



# AFFECT NEWS

*Sharing news and support for families*

December 2016

Registered charity no. 1097087

Action for  
Families  
Enduring  
Criminal Trauma

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## Welcome.

As Christmas approaches we will all be thinking of our loved ones in prison and no doubt, they too will be remembering past Christmases with their family.

Don't forget to send them cards and, maybe, photos of your Christmas so they don't feel so left out. Of course visits are especially important around this time so book as soon as you can.

## Website Under Construction

Our website guru Trevor is currently working with us to re-design our website. A modern and up to date on-line presence is crucial to AFFECT's work. We need to reach as many families and friends of prisoners as we can. We are working hard to launch the new website very soon and a big thank you must go to Trevor who gives his time free despite being very busy running his own business as a website designer.



Join us at our  
NEXT  
MEETINGS

Saturdays 12pm

4th March 2017

3rd June 2017

If you would like to come please reply to your invitation and you will be given details.

These gatherings are well worth attending as you will meet other people who all have loved ones facing long



## Help raise funds for AFFECT!

Please send your old inkjet cartridges to:

[www.recycle4charity.co.uk](http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk)

For each cartridge £1 goes to AFFECT.

You will need to enter the code:

AFFECT-C8627 to register

## Changing times in our Prisons

Most of us reading this have someone dear to us in prison and worry about the affect of prison strikes on the inmates. We have seen the TV news and programmes about life in prison. Many of our loved ones have seen the violence, drug related beatings and long hours of lock-up first hand... and we are worried.

The situation in prisons is near breaking point. Would you ever consider becoming a prison warder? According to the news, there are 65 assaults on prison officers every day. They are frustrated and conditions just get worse for them, so they leave the job.

The government have promised 2500 more officers, but not for another 2 years! Prisoners are there for a reason, but should they be subjected to long hours of lock-up, sometimes all day due to lack of staff. Many feel drugs are the only way out and drug dealing in prisons is big business. Making "legal highs" illegal has had little effect except to put the price up and addicted prisoners will do anything to feed their addiction. There has been cases where they will suffer any humiliation; any beating for the amusement of the dealers, to get their drugs. Horrible, but we have to remember this can happen on the outside too.

What can be done about this desperate situation? Prison reforms have been in the news recently but have now been put on hold by the justice minister.

There needs to be an overhaul of the whole prison system, introducing reforms that include:

- More prison officers with better pay, conditions and training.
- A focused drug prevention policy.
- Reduce number of overall prisoners.
- Review the criminal justice sentencing system to ensure that rehabilitation is priority rather than just incarceration.
- Removing mentally ill patients to secure hospitals for treatment and rehabilitation .

For more information please see?:

1) The Prison Reform Trust provides a good overview of the current situation: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/Comment/Articles/vw/1/ItemID/383>

2) <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/07/liz-truss-puts-prison-reform-plans-put-on-hold>

Anne

## And now for something completely different....

All the toilets in New York' police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity....just can't put it down.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went...then it dawned on me!

I didn't like my beard at first, but then it grew on me.



## We need more stories!

If you would like to share your story please email us at [Affect01@hotmail.com](mailto:Affect01@hotmail.com)

Your contribution will be anonymous or you may like to use your first name only.

I know we all have a lot to say so please try to keep your contribution to less than 500 words if you can. It would also help if you would give me permission to condense a longer piece if necessary.

## Changes to housing benefit threaten offender resettlement, Langley House Trust states.

The Trust, which provides re-settlement services for ex-offenders, has criticised changes to the housing benefit system, stating that: “changes to housing benefit will wipe out 41% of supported housing. Most people would agree that rehabilitation doesn’t work if someone hasn’t got a stable home. Trying to address issues that contribute to crime such as addictions and mental health whilst someone is rough sleeping or sofa surfing is nonsensical. Economically, the ‘benefits’ of the Bill don’t stack up against the cost of the impact to society if most offenders can no longer be housed. Homelessness increases the risk of crime – meaning more victims, more costly prison placements and even fewer resources to help with the ‘rehabilitation revolution’.”

## PRISON VOICEMAIL GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

I’ve recently had an email from Kieran at Prison Voicemail to let us know that it is now in service at over 74 prisons! They were able to add a whopping 21 more prisons in September. What an amazing achievement for him and Alex who operate the service and the amount of work and negotiating with the prison estate that must have taken. We all know how frustrating it can be when we try to get any kind of result from a prison and in April this year it was only operating in 12 prisons. Nothing less than amazing!

One customer e mailed Prison Voicemail to say “...it has transformed the way I can contact my son, just knowing I can leave him a message of support gives my wife and I great comfort”.

3 cheers for the Prison Voicemail team then!! If you would like a complete list or to know if a certain prison accepts this service go to:

<http://prisonvoicemail.com>

## The Right to be Forgotten

Even Japan has ordered Google to remove links to the criminal record of a Japanese man stating that 'criminals are entitled to have their private lives respected and rehabilitation unhindered'.

Japan recognise`s the “right to be forgotten”. In handing down his ruling the Judge said that, depending on the nature of the crime, individuals should be able to undergo rehabilitation with a clean on-line sheet after a certain amount of time has elapsed.

To read the full article go to:  
[www.the-record.org.uk](http://www.the-record.org.uk)

## SHARE YOUR STORY

Thanks to everyone who has sent articles and information for the Newsletter. We are always interested in your suggestions for content, so if you’d like to share your story (or part of it), or have comments, useful tips or information please send it in via the contacts on the front page. Please aim for a **maximum of 500 words**. Any contributions will appear with your first name only, or will be anonymous if you prefer.

**The deadline for the next edition is February 15th 2017**

**Please note the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the editor or of AFFECT.**