



Supporting Families and Friends of Prisoners

Action
For
Families
Enduring
Criminal
Trauma



Registered charity no. 1097087

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AFFECT NEWS

Sharing news and support for families



www.affect.org.uk
affect01@hotmail.com

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0300 365 3651

Notes from the Chair

Dear Ones,

Good news! AFFECT is in great shape. We have appointed Shannel as our Project Development Worker, and she has hit the ground running by making the arrangements for recruiting three new Telephone Support Workers (TSWs). Welcome, Shannel, to your new role.

Welcome too, to the new TSWs, Shamim, Sophie and Debbie. This is especially good news, as there has been a steady trickle of new clients, and it is AFFECT policy to allocate a client to a TSW as soon as possible. Distress levels are often very high before contacting an organisation such as AFFECT. We say goodbye to Becky, who has left to take up full-time employment elsewhere. Thank-you, Becky, for all your hard work over the past few years.

In the news, there are plans to allow prisoners out on day-release to fill labour shortages. This could reduce re-offending and help the economy recover. This must be welcome news for some groups of prisoners as they can gain status, recognition and pride in doing a valuable job, whilst earning money. It also helps them re-engage with society and become responsible citizens. The UK prison population stands at 85,000, with only 7,100 released on temporary licence last year, a reduction from 11,000 per annum in previous years. Employers report that they find ex-offenders are in the main "motivated, reliable and trustworthy." They include some of our family members, so no surprise to us.

The first part of the Covid Inquiry, chaired by Dame Heather Hallett, into the preparedness for a Pandemic, has now completed evidence-gathering. Some preliminary information has been released ahead of its Phase 1 report.

Some serious messages emerging include:

- The experiences of bereaved individuals who lost loved ones during the pandemic
- The impact of preparing for a no-deal EU exit on disaster planning
- Pre - pandemic health inequalities

Watching the Inquiry proceedings live is fascinating, and seeing our experts and politicians being grilled, an eye-opener. Watch it if you can.

Also shown live are the proceedings of committees, and debates in the Chamber of the House of Commons. For the Prison Reform debate, which I watched, a mere thirteen MPs were present, until the vote was called, when hundreds turned up. One piece of evidence I found particularly worrying was a statement by a Minister following a recent prison visit, where they found that the most experienced Prison Officer on duty had “only been in post for 8 months.” Where have all the experienced POs gone?

The summer holidays have started, and I wish you well, wherever you find yourself.

Keep cool.
Love, Carol (Chair)

Injustice

After new DNA evidence linked another suspect to the incident, an innocent man sentenced to 17 years in jail had his rape conviction overturned. Andrew Malkinson was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum term of seven years in 2003 for assaulting a woman in Greater Manchester. He was convicted entirely based on eyewitness identification. There was no DNA evidence linking him to the crime. Mr Malkinson consistently maintained his innocence, which resulted in an additional ten years in prison. The Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC) referred his case to the Court of Appeal in January based on new DNA evidence that implicated another suspect. Mr Malkinson's conviction was overturned by three senior judges. He is now 57 years old. Mr Malkinson's convictions for rape and choking or strangling with intent to commit rape were both overturned by Lord Justice Holroyde, who stated that he should "leave the court free and no longer be subject to the conditions of licence." Mr Malkinson delivered a passionate address outside the court, stating, "On August 2, 2003, I was kidnapped by the state." It took over 20 years to convince my kidnappers to let me free." He felt sorry for the victim because every time he claimed his innocence, she had to relive her anguish since the system failed them both. He is understandably unhappy with Greater Manchester police, whom he refers to as "liars." Mr Malkinson was released in December 2020 but did not feel free. Following his discharge, his name was placed on the sex offenders register and he was closely monitored by probation and police. Following his release, advances in scientific technology enabled his legal team, assisted by the legal charity Appeal, to offer new DNA analysis to the CCRC, which could cast doubt on his conviction. Mr Malkinson added "Now I have finally been exonerated, I am left outside this court... jobless, homeless, expected to simply slip back into the world with no acknowledgement of the gaping black hole that they opened up in my life; a black hole that looms so large behind me, even here today, that I fear it will swallow me up”.

'Abolished But Not Gone'

On July 3rd, UNGRIPP presented a week-long exhibition for IPP Prisoners titled 'Abolished But Not Gone' in The House of Commons. The Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence. It was implemented in 2005 and abolished in 2012, although not retroactively. Through prisoners' art, poems and photographic portraits of people afflicted by IPP, the show shed awareness on the damaging sentence. The event was attended by a number of MPs and other organisations. As IPP prisoners have no release date, this exhibition will help to raise awareness and find light at the end of the tunnel for the families and the offenders.

Washing

You speak about washing away the prison
Washing away the shouting on the wing
Washing away the officer's keys locking the door
Washing away the time limited phone calls
Washing away the staring at the white walls
Washing away the recalls
Washing away the poor decisions
Washing away the frustration of it all

By Shannel

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 or ring Carol on 07833 458415

Prison video calls were introduced during the Pandemic, to connect prisoners with their loved ones. This was a positive step forward in providing vital support to prisoners, their families, and friends through challenging times. Your loved one is allowed one video call per month lasting for 30 minutes. Up to 4 people can attend the call and must be on the visitor list. The same rules around clothing and behaviour apply as if you were visiting in person. The advantage of video calls is that they provide a safe space for you to maintain your relationship while saving you travel time and money cost. The disadvantages are that there is no physical contact, pauses if children move out of the camera, Wi-Fi disruptions and waiting for prisons to approve the video call as they are in high demand. However, video calls are extremely beneficial for family contact. Please view the full article on the AFFECT website.

Today's messages

"There are times when I have to hurt through a situation, and when this happens, the choice is not whether to hurt or not to, but what to do while I am hurting." *Anon.*

"So you know all about me" said the boy,

"Yes" said the horse.

"And you still love me?"

"We love you all the more" - the boy the Mole, the Fox and the Horse, by Charlie Mackesy.

DISCLAIMER

From time-to-time, AFFECT is approached by media outlets, asking us to canvas our supporters for help with their studies and or programmes. We may forward their approach, and reasons, to our supporters, but ONLY by blind copy email. We NEVER divulge any contact details of AFFECT supporters.

We leave it entirely to the discretion of you, our supporters to contact any such third party. In keeping our distance from those interested in research and or programmes related to our supporters' concerns, we are drawing on long experience, that an approach initially presented as a genuine inquiry can turn out to be exploitative, and damaging.