



Supporting Families and Friends of Prisoners

Action  
For  
Families  
Enduring  
Criminal  
Trauma



## AFFECT NEWS

### Sharing news and support for families

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#### Notes from the Chair

##### Dear Ones

Well, spring is really here, and for many of us, but not all, our spirits are beginning to lift after a winter that there appeared to be many things to worry about.

For those of you whose spirits aren't lifting, and whose challenges appear considerable, we think of you with love and compassion. Reach out if you want- AFFECT is still here, not only for new people, but also for those who have been part of us for many, many years. We support each other through both good and difficult times.

Affect continues with over 100 supporters, and we are actively recruiting new Telephone Support Workers: welcome Rachel, Lorraine and Sandy.

Our third Community Fund National Lottery bid was successful, which will enable us to continue supporting the work of a Supervisor for Telephone Support Workers (Kathy), and a Development Worker (Sandy). Fund-raising has always been an issue for AFFECT- the families of prisoners are not held in high regard by society, but we continue to receive regular small donations from individuals, and a larger sum from the House of Bethany- Thank-you, All.

There has been considerable discussion in the media about Indeterminate Prison Sentences, and the 'mess' that is the current situation. Many AFFECT supporters have a loved one serving such a sentence, usually with mental health issues, and are acutely aware of the impact this has on their lives.

If any of you want to take this discussion further through AFFECT in order to influence the national debate, please make contact. This is potentially a time of real change.

Love to you all

Carol (Chair)

## Justice - What Justice? - Giovanna's Story

Giovanna has been an AFFECT supporter for many years, following the imprisonment of her family member. She has held a senior, responsible position in the Health Service until retirement, and is an AFFECT board member, having previously held the post of Treasurer.

Giovanna has a strong sense of social justice, and campaigns actively on environmental issues, including Insulate Britain, and ending fuel poverty, from which 8,500 died in the past year. Foremost in her mind is the future of the Planet, and safeguarding it for our children and grandchildren.



So, why was she sent to prison on 3rd March 2023, for her beliefs, for telling the jury the reasons for her actions, described by the Judge as 'contempt of court'? Giovanna was initially charged with 'causing a public nuisance', when, with others, she blocked a London road junction as part of an Insulate Britain campaign aimed at bringing the seriousness of the issue to the attention of the public. Now, at this point you may have lost sympathy for her, but remember, she is not doing this for herself, but for the future of humankind. I am sure she would much rather have a quiet life at home.

When their case came to court, the Judge ruled that the reasons why they blocked the road were forbidden to be mentioned to the jury. Thus fuel poverty, the urgent need to insulate homes and the environmental crisis (highlighted by King Charles, Sir David Attenborough, the IPCC and many others) were ruled out. Stopping Giovanna and her fellow protestors from being able to defend their actions, is truly shocking. Everyone has a right to a defence, and to explain their actions.

She was sentenced to seven weeks in prison, not for the direct action, but for informing the jury why she took it.

The Good Law Project has helped her lodge an appeal against the Judge's ruling and there has been substantial, ongoing media attention given to this case.

If you would like to read Giovanna's fuller story, it is attached to this email, and enclosed with mailed hard copies of the Newsletter.

Visit The Good Law Project on:

[www.goodlawproject.org.uk](http://www.goodlawproject.org.uk)

## Family support -Prisoners Families Helpline 0808 808 2003 - Freephone

There is growing evidence that providing family support and maintaining family ties is not only important for the well-being of prisoners, but can also help prisoners to resettle back into the community, reduce reoffending and reduce the risk of intergenerational offending.

The prison service is committed to supporting prisoners to maintain relationships with their families during their time in custody. In 2019 the prison service introduced the *Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties Policy Framework*, which requires all prisons to have a Family and Significant Other Strategy in place. This strategy should set out how the prison will help families to stay in touch, build their relationships and support one another.

To read a copy of the Family Strategy for a specific prison visit the [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders Service Directory](https://www.nicco.org.uk) - <https://www.nicco.org.uk> and select the prison you want.

Prisons provide a range of different services to support family relationships including:

- Visit Centre family support, information and advice
- Family visits and special events
- Parenting and relationship programmes
- One to one support from specialist family engagement workers

Many prisons commission a specialist family support organisation to provide their visit and family support services. Those organisations will often have a family support worker based at the prison who you can contact directly for support, advice and information. To find out who is delivering family support services in a prison and how to contact them, visit the [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders Service Directory](https://www.nicco.org.uk) and select the prison you want.

### Our next Group Gathering

Is on **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 1pm** by Zoom.  
If you would like to attend, please reply to your invitation and you will be given details. Future dates are (all Sat at 1pm) 8<sup>th</sup> July; 5<sup>th</sup> August; 2<sup>nd</sup> September; 7<sup>th</sup> October.

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.

### Data Protection

AFFECT keeps very limited information on our Members, namely name, email and telephone details. If you would like to be removed from our records, please email [affect01@hotmail.com](mailto:affect01@hotmail.com) or ring Carol on 07833 458415

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