

i-HOP Quality Statements and Toolkit

**Supporting services to work with
children and families affected by
parental offending**

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Children and families affected by parental offending

Each year in England and Wales, an estimated 200,000 children see a parent sent to prison (16). However, as not all offending results in a custodial sentence, many more children are affected by parental involvement in the Criminal Justice System.

A growing body of research in this area shows a strong association between parental offending and poor outcomes for children and young people (22). These include increased risks of mental health problems, poor school attendance and achievement and being convicted of crime themselves in the future (5, 10, 31). Furthermore, due to an overrepresentation of people from black and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in the Criminal Justice System, this issue affects a disproportionate amount of BAME families. Despite this, there is no routine collection of information about who these children and families are. It is essential that professionals and commissioners understand these children and families' needs and know how best to support them. The Department for Education funded Barnardo's in partnership with POPS (Partners of Prisoners Families Support Group) to deliver i-HOP, a one stop information service, to support multi-agency professionals to work with the children and families of offenders.

Development of the Toolkit

In partnership with Research in Practice, i-HOP developed this set of 8 Quality Statements and Toolkit. These aim to raise awareness amongst a wide range of services, to assist them to improve their practice, and to inform commissioning plans for future work supporting the children of offenders. They also enable services to assess their strengths and areas for development, and to evidence their impact on children and young people's lives.

The Quality Statements and Toolkit have been informed by four main sources of evidence including a database of 54 key pieces of UK based research, evidence, practice examples, strategy and policy (these are referenced throughout, for a full list see Appendix D). Feedback was gathered from children and young people around what the Quality Statements meant for them. 116 professionals were then consulted on how sections of the Toolkit might work in practice. Finally, the Quality Statements and Toolkit were piloted by an Early Help/Troubled Families team and an Integrated Offender Management team. Wider resources were used to substantiate practice examples throughout. (See Appendix C for a full description of the development process).

Quality Statements

The Toolkit is structured around 8 Quality Statements to help services improve their work with offenders families in key areas:

1. Awareness

We are aware of the impact that parental offending can have on children, and we recognise that they are potentially vulnerable children with particular needs.

2. Identification

We have systems in place to identify children affected by parental offending, both as individuals and as a group.

3. Children's voice

We always take into account the rights, experiences and perspectives of children affected by parental offending in developing and delivering our services.

4. Multi-agency working

We work in partnership with the wider network of professionals around children affected by parental offending.

5. Stages of the Criminal Justice System

We recognise and aim to minimise the impact of parental offending on children at all stages of the offender journey [arrest, court proceedings, imprisonment, release and resettlement].

6. Support and services

We provide, or provide access to, support and services to meet the needs of children affected by parental offending.

7. Challenging stigma

We actively challenge discrimination and negative stereotypes about children affected by parental offending.

8. Building the evidence

We monitor our interventions with children affected by parental offending and contribute to the evidence base.

What's inside

Each Quality Statement has a section which is divided into a number of different aspects:

Quality Statements and Toolkit	
Quality Statement	These represent the standard that services should aspire to meet in their work with offenders' children and families. Each Quality Statement is expressed in a concise and measurable way so that together they provide a framework for effective service provision and cover the main aspects of support for these children and families.
Rationale	There is a short summary of the evidence on why each Quality Statement is important for improving children's outcomes.
Examples of practice	There are some examples of what different services have done. Further examples can be found in the resource database (Appendix D).
Outcomes: what difference could this make?	Here you will find long term outcomes and possible changes and benefits for children, families and services that could follow when all services take action to ensure the Quality Statements are in place.
What children & young people say	The Toolkit contains powerful quotes from children, who were consulted in its development, about why and how the Quality Statement is important to them.
Self-assessment	
What can we do?	This is an action checklist for how your service can meet the Quality Statements. Actions are split by type of service: some apply to all services; others more to particular universal, specialist or criminal justice services. They are generally ordered by difficulty, with the actions towards the end often more suited to strategic level development. The numbers correlate to practice examples and tools in the resource database (Appendix D)
How can we evidence what we do?	Here you will find suggestions about the types of data you might collect to show you are working towards, or have achieved success with, the different actions.

There are useful resources in the appendices:

Work plan template (Appendix A)	
This is designed to help you identify priority areas from the self-assessment sections and create a work plan.	
Example of a completed work plan template (Appendix B)	
This was completed by the Early Help/Troubled Families team who piloted the Quality Statements and Toolkit.	
Resource Database (Appendix D - separate document)	
- Tools - Practice Examples - Case studies - Further links	There is a resource database (Excel) containing tools, practice examples and case studies to support you in meeting the each of the 8 Quality Statements and support your work with the children of offenders in general.
Reference list	Contains full details of all resources used to inform the development of the Quality Statements and Toolkit as referenced throughout.

Who is the Toolkit for?

These resources are aimed at all agencies who work with or come into contact with children, young people and families (including those who work with parents within the Criminal Justice System). We have divided this large and diverse group of services into three broad categories which structure this Toolkit:

Universal services	Education professionals (schools, colleges) Early years professionals (children’s centres, nurseries) Health professionals (GPs, practice nurses, Health Visitors, Midwives)
Specialist and Targeted services	Youth services; Early help services; Troubled Families teams; Kinship care support teams; family support teams; targeted children affected by parental offending teams; children and family social work services
Criminal justice services	Prison; Community Rehabilitation Companies and National Probation Service; Police; Courts

Although the Toolkit’s outcomes relate to children of offenders in their own right, rather than being about reducing reoffending for example, all agencies play a part in aiming towards those outcomes.

The Quality Statements and Toolkit will also be relevant to commissioners from all service areas, as they provide a comprehensive overview of service provision for this group, describe the core components of a high quality service for children of offenders and support services to develop their practice.

How to use the toolkit - A step by step guide

Central to the design of this Toolkit was the acknowledgement that services and practitioners have little time or resource to make huge changes to their practice, outcomes monitoring or to specifically focus on children affected by parental offending. The way you use this Toolkit also takes this into account.

STEP 1. Decide which category your service best fits in to
(Universal, Specialist and Targeted Services or Criminal Justice Services)

STEP 2. Familiarise yourself with each Quality Statement and the Toolkit

STEP 3. Use the self-assessment section for each Quality Statement to make a quick appraisal of areas in which your service meets the criteria and areas that need development

Top Tip: Not all self-assessment aspects in your chosen category will be relevant to your service. Focus on those that are most relevant to you.

STEP 4. Think about or provide evidence of meeting the criteria in the self- assessment section

STEP 5. Look at the practice examples in the Toolkit and resource database (Appendix D) for examples of current service provision

STEP 6. Use the work plan template (Appendix A) to develop an action plan by focusing on one or two of the self-assessment areas which are most relevant to your service. Consider working with key staff in the service who can contribute to making a difference.

Top Tip: you might like to print off your completed self-assessment sections for easier completion of the work plan

To use the Toolkit in the most useful way for your service you could:

- 1.** Bring together key stakeholders (ideally including families and young people) to appraise your service and develop solutions. This could generate debate and discussion, while helping the services to identify challenges and strengths. It could also promote 'ownership' and commitment across the service.
- 2.** Identify a lead person who can draw on their knowledge to fill in the work plan template for your service, and/or delegate sections to colleagues where appropriate.
- 3.** Look for opportunities to link the Quality Statements and Toolkit with other service monitoring activity and align with reporting required by commissioners, inspectors or local safeguarding boards.

Important notes on terminology

- The term 'children' is used to refer to children and young people aged 0-18. It is important to note that the effects of parental offending will differ for every child according to their individual characteristics such as their age, ethnicity and gender, and their family's circumstances. These things will mediate the child's understanding of, and response to, parental offending.
- The Quality Statements and Toolkit refers to parental offending and the impact this can have on children but can also be used with children in mind who have experienced another family member or loved one's involvement in the Criminal Justice System. It is essential to recognise that children can be just as negatively impacted when another close family member (e.g. a brother, sister, grandparent or step parent) or loved one is an offender.

1. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

AWARENESS

We are aware of the impact that parental offending can have on children, and we recognise that they are potentially vulnerable children with particular needs.

“I think it’s important they understand, ‘cos if you’ve got that understanding then the child doesn’t have to be on its own if they need help... you’ve already got an understanding of how you can help that child” - young person

Rationale: why awareness is important

Each year in England and Wales, around 200,000 children experience having a parent in prison (12, 16, 20). Not all offending results in a custodial sentence and so many more children, though figures are unknown, will be affected by parental offending and involvement in the Criminal Justice System. Parental offending can have significant consequences for children; they are likely to do less well at school, are at a higher risk of being involved in offending themselves and face an increased risk of mental health problems (5, 10).

In order for these children to be better supported, professionals must first be aware of the issues facing them and their families. Currently there is a low level of awareness about children affected by parental offending and their needs, especially amongst universal services, such as schools (22, 38, 39, 4 46, 43), health professionals (15) and criminal justice staff. As awareness and understanding grows so should the opportunities to identify and provide early help (4, 50).

Examples of practice

- Children’s Centres in Bristol have developed a ‘champion’ scheme whereby one worker in each centre receives training and support to ensure they are aware of the impact of parental offending and understand how their centre can meet these children’s needs. They also attend multi-agency meetings to share

practice and updates on their work. As a result, all children's centres in the city have greater understanding of and increased ability to respond to families affected by parental imprisonment.

- In [Stoke on Trent the local safeguarding children board ensures awareness training on children of offenders is given](#) to all professionals who may come into contact with prisoners' families (including prison staff, probation officers, children's centre workers, school staff, play workers, health visitors, youth workers and family intervention teams).
- Scottish organisation Families Outside provides posters for staff in schools to ensure they are aware of available training around children of prisoners.
- [Bringing Hope offer training around the impact](#) of the Criminal Justice System on families from black and minority ethnic communities.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could awareness make?

- Children of offenders are more likely to be recognised by professionals working in universal services
- Children affected by parental offending have a better experience when they come into contact with professionals working in the Criminal Justice System
- Staff have increased knowledge and understanding to help them support children affected by parental offending

“You’ll actually have some background knowledge to go ‘ok, well what can we do?’ rather than ‘oh my god, I don’t know what to say to this child’”

- young person

Self-assessment

Q1: Awareness	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
1.1	All services - We have resources for staff about children of offenders				Our service displays posters about children affected by parental offending Our staff have access to a range of resources explaining the impact on children of parental offending including relevant e-newsletters
1.2	Criminal Justice System - We provide training in safeguarding children for all our staff who come into contact with the children of offenders Universal & Specialist services - We ensure that training is available to help staff improve their knowledge of the Criminal Justice System				An audit has taken place to help us understand the training needs of our workforce in relation to this issue
1.3	All services - We provide parental offending awareness training for all our staff who work directly with children, families and/or offenders (e.g. access to Hidden Sentence or equivalent)				Our service training plan includes raising awareness about children of offenders (with the voice of children included via video/audio clips) Training attendance records are kept on the number and proportion of our workforce (staff, managers, volunteers) who receive awareness training Evaluation forms show satisfaction with the training
1.4	All services - We integrate parental offending awareness into our established training programmes (e.g. Safeguarding, Continuing Professional Development opportunities)				Team meetings & supervision notes show discussion of this group & identify on-going learning needs
1.5	Criminal Justice System - We provide training to staff on improving the experience of parental arrest, court attendance, prison-visiting or contact for children				Lead person is available in our service for staff. A work-plan and objectives describing their role is available
1.6	All services - We have identified a designated key person or 'champion' in our service with responsibility for raising awareness about this group of children				Our service policies and plans reference children affected by parental offending as a priority group
1.7	All services - We include children affected by parental offending as a potentially vulnerable group in our strategic service plans				

2. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

IDENTIFICATION

We have systems in place to identify children affected by parental offending, both as individuals and as a group.

“In an ideal world, I’d want the police, as soon as they do an arrest...to ring through to the school or children’s centre or anywhere the child was going to be that day and let someone know”

- young person

Rationale: why identification is important

Whilst some information about offenders’ children and families is collected and shared at a local level, there are no national requirements to do so and they are not routinely identified. Furthermore, stigma and fear of repercussions can make affected families reluctant to self-identify (37, 40). This means that we do not know who these children are, or the scale and nature of their support needs (7, 5, 15, 38). With appropriate local identification and information sharing processes the right information can be available for services to signpost to, develop and deliver appropriate support to children affected by parental offending (7, 12, 22, 29).

Examples of practice

- At key points in the Criminal Justice System there are opportunities to identify whether offenders have children. For example, when writing pre-sentence reports for the courts, Offender Managers could ask questions about their child care responsibilities or any contact they have with children (32).
- [Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders \(NIACRO\)](#) in a partnership with probation services each prisoner is asked to identify family members and children affected by their imprisonment. If permission is given the details are sent to NIACRO who send an information pack specific to each prison and telephone the family to offer support.

- Schools can display posters to show pupils and their families that the school is supportive of children of offenders and to encourage children to talk about their situation with professionals (11).
- [Bolton Sure Start Children’s Centres and Bolton Council](#) conducted a mapping exercise to establish the location of offenders and their families and consider the services currently available to them, to inform the creation of an action plan to ensure the needs of children of offenders were being met.
- [The COMPASS early help referral system](#) in Shropshire is a platform through which information about identified children of offenders is passed on to appropriate professionals.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could identification make?

- (More) children affected by parental offending are identified by our service and by other relevant services
- An increased number of children affected by parental offending come forward to access our services
- Information about children affected by parental offending is shared appropriately
- Local commissioners and providers are able to map provision and need, and to identify gaps

“Wherever you’re going to be, they should know [that a parent is in custody], because you’re not going to go in happy, you’re going to go in worrying and not concentrating...you’re going to want them to know before you turn up”

- young person

Self-assessment

Q2: Identification	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
2.1	<p>Criminal Justice System - We ensure information about any children is collected from offenders</p> <p>Universal & Specialist services - When children of offenders are identified we include appropriate information in our recording system</p>				<p>Service records include a section/check box to document details of children of offenders</p>
2.2	<p>Universal & Specialist - The information we share about our service encourages children affected by parental offending to talk to us directly about this (where appropriate)</p>				<p>We can provide examples of service leaflets/web pages and publicity materials which specifically reference support available to children affected by parental offending</p>
2.3	<p>All services - We have clear guidelines on what information about children of offenders can be shared, with whom and when</p>				<p>We share our information sharing protocol or guidelines with other services</p>
2.4	<p>All services - When the information about parental offending has been shared, we can identify such children in individual case records</p>				<p>We have a spreadsheet, database or similar which brings together information on the cohort of children affected by parental offending</p>
2.5	<p>All services - We can report on the numbers and characteristics (demographics) of children affected by parental offending who use our service</p>				
2.6	<p>All services - We use the data we collect about children affected by parental offending to inform our service planning and development.</p>				<p>Our service plan includes analysis of (locality shared) population data about children affected by parental offending</p>

3. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

CHILDREN'S VOICE

We always take into account the rights, experiences and perspectives of children affected by parental offending in developing and delivering our services.

“It’s affecting you not them, they have to know how you feel not how they think you feel...Like, not just the rights, opinions and experiences, and their feelings” - young person

Rationale: why voice of the child is important

Identifying and upholding the rights of children affected by offending and imprisonment is essential for anyone who comes into contact with or plans and or delivers support to children:

- Children and young people have rights in law to have clear, honest and age-appropriate information about services they are receiving and to understand what is happening (2);
- To build relationships and engage children and young people to hear their views, understand their experiences and take account of their wishes and feelings are core elements of effective direct work (9);
- To develop better services we need to listen to, and collaborate with, those we hope to work with especially when making choices and decisions that affect them (12, 17, 22, 26).

Examples of practice

- [Southampton council have produced a toolkit](#) for staff to support work with children of offenders, amongst the resources are worksheets to help children talk about their feelings
- [Children of offenders charity Pact have worked with a group of young people to produce a charter](#) about the rights that children affected by parental offending should have

- Action for Prisoners and Offenders Families (APOF), part of Family Lives have a booklet available, 'Telling the Children', to support families to explain what has happened when a parent or family member has gone to prison
- Barnardo's introduced a family room to Bristol Crown Court so that there was child-centered space

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could taking account of children's voices make?

- (More) children affected by parental offending are identified by our service and by other relevant services
- Children of offenders understand their rights
- Children affected by parental offending are offered more opportunities to say what they think and discuss how they feel
- The voices of children affected by parental offending influence the design, delivery and development of Criminal Justice System, universal and specialist services
- Children of offenders are recognised within government policy through the appointment of a Minister with responsibility for this group

“You're not going to be happy if they got arrested, but say they came out on bail, it's not the same emotions or anything like that, it's different emotions though the whole thing...”

- young person

Self-assessment

Q3: Children's voice	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
3.1	Universal & Specialist services - We provide age-appropriate information for children explaining the stages of the criminal justice process and their rights				Our staff have access to information leaflet(s) for children
3.2	Universal & Specialist - We document children's views and preferences about decisions that affect them (including their views on direct and indirect contact with a parent in prison)				Our record keeping system and assessment form has space to record children's views
3.3	All services - We regularly ask children for their views and experiences of our service, and we use the information they give us to improve what we do				Our service plan shows evidence of children's views A 'charter' (or equivalent) has been produced by children showing what they want/need. We have a complaints and suggestions procedure
3.4	Universal & Specialist services - We know where to access advocacy, peer support or mentoring for children and make sure they have information on how to access these				Contact details and how to access/refer children to these services is available in our service
3.5	Universal & Specialist services - We have ways to include the voices of children of offenders in our service				Children's stories, art work, films are displayed as appropriate Our training contains video/life stories of children Someone in our service has lead responsibility for this

4. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

We work in partnership with the wider network of professionals around children affected by parental offending.

“They’re all like using different techniques to help you but if they like compared notes and agreed on one technique to try each and try the same one then it might work a bit better”

- young person

Rationale: why multi-agency working is important

Multi-agency working is particularly important because there is no single statutory body or lead agency with responsibility for this group of children, and no national framework for developing service provision. Consequently, support is disjointed, provided mainly by local voluntary and community sector organisations, with children and families vulnerable to gaps and differences in available funding and geographical coverage (7, 15).

Local multi-agency partnerships that include both offender management and children support services help organisations who have similar aims, but perhaps different approaches, to work together effectively. They also provide opportunities for organisations to share information and skills, to clarify roles and responsibilities, and to identify and address important gaps, and avoid duplication in provision.

Examples of practice

- Bristol’s Strategy and Action Plan for Supporting Children and Families of Offenders is supported by a steering group including representatives from health, children’s social care, probation and voluntary organisations. The Action Plan sets out how the steering group intends to achieve outcomes for these families and children, assigning responsibilities and timescales to particular professionals and organisations.

- In Essex a multi-agency working group has been established to bring together key agencies, with the aim of highlighting the issues faced by these families, sharing expertise and information amongst professionals, and promoting partnership work;
- Multi-agency working between schools, prison and family can support the involvement of the imprisoned parent in their child's school life e.g. sending school reports and examples of children's work, being flexible when a child is visiting their parent in prison and offering support to children following these visits (11, 39).
- Co-location of services can bring positive benefits, for example, appointments with probation, including community-based assessments, can be undertaken in a local children's centre to facilitate the families of offenders linking with the wider services on offer (12).

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could multi-agency working make?

- (More) children affected by parental offending are identified by our service and by other relevant services
- (Increased) staff understanding about the roles and responsibilities of other services available for children (and families) affected by parental offending;
- Children (and families) affected by parental offending know what different local organisations can offer and know how to approach them for help.

“And if you have too many people then you don't know who to go to. If you have too many people that you know are looking out for you then you don't know, if I told them that, will they tell them this?” - young person

Self-assessment

Q4: Multi-agency working	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
4.1	All services - We have a designated lead as a point of contact for external agencies to communicate with about supporting children affected by parental offending				Our information materials (online and printed) include contact details for our lead for children of offenders
4.2	All services - We have developed links with other services that work with children of offenders.				We have access to a directory of key organisations who can provide additional support for this group (contact details and information on what support is offered) There is a process in place for keeping this resource pack up to date
4.3	All services - We provide information for professionals, children and families on the roles and responsibilities of different organisations in supporting children of offenders				Attendance records show relevant representatives from universal, specialist and criminal justice agencies and minutes/actions/work plan targets are available
4.4	All services - We have set up and/or attend a local multi-agency steering group to help plan and co-ordinate support for children affected by parental offending.				Protocols and/or referral pathways are in place
4.5	All services - We have agreed processes in place for signposting and referring children to other organisations				Joint training sessions are in place Secondment or shadowing opportunities are available (agreement of work schedule; aims and learning objectives and review of how went is in place)
4.6	All services - We provide opportunities for our staff to work with colleagues from other organisations (e.g. co-location of services; joint training; shadowing)				

5. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

STAGES OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

We recognise, and aim to minimise, the impact of parental offending on children at all stages of the offender's journey (arrest, court proceedings, imprisonment release and resettlement).

“I think that’s quite important because it’s not like you’ll have the same opinion on what you need, what help you need on different things ‘cos if they’re just going into prison then that’s going to be different from when they’re going into court, so you’ll need different help at different times”

- young person

Rationale: why the offender journey is important

The offender's journey through the Criminal Justice System has six key stages:

1. Offending behaviour
2. Arrest, including search;
3. Court proceedings, including pre-trial and sentencing at court;
4. Imprisonment;
5. Release
6. Resettlement.

Each stage has different meanings and implications for children affected by parental offending, and each brings diverse and potentially very difficult changes, experiences and feelings (11, 22). Depending on the individual child, their age and family circumstances, all stages can have an adverse or positive effect on children's outcomes and wellbeing (11). Universal and specialist services can do much to minimise this negative impact.

Those working in the Criminal Justice System can improve experiences for children at the points they come into contact with it. They also need to understand the impact that each of the other stages can have on children and families.

Further, Criminal Justice workers need to work in partnership with other agencies to build consistency and continuity in informing, involving and supporting children, from arrest through to post-release (8, 20, 22, 37, 38). Research and practice evidence continues to confirm the importance of an offender's family both during imprisonment and in the resettlement of ex-prisoners (16,19, 23).

Examples of practice

- Court (along with police and prison) staff are an important access point for getting information to families about the prison regime, and signposting to community support. For example, families of offenders charities NEPACS and PFFS run court information services.
- [Good practice guidance is available for prisons](#) from Kids VIP to help support development or running of family visit days in prisons. It provides guidance and ideas, examples of good practice, checklists on how to achieve good visits for children and families, and so on.
- The Thinking Fathers Programme in Bradford is run by the Community Rehabilitation Company and Barnardo's. It supports Dads on community orders or supervision to better meet their children's needs.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System make?

- Children understand what is happening at each stage of the parental offender journey
- Children receive support from specialist and universal services as they need at each stage of the parental offender journey and during the resettlement period
- Children have access to different ways to keep in touch with parents who are in the Criminal Justice System
- Children have an improved experience of visiting parents in prison

“They wouldn't have a clue, like what the different stages are, like most professionals will not have a clue what the different stages are, at least that's got [the Quality Statement] the four key ones there, they know what they're working towards”

- young person

Self-assessment

Ass: Stages of the CJIS	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
5.1	Criminal Justice System - We make sure information for families is available at the time of arrest, in court and when visiting prison so that procedures are clearly explained and information on support is available				Written information is available for children and families e.g. about court process, prison visiting etc. Children and young people were involved in writing the information materials
5.2	Criminal Justice System - We have set up court family rooms, reception areas or visiting centre facilities with children and young people's needs in mind				Our service has a review process which involves asking children what they think about visiting our prison/court/police station (e.g. via a questionnaire) We include opportunities for children to relax, play and eat whilst visiting our prison
5.3	All services - We support arrangements for children to stay in contact (as appropriate) with their parents in prison				'Keeping in contact' strategies are developed with children e.g. letters, story book scheme, visit support (access to help with travel & cost)
5.4	Criminal Justice System - We undertake or request from other agencies child impact assessments at key stages of the offender journey to ensure data is captured about dependent children and their needs are considered and met				Child impact assessment is undertaken and recommendations for change made & implemented
5.5	Specialist and universal services - Children have access to support after release				The remit of our service shows that support for children can continue after the period of custody has ended

6. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

SUPPORT AND SERVICES

We provide, or provide access to, support and services to meet the needs of children affected by parental offending.

“If you can’t support the child then, you know, that child is wasting their time by talking to you. So if you can’t say to them, right, I can do this to help you, or this person can do this to help you, then you can’t do anything for that child when it comes to having a parent in the Criminal Justice System”

- young person

Rationale: why support and services are important

Targeted support and services can help children to cope with parental offending and imprisonment, and can mitigate the potentially adverse impacts on children and their families (7, 10, 35, 37). For imprisoned parents there is evidence that maintaining family ties can have a positive effect on reducing re-offending rates (32).

Yet many children of offenders do not receive the help that they often need and want (22, 51). There is no statutory framework for supporting children affected by parental offending, and imprisonment does not necessarily trigger an assessment of children’s needs. Statutory social work services are targeted at children in need or at high risk of harm (38); not all prisons support children and families with contact and visits (22); specialist voluntary and community sector provision is variable and vulnerable to funding and capacity limitations (22, 51); there are very few targeted services for children from Black and the wider ethnic minority communities for whom circumstances and support may be very specific.

Not all children and families affected by parental offending will have access to specialist support and will not necessarily take up the support offered. Therefore it is particularly important to ensure that information and support for this group is included in the ‘offer’ of universal services, particularly schools (22).

Examples of practice

- The Family Learning Programme at HMP Wolds runs relaxed weekly visits that allow fathers to interact with their families as parents and to bond.
- [Circle's Families Affected by Imprisonment project](#) takes a 'whole family' approach to support for prisoners and their families, to ensure the needs and views of all the family members are considered, and the strengths within the family are identified.
- The Essex Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment Service provides information and advice to professionals, and support to children, young people and their families who have been affected by a family member's involvement in the Criminal Justice System. The service provides a range of support including practical assistance about prison visits, advice about court and prison processes as well as supporting the whole family to support the reduction of reoffending.
- [Person Shaped Support run peer support groups](#) for young people who have had a parent or family member involved in the Criminal Justice System.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: What difference could support and services make?

- Children know who to go to for support
- Children receive services that meet their needs
- Children have a joined up experience across the range of services with which they have contact

“I think its dependent on what support it is, like some people just want to be treated the same as everyone else. They can still get support but don't like make it obvious 'cos some people want to be just like a normal person but still get help from someone” - young person

Self-assessment

Q6: Support & Services	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
6.1	Universal and Specialist services - Our staff use local single/ service assessment or common assessment processes to assess the needs of children affected by parental offending				Our assessment processes include space to ask questions about impact or offending on children. Staff report that they are trained and confident in using assessment processes with children of offenders
6.2	Universal and Specialist services - We have guidance for staff on how we will respond to children who experience or are at risk of parental offending				Written or verbal guidance is available to our staff describing processes to follow when they identify children of offenders, the assessment processes to follow and our support 'offer' for these children
6.3	Specialist services - We are clear to local agencies that we work with this group of children				Information about the services we have for children of offenders is available online and in hard copy for potential service users and colleagues across universal and Criminal Justice System
6.4	All services - We know about other services who can support children of offenders and have information about the eligibility criteria and referral pathways				Directory of local services is available and kept up to date
6.5	Criminal Justice System - we support the child and parent relationship (where appropriate)				Ensure children and families are aware of parents' whereabouts after arrest Range of support for children of offenders is available e.g. child-centred visits, family days, Story book Dads and parenting courses
6.6	Specialist services - We run (or have access to) a peer support group for children of offenders				A participation group for children is in place (agenda, minutes, work plan show the range of activities undertaken by the group)

7. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

CHALLENGING STIGMA

We actively challenge discrimination and negative stereotypes about children affected by parental offending.

“It’s as much about the discrimination as the negative stereotypes, I think they sit next to each other and there’s no point tackling one and not the other, you need to do both” - young person

Rationale: why challenging stigma is important

The stigma of adult criminality and imprisonment can adversely affect the children of offenders. Families from wider ethnic minority groups, such as those with refugee status, are likely to receive more real or perceived prejudice. The nature of the parents’ offence can mean that stigmatisation is exacerbated by the media. The families of female offenders are also more likely to experience stigma within their communities. As a result, children may:

- experience teasing, bullying, rejection and exclusion from peers;
- become isolated by the disruption of family and community networks;
- experience feelings of shame;
- withdraw from relationships;
- avoid confiding in others, including professionals, about their circumstances and experiences (7, 12, 17, 22).

Specialist and universal services’ active challenge to this stigma will help protect children from discrimination, help them feel safe to disclose information about their circumstances, and give them access to non-judgemental support and the services if and when they need them (5, 11, 22, 46).

Examples of practice

- **Schools are essential in challenging negative stereotypes** about children affected by parental offending. For example, they can deliver assemblies which challenge stigma; include information in staff briefings; advertise to parents that the school supports families of offenders (e.g. displaying posters); include information in school newsletters; actively seek to reduce bullying by incorporating issues around prison, crime, blame and punishment into the curriculum e.g. personal social education/citizenship (1, 39).
- Prisons can provide staff training to help improve the experience for children visiting and maintaining contact with their relative in prison.
- **Police can minimise community stigma** for the children of offenders by aiming to make a home or public arrest as discrete as possible.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: What difference could challenging stigma make?

- Services are positive and non-judgemental about children affected by parental offending
- Children experience less bullying and discrimination
- There are more positive attitudes in the local community towards children of offenders

“It wasn’t our choice to be here [in the situation of having a parent in prison]” - young person

Self-assessment

Q57: Stigma Challenging	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
7.1	All services - We have systems in place to guide and support staff who witness, experience or express prejudicial, judgemental or discriminatory attitudes, language or behaviours towards children affected by parental offending				Staff meetings and supervision are used on a need to know basis to discuss incidents of prejudice We have anti-bully policies in operation
7.2	Universal and specialist - We provide or contribute to local anti-stigma initiatives that help children affected by parental offending to make or re-establish supportive social links and contacts				Our service works with young people on positive messages about children affected by parental offending (achievements, myth busting) Children's art work, stories or films are promoted
7.3	Specialist services - We work with local media representatives to influence how other people and organisations treat children affected by parental offending				Local press publish positive stories about children affected by parental offending or publish fewer negative stories about parents going to prison without consulting the family
7.4	Universal and specialist – We are clear to the local community that we welcome and work with this group of children and families				We promote our work (e.g. through posters/newsletters) at community events & venues such as libraries, schools, job centre and churches etc.
7.5	Universal and specialist - We give children control about what information on their parent's offending circumstances we share and with whom (where safe and appropriate to do so)				Our service has processes available for staff and children about how we share information in a confidential and respectful way

8. Quality Statement and Toolkit:

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE

We monitor our interventions with children affected by parental offending and contribute to the evidence.

“Keep feedback from young people about what they find helpful and unhelpful, not just professionals saying what’s worked”
- young person

Rationale: why building the evidence is important

Services carry out a range of activities to support children affected by parental offending but measuring the difference that this varied work makes is challenging (33). It can be difficult to keep track of children and their outcomes over time, and to distinguish the impact of one service when children are using several. Depending on the intervention, services might need to measure and compare multi-faceted concepts such as resilience and the quality of relationships.

Nonetheless, it is important for organisations working in universal, specialist and criminal justice services to build monitoring and outcomes evaluation into their work, and to share learning with others. Building the evidence allows us all to understand the strengths and limitations of our work with individual children, and to identify changes and trends in children’s experience. It also allows services to highlight children’s needs and demonstrate the value of their work and the difference they are making to policy makers, commissioners, and communities (6, 15, 54).

Examples of practice

- Somerset locality has a database of information about children affected by parental offending shared between key agencies which informs service provision.
- **Tools to help measure children’s feelings** are included in New Philanthropy Capital’s (NPC) report which looks at the relevance of such techniques for those working with children of offenders and provides guidance on how to use them.

- Prison visitor centres can assess their current practice against the available [quality standards for running a high quality visitor centre](#) to allow them to identify areas for future development (43) and use the [NPC developed questionnaire for capturing the experience of people visiting prison](#).
- Umbrella organisation CLINKS have developed a set of [evaluation tools for volunteering projects working around the Criminal Justice System](#) including focus group and interview schedule tools for use with volunteers, staff and service users. Analysis spreadsheets are also included to help manage the data.

**GO TO OUR RESOURCES DATABASE (APPENDIX D)
TO FIND MORE PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND TOOLS**

Outcomes: what difference could building the evidence make?

- Services can use the evidence they gather to inform the on-going development of service structures and professional practice for greater impact
- Policy-makers, commissioners and service providers have a better understanding of ‘what works’ to improve outcomes for children affected by parental offending
- Policy objectives and funding systems are aligned to support work that most improves outcomes for children affected by parental offending, in the short and longer term

“I think professionals should learn what to do, but by asking the young people” - young person

Self-assessment

Q8: Building Evidence	What can we do? (please tick one box in each row)	Not yet or N/A	In progress	Yes, in place	How can we evidence what we do? Some suggestions
8.1	All services - We keep records on how children affected by parental offending are referred to our service or on to support services				We have a (shared) spreadsheet, database or similar which brings together information on the cohort of children affected by parental offending
8.2	Specialist services - We keep a waiting list to keep track of demand for support				We have a list showing the number of children requiring support & the time they spend waiting for support
8.3	All services - We do a regular (at least yearly) full service evaluation and service snap shots which includes asking children for feedback about the impact of our work				Our service delivery plan includes evidence of how our service will change in response to recommendations from our evaluation work
8.4	Universal and specialist services - We have an evaluation framework that describes the outcomes for children that we will measure, the indicators that we will use, the tools we will use to collect data, and how that data will be analysed				We produce regular monitoring reports which show progress against indicator(s) for children of offenders We have established academic or expert partnerships to advise and help us with external evaluation There is a theory of change (or equivalent) available for our service
8.5	Universal and specialist services - We collaborate with other local organisations to track outcomes for children affected by parental offending, across different services and over time				We have (shared) performance indicators in this area of work
8.6	All services - We contribute case studies and learning from websites and elsewhere to ensure others can benefit from our evaluation work				Case studies/practice examples showing the impact of our work are written up and shared

Appendix A

Work plan template

Throughout the Quality Statements (QS) and Toolkit there is a self-assessment section with suggested actions on how your service can meet the QS.

This appendix also helps you look at the different elements that are needed to provide a quality service for children of offenders and examine your current position in relation to these. The actions are split by type of service: some are intended for all types of services, others will be more applicable to particular services (universal¹, specialist² or criminal justice services³).

This work plan template allows you to select which actions are relevant to your services – you may decide to prioritise particular ones depending on the results of your self-assessment or you may select all those relevant to your type of service.

1 Universal services (education, early years and health)

2 Specialist and targeted services (youth services, early help services, troubled families teams, kinship care and support teams, family support teams, and targeted children affected by parental offending teams)

3 Criminal Justice Services (prison service, Community Rehabilitation Companies, National Probation Service, police service and courts)

What can we do? Developing a work plan

Quality Statement	Actions for services (Look at the 'what can we do' column of the self-assessment section and select actions most relevant and which you wish to prioritise)	Evidence & comments (use the 'how can we evidence what we do' column of the self assessment section for suggestions of the data/evidence you might collect to show you are working towards, or have achieved, the action)	Plan: this month, within three months, within six months	Completion date	Lead
1. Awareness					
2. Identification					

What can we do? Developing a work plan

3. Children's voice								
4. Multi agency working								
5. Stages of offender journey								

What can we do? Developing a work plan

6. Support & Services								
7. Challenging stigma								
8. Building the evidence base								

Appendix B

Work plan template filled in by Early Help/Troubled Families team

What can we do? Developing a work plan

Quality Statement	Actions for services (look at the 'what can we do' column of the self-assessment section and select actions most relevant and which you wish to prioritise)	Evidence & comments (use the 'how can we evidence what we do' column of the self assessment section for suggestions of the data/evidence you might collect to show you are working towards, or have achieved, the action)	Plan: this month, within three months, within six months	Completion date	Lead
1. Awareness	Obtain resources to support CAPO Champions	Requested that when Frome Champions order to include getset requirements	3 months		Katherine, administrator
	Include CAPO in Strategic Plan	To be included in the LSCB Threshold guidance document	3 months	Completed	Tom, LSCB
2. Identification	Progress the work with the CAPO Steering Group around the identification of Offenders in custody with children	This piece of work is being driven by Rebecca Marshall – IMPACT Coordinator.	Three months		Rebecca, pathway manager, integrated offender management team
	Write guidance for partners on what information should be shared, at what time and by who	Identify other areas of best practice to support	Six months		Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead

2. Identification	When data is collected, analyse to inform service planning on YP support groups	Data currently collated by TF Information Analyst – currently only a small amount held. Continue to drive the necessity for FSW to advise data team of families that are affected by parental offending.	Six months	James Hagley / Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
3. Children's voice	N/A	I am confident that the 'child's voice' is heard and acted on as part of the Early Help Assessment and then monitored in the TAC meetings.		
4. Multi agency working	Improve the links with agencies working with CAPO	To share the information and resources from the CAPO Champions.	6 months	Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
	Identify other services which support CAPO	Ensure that CAPO Champions have an understanding of other services to support families affected by parental Offending.	6 months	Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
5. Stages of offender journey	Ensure FSW are aware of the CJS process	Develop a process flow chart to show the CJ Process	3 months	Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
6. Support & Services	Peer support groups for parents and children who are affected by Offending	Use data to inform service plans and identify which service areas are the highest need	6 months	James Hagley / Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
7. Challenging stigma	Peer support groups for parents and children who are affected by Offending	Use data to inform service plans and identify which service areas are the highest need	6 months	James Hagley / Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead
8. Building the evidence base	Run a media awareness day to highlight the work of the CAPO Champions	Speak with Comms and develop a comms strategy to support	6 months	Gill, Early Help/Troubled families lead / Comms Team

Appendix C

Development of the Quality Statements and Toolkit

All research, evidence, practice models and case studies on the i-HOP website was scrutinised and 54 key pieces of UK based research were selected to form an evidence base spreadsheet. Each of these were examined for information on messages, outputs and outcomes. See the reference list in Appendix A, the accompanying Excel resource database, for details. The local and national policy, guidance and protocols around or relevant to children affected by parental offending as were listed on the i-HOP website were also examined. This evidence was used to develop a draft of the Quality Statements and Toolkit. Wider web based resources was also used to identify services and other examples of practice which form part of the Toolkit.

Two focus groups were then held with young people at Bristol's Barnardo's Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment service's young people's forum and Person Shaped Support's children and young people's group in Liverpool. This enabled us to evidence the Toolkit with the views of children and young people around what services implementing the Quality Statements will mean for them.

We then consulted with 116 multi-agency professionals at 3 i-HOP awareness raising workshops to ensure the Quality Statements and Toolkit made sense and were useful in practice. Relevant feedback and repeated themes that emerged from these consultations were worked into the document.

The draft Quality Statements and Toolkit were then piloted by an Early Help/ Troubled Families team and a Constabulary/Integrated Offender Management team in Somerset. Feedback from these teams were integrated into the final, publicised draft of the Introduction, Quality Statements and Toolkit.