



Sharing news and support for families

Action
For
Families
Enduring
Criminal
Trauma

www.affect.org.uk
affect01@hotmail.com
0300 365 3651

our next GROUP GATHERING

is on **Saturday
6th Feb, 1pm**, by
Zoom. If you
would like to
attend, please
reply to your
invitation and you
will be given
details.

These gatherings
are well worth
attending as you
will meet other
people who have
loved ones facing
long periods in
prison and you
can talk in a safe
place.

Chair's News

Happy New Year! I hope you are keeping well and safe in these difficult times. This has been a challenging year for AFFECT, and for us all. Many charities are struggling, and have had to make unprecedented changes. AFFECT has maintained an effective, but limited service, with most of its work undertaken by video conference, telephone, or post.

For example, the Trust Board has not met face-to-face for a year, the AGM and Group Gatherings were undertaken on Zoom. This has inadvertently marginalised even further those members who lack digital connection. This is regrettable, but unavoidable. The good news is that AFFECT still offers a service; two new Telephone Support Workers have been recruited- welcome to them. Supervision continues, on a 6-8 week basis. Contact has been maintained with the Prison Reform Trust, and Action for Prisoners' Families. AFFECT continues to have a stable financial basis, thanks to continuing, generous donations from our supporters. The annual accounts have been audited, and we have received Gift Aid.

The three main areas of work for 2021 are:

- Promoting the service. Email links with all UK prison governors have been established. An AFFECT Welcome letter has been devised.
- Fundraising- a database of potential sources of funds is in place. No applications made.
- Recruitment of TSWs- First round of recruitment undertaken.

Warmest wishes, and a virtual hug!

Carol.

*"What do we do when our hearts hurt?" asked the boy. "We wrap them up with friendship, shared tears, and time, till they wake hopeful and happy again"**

Stories- a Prison Officer

"At first, the nationwide lock-down was mainly understood and accepted by prisoners, but when the country at large came out of restrictions, they remained in place in prisons. Prisoners really suffered during this time. It is inhuman; my pets get better treatment. Mingling was allowed, for just 30 minutes a day. There has been a massive jump in violent incidents. Prisoners and guards were not allowed to wear masks (this is now being rectified.) In addition, Covid-19 restrictions are impeding rehabilitation."

a Nurse

"I have watched as inmates' health has deteriorated. They are going grey in the face, are constantly tired and worn-out. They have had no sunshine. They just lie on their beds, sleeping, not reading, and with little contact with mental health workers. It is as if they have given up."

a Family Member

"Only too aware of the impact of restrictions on my son. No visiting. Limited contact via digital methods. Depression, poor mental health, for both of us."

Stay home. Save the NHS.

Stay home. Save the NHS.

Why should I? I'm alright. Don't get ill;
don't need the NHS. Always moaning.

No PPE. Lucky they still got jobs.

They get paid, not like me.

Going for my Saturday steak and beer.

Pub closed. What fools! No backbone.

Just because we're told to stay in,

doesn't mean we *have to*. Does it?

Stay at home. Save the NHS.

I'm alright. Don't need the NHS.

Feeling bad today. Won't let a bit of flu get me down.

I'm off out. Mask? Christ no! Why should I?

Can't stop coughing; cough, cough, cough.

Mum died. What bastard gave her Covid?

Can't be me. I haven't got it. Didn't visit much anyway.

I'm alright. Don't need the NHS.

Can't seem to breathe. Ambulance ? For me?

Hey pretty nurse! Sit by me.

What does it matter, no PPE?

Pretty nurse sick, you say? Never mind. She can have a rest.

Pretty nurse died, you say? Can't be me.

Stay at home save the NHS.

I'm alright. Don't need the NHS.

Can't breathe today. Need a ventilator.

What do you mean, no more left?

I'm not alright,needthe...

Anne

Covid-19 and Prisons- update

In the last Newsletter a report was presented on the impact of Covid-19 on prisons, prisoners and their families, called CAPPTIVE, undertaken by the Prison Reform Trust. AFFECT contributed to this project by sharing (anonymously) the experience of AFFECT members with a view to influencing best practice and reducing bad practice. In regards to an update, there have been a number of articles in the media about the state of UK prisons, including statements such as:

"Instead of the virus taking lives, it has taken liberties, and made the practices of our Criminal Justice System resemble a police state"

"As always, the scandal is that there is no scandal."

"There are uncounted thousands imprisoned without a court conviction. The length of time that a defendant can be lawfully held in custody is 182 days. FAIR TRIALS has heard of people having to wait in prisons for cases postponed until December 2021."

"Purple Visits"

Problems are reported with this system of remote video conferencing linking prisoners and families. Screens freeze, and there are long gaps between contacts with loved ones.

The recently published government Mental Health White Paper contains changes that should strengthen people's rights, including:

- Giving legal weight to people's choices and preferences about their care and treatment.
 - Choosing which family member or friend is given particular rights to be involved in their care.
 - Providing culturally appropriate advocacy and a wider range of support from advocates to better help people from a range of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to express their thoughts and wishes about the care they receive.
 - More opportunities for tribunals to discharge people, scrutinise and make certain changes to their care.
- If you would like AFFECT to respond to the White Paper, please get in touch.

*"Sometimes", said the horse, "Sometimes what?" asked the boy,
"Sometimes just getting up and carrying on is brave and magnificent"*.*

Thanks to everyone who has sent articles and information for the Newsletter. We are always welcome your suggestions for content, and if you'd like to share your story (or part of it), we would love to hear from you as the "Stories" are always very popular. Any contributions will appear with your first name only, or will be anonymous if you prefer.

NB the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers, not necessarily those of the editor or of AFFECT.

* quotations from Charlie Mackesy, "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse"

