners' Families and Friends Service provides its essential community based support to families thanks to the dedication of its hard working staff and volunteers.

Julie Howlin keeps all our information and publications up to date. She has worked really hard to develop our new website and will be working with volunteers and families in the months ahead to develop the website further. The advice and information about the criminal justice system is such an important part of the help that is needed by the families that use our service – and it is thanks to Julie that we are able to do this

Theresa Francis works closely with families each week at the Swan Centre and works hard to maintain an active and varied programme for families and children throughout the year. This year has seen the

introduction of an extra day at the Centre focused on resettlement issues. During the year, we have helped in the family centre by our volunteers, Michelle Passmore, Ros Saunders and Dorothy Johnson.

Clare Taylor joined us in June 2008 as our new Court Project Coordinator and brought a fresh outlook and experience to the organisation. She has worked hard to develop our court project and improve our continuing training and support for court volunteers. She has extended our service to West London Magistrates Court. Clare has now left us, but we hope to replace for her soon.

Margaret Vallance has developed and improved our befriending work and our volunteer training and support – volunteers have continuing support and development

throughout the year. She has helped to set up a new one to one mentoring project at the Swan Centre. She is also working towards the Approved Provider Standard of the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

Staff in the office have been assisted in their work with prisoners' families by volunteers throughout the year. Our particular thanks go to Mitzen Foster for providing essential administrative support on the court project, Kim Bartlett and Jan Kernon for helping develop our befriending programme; our two long serving volunteers, Kate Walshe and Jane Thorne continue to work on the helpline. Steadfast and continued support is provided by Penny Clow and Anne Dunlop. **Alan Hooker**



OUR FUNDERS

In the 10 months since our last AG M (November 2008) Prisoners' Families and Friends Service has been very fortunate in receiving varying amounts of funding from 26 different charitable Trusts or Foundations, and donations – some on a regular basis and some anonymous – from 35 generous individual donors

In addition we have been able to help 11 families with essential needs – cookers, washing machines etc, thanks to the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund (6); Newby Trust (2); Mary Strand (2); and The Surrey Dispensary; whilst the Pontin's holiday and our programme of outings have also been funded largely by BBC Children in Need but also by Sheriff's and Recorder's Fund, Help a London Child and the Surrey Dispensary.

Funding over the past 3 years has been greatly helped through the support given to PFFS and its partners by the Nationwide Foundation's 'Investor Programme'. Our donors vary in the size of their contribution but PFFS is very grateful to each and everyone: The Batchworth Trust; Noel Buxton

Trust; Children in Need; Coutts & Co. Charitable Trust; 1772 Charity; Garfield Weston Foundation; Michael and Shirley Hunt Trust; the Inner London Magistrates Courts; LankellyChase Foundation; Leigh Trust; Lloyds TSB Foundation; Norda Trust; Persula Foundation; the Pilgrim Trust; Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust; Sir James Roll Charitable Trust; St Hugh's Church; Henry Smith Charity; London Borough of Tower Hamlets; United St Saviours; Wates Foundation; Willow Tree Trust; Woodroffe Benton Foundation.

We are very grateful too to the individual donors who have made regular or one-off contributions to our funds and to those who have given gifts in kind – toys and clothing: Carshalton Methodist, Epsom United Reform, Norbury Baptists, St Johns Methodists Amersham, the Queen Mary's Clothing Guild and the Good Gifts scheme.

Thanks to all these generous contributors we are confident that we will be able to attain our budget at the end of this financial year. **Anne Dunlop**

FAMILY AND VOLUNTEER STORIES

A VOLUNTEERS STORY

I have been volunteering with PFFS for 6 months now. I am 71 and a retired social worker. At first I was unsure of what I had to offer the families whom PFFS supports. However, from the first moment I met Susan and her two lovely children I was off to a flying start. Usually I visit them weekly and telephone at other times. I am very drawn to Susan because of her pleasant nature and her youthful buoyance, which remains unquashed by the very real difficulties she faces. When we first met, Susan was experiencing financial problems because of failings on the part of the Tax Credit and Child Benefit offices. I helped Susan to resolve those problems with the aid of her MP and that helped us to develop a trust in one another. I greatly enjoy my visits and Susan and the children are always pleased to see me. We have fun together and I am pleased that I have also been some practical help to Susan.

“ YOU ALL DO SUCH A GREAT JOB. YOU HAVE MY DEEPEST RESPECT. ”

Swan Centre member

A FAMILY'S STORY

I first spoke to PFFS in March this year after the father of my young children had been sent to prison. It was an unhappy and worrying time for me and I felt very alone. PFFS suggested that I might like to have a befriender. I thought that might be helpful and Anne came into my life. Unlike with some of my friends, Anne knows my circumstances and I can talk to her freely about my partner. I enjoy talking to her and she likes coming to my home and spending time with me and my children. Anne also supported me when I was getting my financial situation sorted out. Thanks to PFFS my children and I were able to have a holiday near Great Yarmouth this summer and to enjoy an outing to a wildlife park. Since I have been in touch with PFFS I have felt less isolated. I like knowing that they are there for me and my children.

“ THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR WHAT YOU DO - YOU HAVE BEEN BRILLIANT ”

Helpline caller



OUR NEW LOOK . . .



NEWSLETTER

Our new look newsletter distributed to the sector demonstrates our work with families and the volunteers who support them

WEBSITE

Our new window on the world – more information about our work and services, with case studies and video and sound footage of families' stories



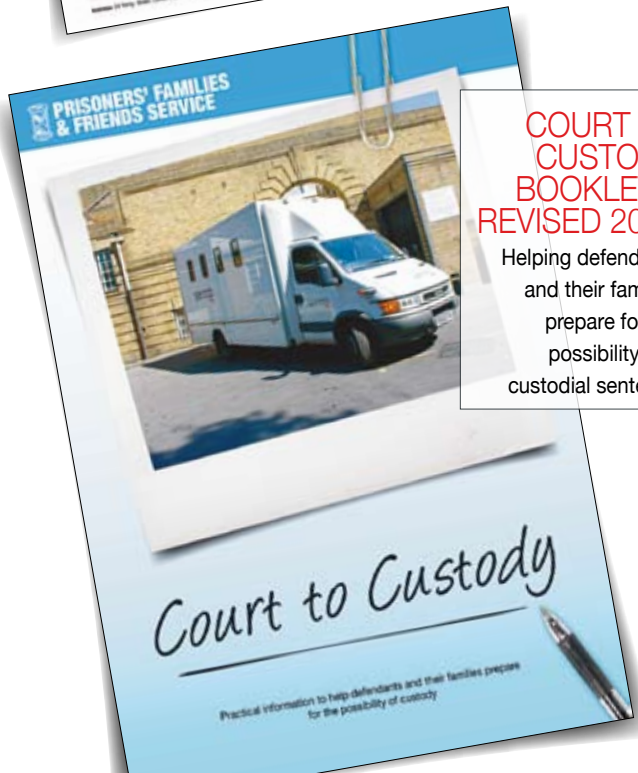
FAMILIES ON TRIAL

Using their own words, prisoners' families talk of how arrest sentencing and imprisonment affects them.



COURT TO CUSTODY BOOKLET – REVISED 2009

Helping defendants and their families prepare for the possibility of a custodial sentence



LEAFLET

Our new look leaflet gives details of all our services for prisoners' families



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2008/9

- Peter Droop (Chair) • Penny Clow (Vice Chair) • Anne Dunlop (Secretary) • Mike Slade (Treasurer) • Anne-Marie Brown-Douglas • Gloria Johnson • Jackie Manning • Clare Negreira • Gretta Reilly • Sheryl de Vries (Resigned July 2008) • Steve Jones, Shane Holland (Appointed September 2008) • Ruth Buchanan (Appointed September 2008)