



An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Pact's Kinship Care Support Service
at HMP Holloway

October 2011

Research team

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Executive Summary

- Pact's Kinship Care Support Service at HMP Holloway provides support and advice to the families and friends who care for the children of women prisoners. It also supports those prisoners and helps to facilitate contact between them, their children, and their children's carers. It is run single-handedly by a Service Manager, employed for 21 hours per week. It began in April 2009 and is due to end in March 2012. Funded by the City Bridge Trust, this Service is unique across the prison estate in England and Wales
- The purpose of the present evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of Pact's Kinship Care Support Service (KCSS) in terms of its impact upon carers, prisoners and their children. This evaluation draws on quantitative and qualitative data gained from the prisoner mothers, their kinship carers and a small number of children; from Pact's staff and other related prison staff, professionals and members of allied organisations. Its key findings are summarised in the following paragraphs.
- The overall numbers of service users reached over a recorded 12-month period was just under 3000, with two thirds of those cases being ongoing to some degree. Service users had wide-ranging characteristics, care arrangements and requests for help or advice, with the highest area of need being for information about visits and the prison regime. On arrival at the prison, mothers needed to be reassured that their children had someone looking after them. Monitoring systems were in place but systematic ethnic monitoring and service user feedback remained to be developed.
- Qualitative interviews and satisfaction scales showed that the KCSS services within Children's and Family Visits, group, one-to-one and telephone support were very highly rated and appreciated, most respondents saying that they did not know from where else they could have obtained this kind of support. Relevant prison staff also valued the KCSS role and its contribution to prisoner stability. Information leaflets required revisiting. Referral, signposting, partnership and policy development work were strong.
- The maintenance of family ties is generally recognised as constituting a key factor in successful prisoner resettlement. Overall, evidence from this evaluation indicates a high need for the Kinship Care Support Service, which has proved extremely effective in contributing to such maintenance through support to prisoners, their children and kinship carers, with some evidence of successful resettlement outcomes. These findings strongly point to the need, not only for its continuing funding at Holloway, but also for its extension across the female prison estate and to primary carers in male prisons.

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Pact's Kinship Care Support Service at HMP Holloway

1. Background and Research Context

1.1 HMP Holloway is a local female prison for adult and young women. It is the second largest female prison in Europe and occupies a site in urban North London. Its total population capacity is 501 and, in common with local prisons across the country, it experiences the difficulties of high population turnover. Holloway opened in 1852 as a prison for men and women and became an all-female prison in the early 20th century. The prison was rebuilt during the 1970s and 1980s in a style designed to meet the perceived needs of women prisoners, a hybrid between a prison and a hospital; it contains a mother and baby unit. Its accommodation is split between single rooms and multi-occupancy dormitories. Black and ethnic minority women make up around 56% of the population, foreign national women about a third of the population, and there are around 70 young women on the young offender units.

1.2 The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) has been running the Visitors' Centre at Holloway since 1998 and the First Night in Custody service since 2000 (see evaluation by Grimshaw *et al.*, 2002). Pact's support services were praised in a recent prison inspection report (HMIP, 2010:5), but the contract to deliver them passed to Spurgeon's in September 2011, following a competitive funding tender exercise, while the prison has taken the decision to abolish the First Night Service. Pact established the Kinship Care Support Service at HMP Holloway in 2009, with the aim of providing support and advice to the families and friends who care for the children of women prisoners – otherwise known as 'kinship carers'. The Service also supports those prisoners and helps to facilitate contact between them, their children, and their children's carers. The Service is managed by one worker, employed for 21 hours per week, and so offers support based on identified need rather than to every prisoner and kinship carer. Funded by London Corporation's City Bridge Trust, this pilot Service, currently due to end in March 2012, is unique across the prison estate in England and Wales.

1.3 Primary child carers (usually mothers) who are remanded or sentenced to custody, may not always have been able to anticipate their incarceration, or to make provision for the care of their children in such an event. In extreme cases this can even mean that they do not know the whereabouts of their children or whether anyone is looking after them. A study which interviewed 1,400 women serving their first sentence in Holloway found this to be the case for 42 of them and that a further 19 children under 16 years were looking after themselves (Revolving Doors Agency, 2004).

1.4 More often, however, children of incarcerated mothers are known to be being cared for by family and/or friends – kinship carers – who find themselves in unfamiliar circumstances, and may need additional support. The Kinship Care Support Service's own internal survey in 2010 found that, at Pact's First Night Service, 33% of arriving women reported having children, 59% of whom

were being looked after by kinship carers, frequently grandmothers, sisters and aunts, but also by other family or friends.

1.5 Of the estimated 18,000 children separated from their mother through imprisonment each year, only 5% remain in their family home once their mother has been sentenced; only 9% are cared for by their fathers, as many as 25% by grandmothers, and 29% with other family or friends; 12% are in care or with foster parents (Corston, 2007). Research conducted in the United States has produced some evidence to suggest that children placed with kinship carers fare better educationally and developmentally than those placed in other forms of care, and are less likely to become offenders themselves; grandparent carers in particular have also spoken of the personal benefits of feeling young again, a sense of pride in the children's accomplishments, and being given a second chance at parenting (Hairston, 2009). However, as that same US research and other UK-based research studies on kinship care have also found, there are several possible types of cost to becoming a kinship carer: emotional and relationship (including with the natural parents); financial; physical (particularly for older carers); and anxiety about the future (Broad, 2007, 2010; Farmer & Moyers, 2008).

1.6 The Kinship Care Support Service seeks to support those in the prisoner/child/kinship carer triangle (see **Figure 1**) who may be experiencing some of the difficulties outlined in the paragraphs above. In so doing, it contributes to the aims of the Children and Families Pathway (Home Office, 2004), wherein the maintenance of family ties is believed to be a significant factor in future desistance from offending (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Savolainen, 2009).

2. Evaluation Purpose

2.1 The overall purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of Pact's Kinship Care Support Service (KCSS) in terms of its impact upon carers, prisoners and their children. This evaluation report provides indicative evidence of the Service's achievements and of its development needs.

3. Research Method

3.1 This report assesses the quantity and quality of the KCSS work in relation to the following research objectives:

- Numbers and types of Service Users receiving support - derived from KCSS monitoring data
- Key areas of support provided - derived from KCSS records, a small number of KCSS case studies, and observation of support services

- The extent to which the KCSS has been able to develop advisory and information resources, such as leaflets, the homework club, Facebook support, a family-friendly website, and inter-agency/partnership work – derived from documentary and website information and conference attendance
- The extent to which kinship carers, prisoners and their children feel supported and their situation improved - derived from satisfaction scales and qualitative interviews with a sample of this user group
- The extent to which key prison staff consider the KCSS has impacted on their work, on prisoner welfare and attitudes, and on safer custody – derived from qualitative interviews or questionnaires, according to their convenience
- Relevant Pact staff members' own views and experiences of the role, including training and development needs – derived from in-depth interviews with them

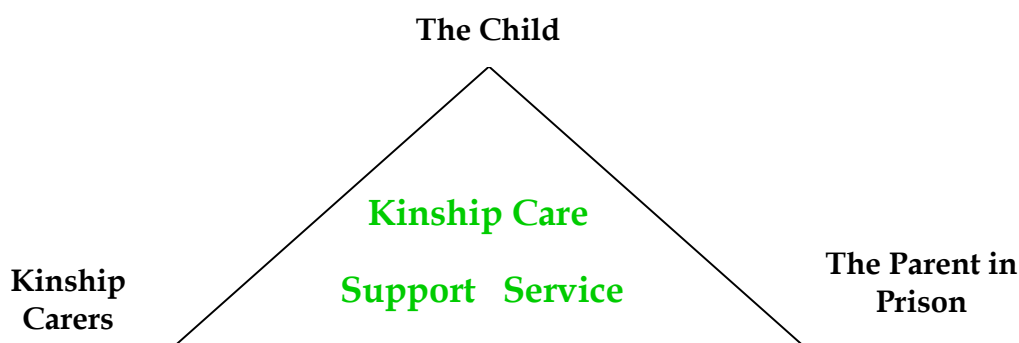
3.2 The quantitative data in **Tables 1 - 3** of this report are based on KCSS information returned to the Research Team covering 2 years from August 2009. Prior to the present post-holder's arrival in August 2009, these data were not systematically recorded. It is also important to note that contacts with service users may sometimes be too brief to be able to elicit all the information required, especially where it is personal and potentially sensitive, such as that relating to ethnic origin. Thus, to that extent there exist some gaps, but the data collected are sufficient to be able to identify overall trends.

3.3 Over a 9-month period, between February and October 2011, a total of 63 qualitative interviews and 4 questionnaires (according to respondent convenience) were conducted with all relevant Pact and prison staff; with a sample of prisoners, kinship carers and children; and with other relevant professionals and members of allied organizations. (See **Appendix A** for an explanatory breakdown)

4. Characteristics of the Kinship Care Support Service

4.1 The Kinship Care Support Service triangle: The KCSS characterises its service as operating within a prisoner/child/kinship carer triangle, with the child at the apex, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The Prisoner/Child/Kinship Carer triangle



The KCSS information leaflet for the service users depicted in this triangle sets out the following aims:

- To provide support and advice to family members and friends who care for children whose parents are in HMP Holloway
- To help resolve conflicts between the carers and parents of the children
- To help facilitate contact between children and their parents in prison

The leaflet explains that, in pursuit of these aims, it offers a range of support as follows:

- Someone to talk to about any concerns you have as a carer
- Help to explore how these concerns could be resolved
- Access to relationship counselling (with Marriage Care)
- Links to a wide range of local and national services

The Kinship Care Support Manager is based in the Visitors' Centre just outside the walls of HMP Holloway. On those premises, one-to-one help is offered face-to-face when kinship carers bring children to visit their mothers; a carers' support group and a homework club for children is also offered, together with telephone and email support. Within the prison the Manager makes the service directly available to prisoners through Pact's First Night Service to new arrivals (due, at the time of writing, to be abolished because of Ministry of Justice cuts to the prison system), through contact with the prison wings, and a presence on the Resettlement Unit.

4.2 Recipients of Kinship Care Support: Between August 2009 and August 2011 inclusive, the total period which has been monitored at the time of writing, 1,675 prisoners and 1,312 kinship carers, a total of 2,989 service users are recorded as having received support from the KCSS. About two thirds of these cases require some degree of continuing contact. Referrals to the KCSS have largely come through the First Night Service (which addresses immediate needs of arriving prisoners, seeking also to reduce risk of self-harm and suicide), to a lesser extent from the Visitors' Centre, other prisoners, prison staff and proactive work by the KCSS Manager. In most of these cases, the children are supported through the work done with adults. However, those children who come on the monthly Children's Visits and the quarterly Family Days, and those who attend the Homework Club, have the opportunity to receive direct contact with the KCSS either during the visit or in the Visitors' Centre.

4.3 Table 1 below, shows the frequency and types of issues for which prisoner and kinship carer service users sought advice over the last year.

Table 1: Number and types of issues for which service users sought advice; September 2010 – August 2011

TYPES OF ISSUES FOR WHICH ADVICE SOUGHT	FREQUENCY OF REQUEST TYPE
Advice/Counselling for Children	16
Legal Advice	50
Family Disputes	17
Parenting Classes	24
Sources of Community Support	108
Housing	35
Benefits	37
Schooling	32
Visiting & Prison Regimes	603
Other issues	549
TOTAL ADVICE REQUESTS	1,471

It can be seen that the most frequent issue about which advice was sought related to information about the Visiting and Prison regimes. These are the matters about which both prisoners and kinship carers, particularly those encountering prison or Holloway itself for the first time, are most bewildered. They find it difficult to get the practical information they need, especially that relating to contact between mothers, children and their carers. The KCSS has supplied this information by phone to carers and in response to referrals from the First Night Service and other prison-based referrals.

'Other issues' constitute the second highest frequency of requests. The topics about which prisoners and carers seek advice are extremely diverse and so far have not been able to be fully captured on a monitoring system. This is an area which remains to be developed. The third most frequent request surrounds the need for community support by kinship carers, who often feel isolated and occasionally scapegoated in their role as carers of prisoners' children. Advice on legal

matters, including different options for care arrangements, is also quite often sought, mainly by kinship carers. The KCSS has produced a series of information leaflets outlining these options (see **Section 4.6**). Other, less frequent, but nonetheless sometimes urgent requests, relate to benefits, housing, schooling for the child, and advice on what to tell the child about a mother's imprisonment or where counselling may be obtained for a distressed child. Family disputes may also arise, where mothers and carers cannot agree about issues relating to the child's care, and the KCSS explicitly offers help to resolve these disputes. Finally, inmate mothers may seek advice about undertaking prison-based parenting classes.

4.4 Table 2 below shows the frequency and types of referral/signposting by the KCSS over the last year to other agencies and groups for further, more specific support.

Table 2: Number and types of referral/signposting by KCSS to other agencies and groups; September 2010 – August 2011

TYPES OF REFERRAL/ /SIGNPOSTING	FREQUENCY OF REFERRAL/SIGN-POSTING TYPE
Family Learning in Prisons (LLU+) *	21
Adfam/Drug Support **	4
Prison Chaplaincy	1
Family Intervention Project ***	1
Family Mediation	2
Family Rights Group	111
Grandparents' Association	81
Housing	19
Local Children's Centres	26
The Place2Be ****	10
Public Protection	58
Other agencies/groups	358
TOTAL REFERRALS/SIGN-POSTING	692

* Provides family learning activities on Children's Visits

** Provides support for drug management/reduction – service now withdrawn

*** Provides counselling for families **** Provides school-based support

According to the type of enquiry, some types of referral are made directly to other agencies or groups, while 'signposting' is the process of providing the information service users need to gain further help suited to their particular needs. The KCSS Manager reports that referral/signposting is done on every single case that comes to the Service's attention; this is a major part of her workload. Again, the scope for this activity is diverse and so 'Other agencies/groups' form the most frequent category – an example of this would be a service user being referred to a local church group where someone speaks their language. The second most frequent category is the Family Rights Group which advises families whose children are involved with social care services,

which also chairs the Kinship Care Alliance, and with both of whom the KCSS has formed a close partnership. The third most frequent category is the Grandparents Association, since many carers are grandparents, and the KCSS has both involved the Association in the running of the Kinship Care Support Group, and provides signposting to the Association and its helpline for carer Grandparents visiting the prison. The fourth most frequent category is that of Public Protection within the prison, to which referrals are made when there are child safeguarding issues. The final relatively frequent source of referral is that of Family Learning in Prisons which, in Holloway, is run by a company called LLU+ which provides family learning activities on Children’s and Family Visits (see **Section 4.7**). Again, KCSS and LLU+ have worked closely together, and it is clear that referrals to and working with partners is a main focus and strength of the KCSS.

4.5 Table 3 below shows the extent of direct services provided by the KCSS to service users over the last year. As is apparent from this and the preceding Tables, statistics on the ethnic backgrounds of service users have not so far been systematically collected. A pilot exercise during 2011 revealed some limited data, but this activity needs considerable further development if reliable evidence of equitable service to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is to be obtained. Likewise, more systematic service user feedback needs to be put in place.

Table 3: Number and type of direct services provided by the KCSS to service users; September 2010 – August 2011

TYPES OF DIRECT SERVICE	NUMBER OF OCCASIONS SERVICE USED BY INDIVIDUALS *
Children & Family Visits	323
Kinship Care Support Group	58
Kinship Homework Club	24
One-to-One Support	384
Telephone Support	402
TOTAL DIRECT SERVICES PROVIDED	1,191

* NB: some individuals use more than one service; some use the same service more than once

As **Table 3** above shows, considerable use is made of the range of direct services offered by KCSS within its ‘triangle’ of support (see **Figure 1**). These are outlined below in order of their frequency of use:

- **Telephone Support:** Types of telephone support sought and received range from straightforward information provision about prison visits and procedures, through passing urgent messages between prisoners and carers, advice about what to tell children, providing generalized emotional support, to relevant agency referral for matters of prisoner or family physical/mental health or child safeguarding.

- **One-to-One Support:** This face-to-face support covers broadly the same issues as in telephone support, but is, of course, more immediate and personal, benefiting from the KCSS Manager's presence in the Visitors' Centre, in the Extended Children's and Family Visits, and at key points across the prison. Ongoing records are kept by the KCSS Manager on all cases.
- **Children's Visits & Extended Family Visits:** Both of these facilities constitute 5-hour visiting periods, organised by Pact, with a KCSS presence, in a more relaxed atmosphere than ordinary visits. They run from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. and women have to pay £1 to help cover costs. Family Visits are held quarterly, and can be attended by children and accompanying adults (usually kinship carers) to a maximum of 4 visitors. The prisoners have to have Enhanced status. Children's visits are held on the second Saturday of each month. Mothers can apply for both kinds of visits after they have been in Holloway for 4 weeks, and are on Standard or Enhanced regimes, after which they will be risk-assessed by the prison's Public Protection Unit. Acceptance is on a 'first come, first served' basis (contentious among some of the women who feel it should be on the basis of identified need), but recently the maximum number of mothers allowed these visits has reduced from 30 to 20, on the grounds of insufficient prison officers to supervise children, (though this is intended to be the responsibility of the mothers and is not regarded as a problem by KCSS, Pact and other involved staff).

Family Visits are held in a Family Room, whereas Children's Visits are held in the much larger multi-purpose hall (which also doubles as the gymnasium) where there are a variety of family learning activities run by LLU+. Families can also swim together in the prison pool, though this is not always open, which can be disappointing for children. Light refreshments and lunch are provided. Children's visits are for mothers and children only, and are advertised as 'an opportunity for mothers to spend some quality time with their children. The aim of the visit is to maintain family ties by providing a relaxing and sociable environment for parents and children'. Mothers are expected to supervise their children 'at all times'. These visits are particularly valued for their length and relative 'normality', especially by prisoners, carers and children who find the shortness and formality of ordinary visits, and fact that women can't leave their seats during them, distressing. In some cases, families do not use them for this reason.

- **Kinship Care Support Group:** This group, run in partnership with the Grandparents' Association, is for carers who have brought children to the prison for the Children's Visit, but who do not go into the prison with them. They can go into the Visitors' Centre, where they can obtain light refreshments, information and advice, and also attend the Support Group, facilitated by the KCSS Manager. The group tends only to be attended by small numbers, and often the same people, but is valued for the mutual support opportunities it provides to kinship carers.
- **Kinship Homework Club:** This is available on Tuesday afternoons during term-time between 4.00 and 6.00, when the KCSS Manager offers support and encouragement to children needing to do homework on their way into an evening visit. Out of term, it

becomes a 'drop-in' centre. The Homework Club is advertised as helping 'to promote **fun learning** and address issues that children might be facing. The kinship carers are also given the opportunity to talk or just relax'. Only small numbers of relatively local children, again often the same ones, attend this facility, since it is too far for many to travel on a Tuesday afternoon after school. However, this also is valued by kinship carers for the learning opportunities it provides to children.

4.6 Information, training and networking: In addition to providing the services outlined above, the KCSS manager has devised and produced a wide range of information leaflets about them and, in collaboration with the Family Rights Group, has also created a series of lucid fact sheets, setting out the legal position, rights and responsibilities of kinship carers with the following titles: Jargons and Abbreviations; Residence Orders; Special Guardianship Orders; Private Fostering; and Understanding Parental Responsibility. These, together with a wealth of other information and resources for kinship carers, are available on the family-friendly Kinship Care Support Service website (see **Reference** section), where web-links to other relevant sources of advice are also provided. A further source of internet information with a friendly blog, case studies and relevant links appears on Facebook, where it is also likely to reach a younger audience. Two research respondents mentioned that their daughters had looked at this site. The KCSS Manager also recruits and trains volunteers, and attends relevant training to meet her own development needs. She has also made presentations about the service at a number of conferences and criminal justice forums. Thus, the service is not only delivered, but given a high external profile, which affords access to existing and potential users and professionals, and opens up further networking and partnership opportunities.

An area which may need revisiting is that of the leaflet about the KCSS, the format for which was devised before the current Manager took over the role. It contains inconsistencies with other KCSS documents about its aims (see **Section 7.4**) and provides quotations from four grandmothers rather than a spread of family and friends. Although the photographs in the leaflet represent a range of skin colours, it is perhaps unfortunate that the one on the front cover is of a white blonde mother and child when such a high proportion of prisoners and carers are from black and minority ethnic groups. The photograph of the KCSS Manager is taken against the light and so is not very clear, despite being cheerful! The leaflet could perhaps clearly list the range of services that the KCSS provides as, when presented with such a list in the evaluation interviews, some respondents who already knew about the KCSS were nevertheless surprised to learn of some services they hadn't known were available, such as counselling for children. Further developments might include a separate leaflet for prisoners, more tailor-made to their immediate, medium and long-term needs relating to the care of their children. Finally, leaflets could be more readily available on Visitors' Centre tables on visits days, rather than on a rack which people might not see, and also could be distributed to prisoners and carers during the visits themselves. Prison staff may need further assistance to understand their contents and thus encouragement to distribute them to those who may benefit from them.

4.7 The KCSS and Family Learning (LLU+) at Holloway: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has highlighted the importance of family learning in prisons as a means of promoting family literacy, language and numeracy, recognizing that this has the potential to

contribute not only to the strengthening of families, but to the prevention both of prisoner recidivism and the intergenerational transmission of offending (NOMS, 2005). There is, therefore, a clear rationale for the involvement of the KCSS in this activity which, at Holloway, is run by a company called LLU+ (very recently changed to 'Learning Unlimited') which has been based at London Southbank University, and provides family learning activities on Children's and Family Visits (for further detail see Folarin *et al.*, 2011). Funded for 3 years by the Big Lottery, it is due to come to an end in early November 2011, after which it is due to be taken over in some form by the Adult and Community Learning Services for Camden and Islington Council. LLU+ has been committed to involving all stakeholders in the planning for its work on extended visits and KCSS, the Pact Visitors' Centre staff, and the Children and Families Pathway Lead have all worked in partnership to set up and sustain this activity. The KCSS Manager and Family Learning tutors have sat in on each others' sessions, and the former's support to prisoners and carers has been described by the latter as 'invaluable' (see **Section 7**). Mutual referrals are made between KCSS and LLU+, and KCSS service users speak appreciatively throughout this evaluation of their access to LLU+ and its benefits to them and their children.

4.8 In summary: Based, largely, on documentary evidence, this section has set out the main characteristics of the KCSS. It has described the range of work carried out by the Service, its array of referral sources and targets, and the numbers and types of clientèle it serves. In addition, it has recounted the intensive development activity in relation to information leaflets, fact sheets, websites, training, criminal justice policy campaigning, internal and external project presentation, networking and partnership work. Monitoring is an area requiring further development, particularly that relating to BME prisoners, kinship carers and children. Service user feedback systems also need to be put in place. However, given the huge KCSS workload described in this section, the fact that so much has been achieved in 2 years, effectively by one person in 3 days per week, the visible progress and achievements are impressive. It is clear that the KCSS indeed occupies the centre of the triangle (**Figure 1**) which seeks to support and hold together the prisoner mother, the kinship carer, and the primary focus of this endeavour, the prisoner's child.

5. A View from Prisoner Mothers and their Children

5.1 The interviews: Semi-structured interviews, lasting around 45 minutes, and focusing on their experiences of the Kinship Care Support Service, were held with twenty two prisoner mothers. Two of these interviews were conducted jointly with the relevant kinship carer, one being the prisoner's daughter and one the prisoner's mother (See **Section 6** on the views of Kinship Carers). Three mothers were interviewed twice and their perspectives of KCSS over time obtained. Eight children from five families were also interviewed (See **Section 5.19**). Prisoner mothers were either interviewed on the Resettlement Unit or during their visits on Children's or Family Days. Where possible, Pact staff pointed out the mothers/families the KCSS worked with, but it was effectively a matter of chance which prisoners were present on these occasions. To that extent, the interviews constituted a random selection and could be said to be reasonably typical of prisoner users of the KCSS. Researchers approached the women, explained the purpose of the research and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. Almost all agreed but, given the nature of the visiting arrangements and environment in particular, some interviews were conducted in the presence of other adults or children (with the respondents' agreement), some contained interjection from others, and some were interrupted by lunch or play, and returned to later on. Prison-based research always bears the limitations of compromise with the exigencies of the prison system. Key findings from these qualitative interviews are set out in the remaining paragraphs of this section.

5.2 Characteristics of prisoner service users: Only adult women were interviewed with ages ranging from early twenties to mid-forties. In addition to two who were on remand, their offences included fraud (5 cases), forgery, possession of false documents, burglary, running a brothel, immigration offences, assault, drug offences, supply of firearms and murder. Their custodial experiences ranged from a few weeks/months on remand, through to Life imprisonment. The numbers of their children ranged from one to six. As **Table 4** below shows, these women came from a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds which were, of course, reflected and multiplied in those of their children.

Table 4: Breakdown of Self-defined Origin of Prisoner Mother Respondents (in order of frequency)

SELF-DEFINED ETHNIC ORIGIN	NUMBERS (n = 22)
White British	4
Nigerian	4
Black British	3
Jamaican	3
Chinese	2
Ghanaian	1
Greek-Irish	1
Latvian	1
Mixed Race	1
Polish	1
Somalian	1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	22

Table 4 above shows that four of these respondents (18%) define themselves as White British, three as Black British, and that the remaining eighteen (82%) constitute a wide spread of other ethnic categories. Although this is not a representative sample, and Holloway contains large numbers of foreign nationals, it is worth noting that the proportion remains relatively high in a national context of 27% BME prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2010). Clearly the BME population is being reached here, and vigilance about monitoring KCSS practice in this area would ensure that there is evidence of the Service's accessibility to this group.

5.3 Types of kinship carer: **Table 5** below provides a breakdown of the family and friends who constituted the kinship carers of these women's children.

Table 5: Breakdown of Prisoner Mothers Sample of Kinship Carers (in order of frequency)

TYPE OF KINSHIP CARER ACCORDING TO RELATIONSHIP WITH PRISONER MOTHER	NUMBERS
Mother	8
Sister	3
Sister(s) and child's father	3
Foster parents (through Children's Services)	2
Husband	1
Mother, sister & cousins	1
Sister & friend	1
Adult daughter & son	1
Adult daughter	1
Friend	1
TOTAL KINSHIP CARE TYPES	22

It is clear that the children of these women were in a wide range of kinship care situations. Maternal grandmothers constitute over one third of this sample, hence the helpfulness of the KCSS partnership with the Grandparents' Association. Sisters play a key part in over a further third of cases though, interestingly, often in combination with other sisters, the children's father or friends. Here we see kinship care in the form of co-operative groups looking after prisoners' children. Adult children also feature as carers. It is apparent, and perhaps not surprising that the carers are predominantly female, though some appear to be facilitating and supporting the involvement of the children's father. Two children were living abroad with extended family, and their mothers were being helped with telephone contact by Hibiscus (a charity supporting foreign national prisoners) with whom KCSS works closely. In two cases, children had to be placed with foster parents but, with the help of the KCSS, were maintaining contact with their mothers.

5.4 Childcare arrangements on day of arrest or sentence: Of the 22 women interviewed respondents, 16 (72%) had anticipated their possible imprisonment and had made prior arrangements for the care of the children should this come to pass. The remaining 8 (18%) however, had not expected or believed that they would go to prison and their children's care had to be arranged hurriedly by Police, Children's Services or unprepared family members or friends. Some quotations illustrating a range of these women's experiences of kinship care arrangements on arrest or day of sentence, appear below.

The children carried on living at home with my husband.

I was expecting to go to prison and signed my children over to my sister with the custody sergeant on arrest.

I have a 9 month old baby with me in the Mother and Baby Unit here, and my 2-year old and 8-year old are cared for by their Nan, Aunt and cousins. They all live together, so they made arrangements among themselves.

My sister was in the house when I was arrested, so arrangements were made by default. My sister is only in her early twenties. I asked for the older one to go to a family who live 10 minutes away. He needs an environment with a man he can respect. He's known the family all his life.

I was on a suspended sentence. I wasn't sure if they'd impose it, but I arranged for my Mum to have them the night before. I got the sentence and she's been looking after them ever since.

I was arrested in the house and they took me and my little girl to the Police Station. My friend came with us and took the child and is looking after her. But the friend has her own children and they go to different schools, and I'm waiting to hear if my daughter can still go to her own school where she is settled.

We had a fire in our flat and were homeless for 6 weeks. Then we went to a meeting about housing and they arrested my husband and me for benefit fraud. I knew nothing about it but I think he had put my name on some of the papers. After this, I got so depressed at the thought of going to prison that I couldn't talk to anyone, my children included and so we didn't make any arrangements for them. We both got sent to prison and Social Services (sic) just came and took the children into foster care.

This range of experiences shows that, where prisoner mothers already had stable kinship circumstances, these could continue in the form of care for their children, some having been thought through and pre-arranged, but others stepping into the breach at short notice and sometimes creating problems such as continuity of a child's schooling. There could also be funding and other problems arising from the fact that the prisoner mother and child had lived in different local authority areas to that of the new carer. In most of these situations, the women reported that the KCSS Manager provided one-to-one advice, made phone calls to the carers to check on the welfare of the children, (which greatly reassured them and helped them to settle at Holloway), advised on matters such as the legal requirements of private fostering and provided information about Children's and Family Visits, from which many of them were benefiting on the day of interview.

5.5 KCSS influence on the Courts: In situations such as that illustrated in the final quotation in **Section 5.6** above, the lack of pre-planning means that officialdom in the form of Children's Services has to step in. In this particular case, the mother's depressive state was a contributory factor; this and the fact that both parents were imprisoned meant that a 2-year old and a 9-year old were thrown into a traumatizing loss experience. The KCSS was able to facilitate contact between prisoner and foster parents, and to advise on visiting arrangements for both mother and father in prison. However, if children's needs and rights under the UK-ratified United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) were to be considered and catered for by Courts, this situation might have had a different outcome. Recognising this problem, the KCSS Manager has contributed to a new awareness-raising programme to courts, led by Pact in alliance with other campaigning organizations. Posters have been produced which target families and friends carers in court waiting areas, defendants in cells, duty solicitors, and sentencers. A web resource, hosted by the umbrella organisation, Action for Prisoners' Families, has also been developed with links for kinship carers who need urgent information as a consequence of unexpectedly being left with the care of a child or vulnerable adult dependent.

Pact's Chief Executive commented: *This work would not have happened without the KCSS Manager. She has worked on the links, consulted families, advised on the posters. Also, because of her, we joined the Kinship Care Alliance, and this gave us a network to plug into.*

Thus, the KCSS provides not only direct help to service users, but draws on that experience to identify issues that require much broader action and contribute to the development of criminal justice policy and practice.

5.6 Number of KCSS contacts with the prisoner mother sample: The number of contacts, all face-to-face, between the women in the sample and the KCSS manager is shown in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Number of KCSS contacts with the prisoner mother sample (n = 22)

Number of contacts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Responses from sample	3	5	5	2	1	1	-	1	-	1	4

The figures above are, of course, taken from a modest if relatively random sample of prisoner mothers, who had been at Holloway for periods ranging from 1 day to 6 years. Thus, it was to be expected that their access to and contacts with the KCSS would vary in number. The three who said they had had no contact were approached for interview on a Family Visits day, when logistics prevented prisoners who had had such contact always being pointed out to the researchers. It was informative, however, to learn from these interviewees that either they knew about KCSS but did not need help, or did not know but had the KCSS/Pact presence pointed out to them so that they could ask for help, or indeed that they possibly had been helped but were confused as to which personnel belonged to which part of the prison system. This latter was, in fact an issue which recurred in interview from time to time. It would benefit from some time being devoted to the possibility of further clarification, but the fact was that it did not really matter to inmates who offered them the help they needed, as long as someone did. It can also be seen that the cases involving two or more contacts constitute just over two thirds of the sample, in line with the KCSS overall monitoring data. It should be emphasized here that many cases only require simple information, for example, about visiting and prison procedures, but while the initial contact may

be brief, it will often necessitate a further phone call to relatives or referral to other agencies, so that almost no enquiry can be seen as constituting a one-off process. As **Table 6** above also shows, at the other end of the spectrum, where ten or more contacts have been made, some prisoners need ongoing emotional support from the KCSS. The two quotations below provide examples of the helpfulness to the prisoner mothers of both short and long-term support.

I am here from another prison on accumulated visits. It's disappointing because they have just reduced the ordinary visit times, but these (Children's) Visits let you spend more time and she (KCSS Manager) comes round and gives you information and offers to help. There is nothing like this in the prison where I'm serving my sentence and I think people really need it.

My Mum has been looking after my daughter for the past 3 years now. I didn't need any encouragement to keep in touch with both of them, but there have been tensions, and the KCSS has been what has held us together and helped us to sort out problems and situations we hadn't expected to be in. The Children's and Family Visits are brilliant and so are all the LLU+ activities – my daughter loves them. I wish she could come to the Homework Club too, but we live too far away.

The first mother appreciates the access to information and offer of help, and contrasts this favourably with the situation in her own prison, where no comparable service exists. The second mother is serving a long sentence and greatly appreciates the ongoing emotional support she can draw on, as and when new challenges arise in her relationships with her daughter and her mother as kinship carer. At the same time, she and her daughter also benefit greatly from the practical support offered within the extended visits and from the Family Learning activities which the KCSS' partnership work facilitates.

5.7 First contact with the KCSS: **Table 7** below shows the way in which the mothers in this sample first came into contact with the KCSS. The range of points of such contact shows that the service is well-publicised at strategic points in the prison and elsewhere, including other agencies and the KCSS website, or combinations thereof. However, one of the women did suggest it could be better-advertised on wings and landings, though this is often a function of too many leaflets and papers crowding out the notice boards. Many women welcomed the First Night service, which the KCSS Manager often attended, and the immediacy it offered of being able to make contact with children and families. On the other hand, one woman felt that when prisoners have just arrived, they are not sufficiently receptive to be able to make good decisions about such contact and could perhaps benefit from a follow-up visit on the wing the next day.

Table 7: Type of first contact between prisoner mothers and the KCSS (in order of frequency)

TYPE OF FIRST CONTACT WITH KCSP (n = 22)	NOS.
Through First Night Service	4
Requested help from KCSP staff after reading letter/leaflet	4
On an extended (Children's or Family) visit	3
On Resettlement Unit	2
On prison Induction	1
On prison Wing	1
Parenting class	1
Referred by Hibiscus (charity addressing special needs of foreign national prisoners)	1
Requested help after accessing Pact/Kinship Care website on prison internet	1
Other Prisoner referral	1
Not applicable *	3
TOTALS	22

* 3 members of the sample who had not had contact with the KCSS

5.8 Importance of KCSS to prisoners, their children and kinship carers: All those prisoners who had used the KCSS service said that this was their first experience of being helped or advised about the care of their children whilst in prison. All members of the sample were asked to rate the importance of such a service on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 = not at all important and 10 = extremely important. **Table 8** below depicts these ratings.

Table 8: Prisoner mothers' ratings of importance of KCSS service to prisoners, children and kinship carers (n =22)

<i>Not at all important..... .. Extremely important</i>											
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A*
Prisoner mother ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	19	1

* N/A = Not answered

Apart from one respondent who, not knowing much about the service, chose not to answer this question, it is apparent that these women, who are very familiar with the problems and issues which arise from the fact that their children need to be cared for by others while they are in prison, rate the importance of the KCSS service very highly indeed. Two short-term and a longer-term prisoner provided illustrative comments, the first two having moved from high anxiety at their first interview to a much more settled state at the second, following ongoing KCSS help with contact with their children and their foster parents (the latter often being difficult to bring about) and, in the first case also with her imprisoned husband.

I am so happy she (KCSS Manager) talked to me, and she supports me, and she's always there for me all the way.

I didn't see my 2-year old for 5 weeks after I came in here. But first Mr 'Y' (Children & Families Pathway Lead) helped me and then the Social Worker, who has been relentless in her determination brought him, at first once a week and more recently twice a week, though his father (who is married and has several other children) has brought him in today. (NB: Children's Visits take place on a Saturday, when Social Workers are unlikely to be working). On the first occasion he was really upset and cried all the time, wouldn't look at me, wouldn't come to me. He was really mad at me because he thought I had left him. But because of all the Social Worker's efforts, he is now much happier with me. The KCSS has helped through making phone calls to the Social Worker to liaise about visits. The landing officers refuse to do any of this – they are not very kind.

She helped me to tell the children why I was in prison. She advised me not to lie to them and I took her advice. The support she gives to these women, especially after the visits when the children have gone and they're upset is really great. She takes the trouble to go round and talk to everyone and that goes a long way in here.

5.9 Children's progress in kinship care: When asked how they felt their children were getting on both at home in the kinship care setting and at school, women in the sample described a range of situations. Most were reasonably happy with the way their children were being looked after at home and progressing at school. However, there were some exceptions, and it should also be

borne in mind that there is evidence to suggest that imprisoned parents tend to be over-optimistic about their children's welfare, as set against the children's self-report, partly because it is difficult for them to contemplate their behavior having caused their children unhappiness (Boswell & Wedge, 2002). Two examples of mothers' anxiety about children's schooling, with which they felt the KCSS had helped them, especially through liaison and referral work appear below.

Initially, there was a bit of a setback when everything happened. He (15-year old son) is very intelligent. He needs monitoring and routine. The school could tell something was wrong. There was no-one to make sure he did any work. I asked the KCSS Manager to call the school. The school sent a letter to me through her. Then they put a plan in place to help with his work. They put him on report for a couple of weeks. It should have been longer but he did so well he came off.

The situation got to him (12-year old). The Police took his computer, the one he did his homework on and so he couldn't do it. He gets detention because he hasn't done his homework, though he is happy there with his sports. The KCSS referred my husband to the CAB ((Citizen's Advice Bureau) regarding ID, because the Police took everything and he had nothing to show at the Job Centre. They were helpful. I was very low when I came in here because I was worried about my children. They (KCSS Manager and Children and Families Pathway Lead) offered me help and advice. I feel much better now. I know there is help for my family while I'm here.

5.10 Usefulness of KCSS help and advice: The women in the sample had sought help in the same range of categories as those set out in **Table 1** above – that is to say Visiting and Prison regimes, advice/counselling for children, sources of community support, legal advice, family disputes, housing, benefits, schooling and parenting classes. Unsurprisingly, however, the preponderance of enquiries surrounded the prison system. When asked whether they had found the help or advice they received useful, all of them said 'Yes'. Further to this, when those who had availed themselves of direct KCSS services were asked to rate the helpfulness to them and (where applicable) to their children of those services, these ratings were extremely high, as **Table 9** below demonstrates. The two who scored 6 for the extended visits did so on the grounds that timing and frequency could be improved, but these matters were not in the gift of the KCSS. Nonetheless, all the ratings were in the top half of the rating scale, and 91% of these were scored at the maximum figure of 10, a high accolade for the KCSS.

Table 9: Prisoner mothers' ratings of helpfulness to them and to their children of direct KCSS services they had participated in, where 1 = not at all helpful and 10 = extremely helpful (n =22)

RATING SCALE	<i>Not at all helpful..... .. Extremely helpful</i>										
	No rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Helpfulness of Extended Children & Family Visits to self (n=18)	1	--	-	-	-	-	2	--	--	1	14
Helpfulness of Extended Children & Family Visits to child/ren (n=18)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16
Helpfulness of one-to-one support to self (n = 12)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	11
Helpfulness of one-to-one support to child/ren (n = 12)	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Not applicable (n = 3)	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RATING TOTALS	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	48

The direct services to prisoner mothers only included the extended visits and one-to-one support, whereas for carers and children it also included the Kinship Care Support Group, the Homework Club and Telephone Support (See **Section 6**). It should be noted that, because they are sometimes confused by the large number of prison-based personnel with whom they interact, some prisoners and carers may not always have realized that KCSS organized the Extended Visits, so may not have included them in answering the above questions, though researchers had clarified where necessary.

5.11 Referral to other organizations or professionals: Since referral is an important part of the KCSS role, the prisoner mother sample members were asked whether the KCSS had referred them

to other organisations or professionals for more relevant or specialised help. In some cases, more than one answer was given. Two had not needed a referral. Two women were unable to remember whether this was the case, but others answered in the categories depicted in **Table 10** below, also indicating whether they had found the advice from the referred sources helpful or not – which, with one exception, they all had. Appreciative comments were made about LLU+ and Hibiscus.

Table 10: Referral and extent of helpfulness to other organisations & professionals

REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS OR PROFESSIONALS (n = 15)	NUMBERS	ADVICE/HELP USEFUL OR NOT?	
		YES	NO
Family Learning in prison (LLU+)	6	6	
Adfam/Drug Support	2	2	
Prison Chaplaincy	2	2	
Counselling service	1	1	
Prison parenting class	1	1	
Children's ('Social') Services*	1	1	
Hibiscus	6	6	
Probation	1		1
Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)	1	1	
Prisoner informed about referral options but did not need them	2		
Not applicable (n = 3)	3		

*Respondents often refer to the more recently created Children's Services as 'Social Services'.

5.12 Difference KCSS advice or help has made to prisoners and families: Members of the prisoner mother sample were asked if the advice or help they had received from KCSS has made any difference to them, their children, or their wider family members.

Apart from the 3 to whom it was not applicable, one person did not answer this question. **Table 12** below shows the overall responses.

Table 11: Difference KCSS advice or help has made to prisoner mothers, their children and other family members (n = 18)

Difference to Service User	15
Difference to prisoner's children	10
Difference to other family members	7

Clearly, members of this sample considered that KCSS help had made a difference, either to themselves, their children, and/or, to a lesser extent, their other family members. The following quotations illustrate some of their reasons for saying this, which ranged from the practical to the emotional:

Because we have more time to see each other. More physical contact.

Through Children's Visits, I and Mum have contact with the KCSS and are reassured to know that the service is there.

It's such a relief to know through them that my daughter is still with a friend and is OK.

Obviously, I know my baby's not going to forget me.

She has helped to sort my Mum's VOs (Visiting Orders) out.

Only in the fact that I know there's help. I tell other people and new prisoners about whatever she (KCSS Manager) says.

*Seeing my kids. It's something big. It's very important. At least I won't be thinking 'What are they doing?' It's made me more strong to see that I can do it – see my kids and not worry so much about how I feel, but more about how **they'll** feel.*

My husband didn't know where to turn. I'm the one who asked KCSS to tell him where to go. Now he knows his rights, he's looking to go back to work and is seeking a nursery for the small one.

The Family Learning (LLU+) was very useful. It helped me to help my daughter. It was excellent

5.13 Maintenance of contact between prisoner mother and kinship carer: Respondents were asked how important they felt it was to maintain contact with the person/people looking after their children. On a scale of 1 – 10 where 1 = not at all important and 10 = extremely important, they universally rated the importance of this contact at 10. Thus, whatever the KCSS could do to further this contact was seen as crucial by these women.

5.14. Helpfulness of KCSS in encouraging maintenance of kinship contact: Respondents were asked whether the advice or help they received from the KCSS had encouraged them to maintain

contact with the children’s carer and/or with their children. Their responses in **Table 12** below show this to have been the case, but that the greatest encouragement appears to centre on the relationship between the prisoners and their children whose welfare is, after all, paramount in this situation.

Table 12: Helpfulness of KCSS in encouraging maintenance of kinship contact

ENCOURAGEMENT BY KCSS ABOUT CONTACT (n = 22)	YES	NO
Between prisoner & carer	12	
Between prisoner & children	15	
Not applicable*	6	

*Applies to 3 who had not used KCSS & 3 who said they needed no encouragement to maintain kinship contact

The range of quotations below illustrate the kinds of things that had changed within these contacts as a result of the KCSS involvement. However, the first quotation also shows what problems could persist when prisoner mothers did not know what the KCSS could offer:

When my son was going through a bad patch at school, I didn’t know they could help. He would say, ‘I don’t care because my Mum isn’t here’.

She could phone my children’s foster parents and come back and tell me how they were doing and behaving. She told me that my daughter was happier at school since I could talk to her on the phone, and this made me feel better.

Nothing changed but it’s really important for the prisoners to keep in touch. It makes them less depressed. If not, I feel depressed and I’m thinking about self-harm. I did think about self-harm when I couldn’t get in touch with my kids, but now I feel stronger and I’m off medication.

The Children’s Visit has really helped by spending time in a relaxed, informal environment which the children really enjoy and look forward to. It’s excellent.

5.15 Extent to which prisoner mothers consider the KCSS meets its 4 aims: The 19 prisoner mother respondents who had received KCSS services were well-placed to assess how far, in their experience, they would say the KSCP meets its aims. One person did not feel she knew enough to be able to answer this question, hence the total responses coming from 18 women, on the rating scales set out in **Tables 13a, b, c & d** below.

Table 13(a): Extent to which the aim to support and advise families & friends who care for children whose mothers are in Holloway is being met: the prisoners' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Prisoner mother ratings (n = 18)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	14

Table 13(b): Extent to which the aim to provide links to a wide range of sources of support is being met: the prisoners' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Prisoner mother ratings (n = 18)	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	13

Table 13(c): Extent to which the aim to ease the process of contact between children and their mothers in prison is being met: the prisoners' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Prisoner mother ratings (n = 18)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	16

Table 13(d): Extent to which the aim to help to resolve any conflict between children’s carers and their mothers in prison is being met: the prisoners’ view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>											
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A*
Prisoner mother ratings (n = 18)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	6	6

* These prisoners had not experienced kinship conflict situations with which they felt they needed help and so did not feel they could offer a rating

It can be seen that most of these ratings are extremely high. In respect of **Table 13(b)**, the extent to which the aim to provide links to a wide range of sources of support is being met, there are a minority of scores at 5 and 6, and this may well be because the full range of possible links and referrals was not known.

5.16 Prisoner mothers’ levels of satisfaction with the KCSS: Members of the sample were further asked to rate their satisfaction levels with the service. Their responses appear in **Table 14** below.

Table 14: Prisoner mothers’ satisfaction levels with KCSS

<i>Not at all satisfied..... Extremely satisfied</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Prisoner mother ratings (n = 18)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	12

Again, these ratings clearly show that satisfaction levels with the KCSS are extremely high. Taking this together with the four Tables 13, it is apparent that the Service has made a real impact on those who have used it, and importantly, has helped women, their children and kinship carers to maintain their ties. However, it would be impossible to do full justice in this report to the full range of the KCSS Manager’s work. In order to provide a more comprehensive flavour of the kind of service provided, two short case studies are included at **Appendix B**.

5.17 Availability of alternative sources of help and advice: The sample of prisoner mothers were asked whether they knew of other sources of help and advice to which they could turn. Almost all said that if the KCSP hadn’t been available, they didn’t know of anyone else who might have offered them the help or advice they needed. Several commented that they could not get

this from prison officers. Only 4 were in touch with Probation Officers, of whom only 2 felt they received any support from this source, and there was lack of clarity as to whether they could expect to do so (NB: Although Probation Officers used to offer through-care to all prisoners, they are now only authorised to do so for those serving more than 12 months imprisonment, and transport costs for prison-visiting are only approved for specific purposes such as conducting a Home Leave or Parole assessment).

My PO who is a Lifer Manager in here is helpful.

My PO helped to get me into the Mother & Baby Unit at another prison.

I know my PO well but he hasn't been here to see me.

The Probation Officer just carried out a pre-sentence report. She did not offer any help or advice. She passed the case on to Social Services about my sister having the children. Social Services didn't offer any help or advice.

5.18 Suggestions of prisoner mothers for improvement to the KCSS: When prisoner mothers were invited to make suggestions for improvement, most felt that the only real need was for more staff to do what one person was currently doing in 3 days a week. One or two also thought that the services could be better advertised:

They could advertise their services more I think they are doing an excellent job so far because the parents are so happy to see their kids. Before the first visit I was crying. Afterwards it made me a bit stronger. They should be increasing the amount of people (like KCSS Manager) coming in.

Other than this, people mostly referred to things which would not be in the control of the KCSS or Pact staff, such as the need to have extra extended visits now that these only allow 20 instead of 30 inmates to have visits. A return of the bouncy castle was mentioned, as was the need to ensure the swimming pool is open when children come with their swimming things and are looking forward to it. Some time spent in the fresh air – 'garden time' – during the 5 –hour visits was suggested by several women. Some also felt that the Children's Visits would benefit from more (non-LLU+) activities, such as face-painting and tying up balloons, as it was sometimes difficult to keep children occupied for a 5-hour period. The need for a more efficient application system for the extended visits was also referred to:

We have to fill in an application form for these Children's Visits, and mostly it takes forever to reach Pact. So what we have to do is try to catch them whenever they come up to the wing. That system needs to be improved. The officers need to keep a log.

However, as far as the actual KCSS was concerned, prisoners were generally full of praise and appreciation for the service and its Manager. Her helpfulness, professionalism and swiftness to respond across the kinship triangle (see **Figure 1**) were often remarked on, as were her cheerful disposition and respectfulness towards both prisoners and their relatives and friends. When invited to make any last comments, these very positive observations were made:

I would like to thank them for the services they provide.

It was a relief to meet someone who took the time to listen to my worries and needs – and she was very quick to get back to me.

They're really good. Their support means a lot to the women.

Pact is really good in this prison. KCSS is doing a really good job.

I don't trust Social Services (sic) but I can really trust KCSS Manager to be truthful, and also that she won't report things I say to her in confidence. It's a very good service.

They're doing their best here. The KCSS Manager is on her own and the need is very great. She and the project are great. They are good – they give a great service. She is always working, but she's still listening.

5.19 A view from the children: While a small number of research studies have been able to record the views and experiences of children about a parent's imprisonment, for reasons of sensitivity this is often difficult to do, as most of them note (see, for example, Brown, 2001; Boswell, 2002; Boswell & Wedge, 2002). However, the children's voice tends to be the one least heard in the prison setting and so this study asked some simple questions of 8 of them either in the Visitors' Centre before Children's or Family Visits, or during the visit with their mothers. The KCSS operated in all these settings. The questions centred around their feelings about visits and other forms of contact with their mothers, and their hopes and fears for the future. Parental/carer permission, and an understanding of the children's belief about the reason for their mother's location, was obtained before interviewing them. The ages of the children ranged from 4 years (a brief interview) to 14 years. Five were female and 3 male; 5 were white British and 3 from black ethnic minorities. All names have been changed:

Anita, aged 4, living with her Aunt: *I like to see my Mum. I miss her. We can play here (refers to the LLU+ activity). I want her to come home.*

Jemma, aged 6, living with her maternal Grandmother: *I like coming here. We get to go swimming (NB: sometimes the prison pool is not open on these visits because of shortage of staff or other practical reasons, and children who have brought their swimming things with them, and look forward to sharing this activity with their mothers, are very disappointed). Mum being away from home makes me sad. But she sends me letters and cards and CDs and rings me up. I get on fine at school.*

Robert, aged 9, & Scott, aged 10 (giving joint responses) living with their Stepfather: *We look forward to these special visits with our Mum. We're a bit upset that she's away from home. At school, every teacher is saying 'Your Mum's gone away' in lesson time and we and she feel upset about this. We do get letters and cards and we can send them back and photos. She phones us after school almost every day.*

Clare, aged 10, & Tina, aged 13 (giving some joint responses) living half the week with their Aunt and half with their Father: *We look forward to these visits. But we don't like the way the*

Prison Officers treat you. They look down on you and stuff. It's unfair our Mum being here. Everyone was shocked by her sentence. We can bring flowers for Mother's Day, but visits are not often enough and phone calls are too short. We want her to come out so we can be normal again. We just need her home.

Tina: *Only three people at school know about my Mum. The others wouldn't understand. I have counselling.*

Serena, aged 11, living with 2 adult siblings: *I like to come to these special visits because I get some time to spend with my Mum and talk to her. I'm OK with her being here because I can see she's OK. We can phone and send each other letters and cards and I have a video of her at home. My school doesn't know my Mum's in prison.*

Jacob, aged 14, living with his maternal Grandmother: *It's good coming here and doing these activities with her (again refers to the LLU+ activity). I don't like her being away and I don't know when she's coming home, but I'm used to it now. We exchange letters and cards and she phones a lot. Only one teacher and one friend at school know and school is mainly OK. I hope she'll come home but I try not to think about it and just get on with my life.*

There is little surprise in these children's comments. They express a predictable range of emotions and attitudes from sadness to stoical acceptance, appreciating what contact they can have with their mothers while wanting more, with some having uneasy or discriminatory experiences at school as a result of their mothers' incarceration. Their voices are a reminder of what the KCSS and its partner services exist for. While none of these children have reason to have a close understanding of the KCSS and its role, they are indirectly benefiting from the partnerships of KCSS with bodies such as LLU+ and the Grandparents' Association, and from the support received by their mothers and carers which enables the extended visits to take place and, in some cases, also helps to resolve family disputes.

5.20 In summary: The quantitative and qualitative material in this section has demonstrated that prisoner mothers with a wide range of characteristics are being reached by the KCSS. They have a variety of kinship care arrangements for their children, some having been planned for and others organized in crisis mode after their arrest or sentence. They have been helped by the presence of the KCSS Manager, who can phone, and simultaneously offer support, to their kinship carers in order to reassure the women that their children are being cared for. The children themselves have reminded us of their centrality to the KCSS endeavour, how sad it almost always is for them that their mothers have been removed from their everyday lives, and the difficulties at school and at home that they are left to negotiate. As well as responding to service users' immediate and ongoing practical and emotional problems, the KCSS Manager has been able to contribute to a much broader campaign to obviate some of these problems, through partnership and consultation work. In the meantime, there is no doubt that she has made a difference to the wellbeing of these prisoner mothers and to some of their children. The next section will present the views of the kinship carers on the quality and effectiveness of the Kinship Care Support Service.

6. A View from Kinship Carers

6.1 As for the prisoner mothers, semi-structured interviews, lasting around forty five minutes, and focusing on their experiences of the Kinship Care Support Service, were held with twenty four kinship carers. Two of these interviews were conducted jointly with the relevant prisoner mother, one being the carer's mother and one the carer's daughter (See **Section 5** on the views of Prisoner Mothers). Four other interviews were held separately with prisoner/carer 'pairs', but this occurred by chance rather than design and did not reveal any disparity in perception of the KCSS. Two further interviews were conducted in sequence on the telephone with two sisters sharing the kinship care of a third sister's children. Five interviews were conducted face-to-face either in the Visitors' Centre, or during a Family Visit and it was a matter of chance which carers happened to be present and available for interview. The remaining nineteen interviews were conducted on the telephone, taken from a list of 90 kinship carers who had made use of the KCSS at some point between August 2009 and August 2011. All carers on the list were telephoned, unless for some reason it appeared inappropriate to do so; all those to whom the researchers were able to get through, and who consented, were interviewed. To this extent, the interviews constituted a random selection. Included in the interview sample was one father, visiting with his child, who had received KCSS support despite not officially being eligible to do so, and one carer who brought the prisoner's children to Children's and Family Visits, but was not aware of the KCSS' involvement in these, or of the other services she could be offered. Eight of the telephone interviews were with carers whose children's mothers had been released and these outcomes are reported in **Section 6.13**. Key findings from these qualitative interviews are set out in the remaining paragraphs of this section.

6.2 Characteristics of kinship carer service users: Members of this sample were caring for a total of 37 children of prisoners whose custodial experiences ranged from a few weeks/months on remand, through to Life imprisonment. The periods during which they had been caring for these children ranged from one month to 5 years with 58% having occupied this role for up to one year, 25% for up to 2 years, and 17% for between 2 and 5 years. The numbers of children they were each caring for ranged from one to four, with ages spanning from babyhood to 16 years. As **Tables 15** and **16** below show, a preponderance of carers were looking after one child (though, in a few cases, the child had siblings who were placed elsewhere), and the most frequent age group for these children (49%) was that of 5 – 10 years, primary school age. However, two carers were looking after babies, and the total figure for pre-school age children was 32%, just under one third, likely to require many more hours of direct care than those of school age. The three in the 11-17 year old group were all teenagers (the oldest being 16, as noted above). Several of the younger kinship carers also had children of their own to care for; in one case, a carer was looking after 3 of her imprisoned sister's children and 3 of her own. Three carers had taken over care of prisoners' children after the latter had spent periods in foster care, one in particular having had to 'fight' to get the child out and placed with her. Situations like these, with children often becoming disrupted and confused, could be especially challenging to carers. Similarly, for older carers (i.e. the children's grandparents), the process of 'starting again' with child-rearing could be physically and mentally demanding and support of the kind that the KCSS could offer in all these situations, was much needed.

Table 15: Numbers of prisoners' children looked after by kinship carer sample

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN (n=37)	NUMBER OF KINSHIP CARERS (n= 24)
1	14
2	5
3	4
4	1

Table 16: Ages of prisoners' children looked after by kinship carer sample

AGES OF CHILDREN (n=37)	NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN AGE GROUP(n= 24)
Under 1 year	2
1 – 4 years	10
5 – 10 years	18
11 – 17 years	3

Table 17 below sets out the relationships of this sample of kinship carers to their prisoner relative/friend. It can be seen that 12 (50%) of carers were the mothers of prisoners, and 6 (25%) were sisters. Three were daughters, one a male partner, one a friend, and one an ex-mother-in law. However, as in the prisoner mother sample (**Table 5** above), women carers predominate.

Table 17: Relationship of kinship carer sample to prisoner mother (in order of frequency)

RELATIONSHIP OF CARER TO PRISONER MOTHER	NUMBERS OF CARERS (n=24)
Mother	12
Sister	6
Daughter	3
Partner	1
Ex mother-in-law	1
Friend	1
TOTALS	24

Table 18 below sets out the range of self-defined ethnic backgrounds of these carers. They are slightly less varied than those of the prisoner mothers, with more White British people in the sample (but see caveat at Table 18 * footnote below). As noted earlier, the sample was obtained by chance and not by design, but the easier accessibility of this group may suggest that there is more work to do to reach BME carers.

Table 18: Breakdown of Self-defined Origin of Kinship Carer Respondents (in order of frequency)

SELF-DEFINED ETHNIC ORIGIN	NUMBERS (n = 24)
British or White British*	11
Nigerian	3
Jamaican	2
Welsh	2
Irish	1
Scottish	1
Chinese	1
African	1
West African	1
Tanzanian	1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	24

*Where interviews were conducted by telephone, it was not always possible to ascertain whether respondents who answered 'British' were black or white British (none having replied 'Black British', and so difficult to assess whether they would come into the BME category)

6.3 Childcare arrangements on day of arrest or sentence: Of the 24 kinship carers, 13 (54%) had been led to anticipate the possible imprisonment of the children's mothers and were expecting to care for their children. Five already had the children living with them, two because of

the mother's drug addiction or mental health condition, and three in anticipation of the mothers' imprisonment. One had made these arrangements with her daughter a year before her likely imprisonment so as to ensure that Children's Services, who were involved, would have given permission in time. Others had been asked to care for the children closer to the event, a few at the last minute. Of the remaining 11 (46%), arrest or imprisonment had not been anticipated, and (apart from 5 cases, where the children and sometimes their mother, had already been living with them) the carers had had to make very swift arrangements when contacted by Police, Children's Services or occasionally by the women themselves phoning after sentence from court or the prison. This sample of kinship carers' early experiences generally sounds more fraught than those described by the prisoner mother sample – partly perhaps because, as suggested earlier, the mothers needed to believe that their children's kinship care situation was stable, and partly because this sample of carers emanated from a group with problems and needs many of which had come to the attention of the KCSS. Some quotations illustrating a range of these carers' experiences on arrest or day of sentence, appear below. Their kinship status is given in relation to the prisoner mother.

Mother, sharing care with the children's aunt: *It was sudden. Someone from the Police Station just called me and said she'd been arrested, so I sorted it out with the Auntie and the kids*

Sister: *When it happened, I went to the Police Station, and said I was their Aunt. They said it was OK and I just took them.*

Friend: *My friend (the prisoner) rang me at 7.00 a.m. to say the Police were at her flat. She asked me to go and collect her son (aged 9) till she got back from the Police Station. Neither of us at that point thought she was going to be taken into custody. I spoke to the Police and told them it would take me 2 hours to get there. They said this would be OK and they would leave him with a tenant. When I got there, he was alone in his mother's flat and not with the tenant.*

Mother: *The Police Station phoned me at work and asked me to collect the children. I said I'd be there in 2 hours, but they wouldn't wait, and by the time I got there, Social Services (sic) had taken them into foster care. It took me 3 months of shouting and screaming to get them out. The 3-year old is still very confused and insecure.*

Daughter, aged 18: *We weren't expecting our Mum to go to prison, but we were all living in the same house anyway, so the children just stayed there. My older brother is disabled, so I care for him too.*

Mother: *We didn't think she was getting put away. She had a serious head injury as a teenager and has brain damage. The solicitor said she wouldn't go to prison. But her child was living with me anyway.*

Mother: *No arrangement. I had an idea, but didn't know she was going to be sentenced, so I was left with the baby, with no hope, no support. My other daughter went to Court with her. Because the child was not at risk, Social Services weren't bothered. I used up all my annual leave. My other daughter's university studies were all messed up. We had to support each other.*

(Male) partner: *It was amicable. I had had him overnight and took him back to his mother, unaware till then of her offence. I just took him home again. No-one got in contact with me though. I could have been anyone. Eventually, a Health Visitor came round.*

Sister: *The children's care is shared with my sister. She lives nearer the school, so they live with her during the week and I have them for weekends and school holidays. We arranged it all before their mother went to prison.*

These quotations highlight a range of experiences, from those in the Police Station, or Court, where care was arranged hurriedly and the children's best interests not always safeguarded, to that of a very young adult thrown into a caring responsibility, to those where carers were already looking after the children, or could easily step into the breach. Certainly the majority of them demonstrate the need for Police and Courts to introduce systems which ensure that the child's needs are immediately identified and that s/he is properly protected, in line with the current campaign being promoted by the KCSS and Pact. It is only after women enter prison that the KCSS can begin identifying and helping their kinship carers, by conducting news from them to the prisoner mothers about the children's welfare, advising on the legal position (for example, two were applying for Special Guardianship Orders), and providing information about Children's and Family Visits, the Kinship Care Support Group and the Homework Club.

6.4 Number and type of KCSS contacts with the kinship carer sample: Of these 24 sample members, 15 had received face-to-face contact with the KCSS Manager, 15 had had telephone contact, and 5 reported receiving letters and/or leaflets in the post. Some had experienced combinations of these contacts. The number of contacts between the kinship carers and the KCSS manager is shown in **Table 19** below.

Table 19: Number of KCSS contacts with the kinship carer sample (n = 24)

Number of contacts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Responses from sample	1	8	3	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	5

As with the prisoner mother sample, these figures represent a relatively random sample of kinship carers, whose relatives/friends had, in this case, been in prison for periods ranging from 1 month to 5 years. Thus, it was to be expected that their access to and contacts with the KCSS would vary

according to the length of time their prisoner mother had served. The person who said they had had no contact had not known about the KCSS but the children had benefited from Children's and Family Visits and, again, there may have been some confusion about the status of attending personnel. **Table 19** also shows that the cases involving two or more contacts constitute just under two thirds of the sample, in line with the KCSS overall monitoring data. Again, it is the case that many of these service users only require basic information, for example, about visiting and prison procedures, or to pass on news about the children's welfare, but this often precipitates the need for the KCSS Manager to feed back this information to the anxious prisoner and/or to make a referral to other agencies, so that most enquiries engender several more actions. As **Table 19** above also shows, however, where ten or more contacts have been made, some carers need ongoing emotional support from the KCSS and this applies particularly to those caring for children while their mothers serve very long sentences or Life. The two quotations below provide examples of the helpfulness to the kinship carers of both short and long-term support.

Mother of short-term prisoner: *She (KCSS Manager) rang me a couple of times. We haven't met. She sent me some forms about transport and explained it to me. She was very helpful.*

Mother of long-term prisoner: *She introduced herself to me when I first came to the Visitors Centre. She encouraged me to join the Carers' Support Group and this has made a real difference to me. It made me speak to others about what happened and how I feel, which otherwise I wouldn't have done. It's also good to hear about other people's situations and realize you aren't on your own. Also the Children's and Family Visits are a godsend to us, and my granddaughter loves the family learning activities with her Mum.*

The first carer appreciates the provision of information she didn't have, and access to advice on the telephone. The second carer's daughter is serving a long sentence and derives great benefit from the ongoing emotional and practical support she can draw on in the Kinship Care Support Groups, which are held in the Visitors' Centre during Children's Visits. She, her daughter and granddaughter also greatly appreciate the support and the Family Learning opportunities within the Children's and Family Visits, where the KCSS has a presence.

6.5 First contact with the KCSS: **Table 20** below shows the way in which the kinship carers in this sample first came into contact with the KCSS. The main points of initial contact appear to be either through the prisoner mothers asking the KCSS to telephone their kinship carers, or through KCSS approaching them at the Visitors' Centre, or through the carers having read a letter or leaflet explaining what the Service does. As noted at **1.2**, this service lacks sufficient staffing for it to be based on anything other than identified need, but that fact is that there may well be other kinship carers needing support who don't know about the service either because they don't visit the prison or because their prisoner relative/friend hasn't had reason to contact the KCSS or suggest they call the carer.

Table 20: Type of first contact between kinship carers and the KCSS (in order of frequency)

TYPE OF FIRST CONTACT WITH KCSS (n = 24)	NOS.
Prisoner mother asked KCSS to phone carer	7
Approached by KCSS staff in Visitors' Centre	7
Requested help from KCSP staff after reading letter/leaflet	5
Through First Night Service	1
Contact suggested by another kinship carer	1
Through carer support group in another prison, attended by KCSS*	1
Through Pact website at Visitors' Centre	1
Not applicable **	1
TOTALS	24

* KCSS Manager had given telephone advice to a carer whose daughter was in another prison and was invited by this carer to attend that prison's support group

** One member of the sample who had not had contact with the KCSS

6.6 Importance of KCSS to prisoners, their children and kinship carers: All but 3 carers who had used the KCSS service said that this was their first experience of being helped or advised about the kinship care process. Two of these latter, both mothers of prisoners, commented on this experience as follows:

She (KCSS Manager) introduced herself to me at the Visitors' Centre while the children were visiting their Mum. It was so good as I was having a really bad day, stuck in London for 5 hours with no-one to talk to. She became someone I could offload to about the difficulties with the children – one was just a baby when his Mum came in and the older one was very emotional and insecure. She would say 'You're doing so well – things will be OK'. I could have a good cry and know I wouldn't be judged.

My daughter had asked her to phone me about the children and I was so relieved to find out that there was someone who could tell me she was alright, what to do about visiting and what to tell the children. Then she sent me some leaflets which explained it all.

Two of those who did have previous such experience of receiving this kind of support cited Children's Services (one in conjunction with Adfam, as the prisoner mother had a longstanding drug addiction) in relation to fostering arrangements; the other carer said that Court staff had given her leaflets and a phone number to ring. The sample members were asked to rate the

importance of such a service on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 = not at all important and 10 = extremely important. **Table 21** below depicts their ratings.

Table 21: Kinship carers’ ratings of importance of KCSS service to prisoners, children and kinship carers (n =24)

<i>Not at all important..... Extremely important</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kinship carer ratings	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	19

The respondent who gave a 5 rating did so on the basis that she did not know very much about the service. It is clear, however, that the vast majority of kinship carers, whose knowledge of the service also varied according to the nature and length of their experience of it, rated its importance to those in need very highly, as indeed had the prisoner mothers.

6.7 Carers’ views of the progress of children in their care: Perhaps unsurprisingly, this group of kinship carers were less inclined than the prisoner mothers to suggest that the life with the children either at home or at school was reasonably problem-free. They, after all, were facing the daily challenges of child-rearing with these children, some of whose lives had been considerably disrupted when their mothers were taken into custody and who had to find a way to understand and cope with this both for themselves and in their school and friendship circles. While 17 (71%) of the sample, especially those with whom the children were already living or used to seeing very regularly, felt the children were settling well at home, albeit sometimes with minor behavioural difficulties, the other 7 (19%) described considerable stress both for themselves and the children. The quotations below afford examples of each situation:

Partner & father of 2-year old child whose mother was previously on drugs: *Because of how his Mum was, he’s very clingy with me so it isn’t easy. But I can look after him. He’s so young. He listens to his Mum on the phone and kisses the phone. He jabbers along. Everyone knows her in this area and what she did.*

Mother who cannot bring the child to visit because of distance: *She (3-year old girl) was in foster care in another city for a year before she came to me. She wets the bed after speaking to her mother on the phone. She says ‘It’s my Mummy coming to the door’ when she hears the bell. She speaks to her mother once a week, but sometime throws the phone on the floor. She has two parents in prison – her father is also in prison. Christmas was very hard and my other daughter wouldn’t help – she feels I don’t have time to help her with her own children.*

Though many children were said to be doing well at home, only half the sample reported few or no school-related problems:

Sister caring for teenage boy: *It's been so hard and stressful for him, but he's behaved well at home, loves playing football, and has a good support group at church. But he's been very upset at school – dreadful. He just wanted to stay out of school. But since his Mum came out 9 months ago, he's been much better, and he's seeing his Dad too. He's doing GCSEs now and he's doing OK.*

Friend caring for 9-year old boy: *At home, he coped because I was his mother's friend and he used to play with my children, so he knew them well. But school, it wasn't a good experience. I lived 15 miles from his previous home. I had no support in finding a school. I contacted my local Social Services (sic). They said they couldn't help, as I didn't have Parental Responsibility, and so the responsibility rested with Social Services (sic) near his home. But they passed the buck back to my Social Services who eventually found him a school.*

Sister caring for 3 children: *At home, they're all fine, all OK. The two big ones (aged 10 & 12) know what's happening. The little one (aged 4) thinks Mum's on holiday. The whole thing happened just before they went on the 6 weeks holiday. The one in primary school (aged 10) had a bit of a breakdown in school, so the Head does know.*

Several carers also reported that their children had been bullied at school because it was known that their mother was in prison. Even where things were working reasonably well at home, carers felt they had little or no control over this kind of thing in the school environment. These were situations where, if the KCSS Manager knew about them, she could liaise directly with Head Teachers, or with Children's Services or arrange counselling for children, as appropriate.

6.8 Usefulness of KCSS help and advice: The carers in the sample had sought help in the categories set out in **Table 22** below. The highest number of enquiries surrounded general emotional support, followed by visiting/prison regime and benefits advice. When asked whether they had found the help or advice they received useful, all of them said 'Yes', in some cases followed by comments such as:

Very useful information – very helpful. Just to know I can call and talk to her.

Very helpful advice – she was telling me about counselling and housing and help with transport.

Table 22: Areas of help/advice offered by/requested by kinship carers from the KCSS (in order of frequency)

AREAS OF HELP ADVICE SOUGHT FROM KCSS	NOS.
General emotional support	8
Visiting and prison regime	6
Benefits	6
Legal issues	4
Community support	4
Transport and costs	3
Counselling for children	3
General information (including via email)	3
Schooling	2
Housing	1
Parenting classes	1

NB: Some carers had requested more than one source of help

Further to **Table 22**, those who received direct KCSS services were asked to rate the helpfulness to them and (where applicable) to their children of those services. This did not include the Homework Club about which none of the sample group had experience, but about which KCSS partners comment in Section 7. Like those of the prisoner mothers, these ratings were extremely high, as **Table 23** below demonstrates. The person who scored 6 for the helpfulness to children of extended visits did so on the grounds that bouncy castle had been removed and the swimming pool was too often closed, not matters which were in the control of the KCSS. Other than this and, again, as for the prisoner mothers, all the ratings were in the top half of the rating scale, and 92% of these were scored at the maximum figure of 10. Put alongside the prisoner mothers' maximum figure scores of 91%, this is an extremely high appreciation level for the helpfulness to kinship carers of the KCSS.

Table 23: Kinship carers ratings of helpfulness to them and to their children of direct KCSS services they had participated in, where 1 = not at all helpful and 10 = extremely helpful (n =24)

RATING SCALE IN TERMS OF HELPFULNESS TO SELF OR CHILD/REN	<i>Not at all helpful... ..Extremely helpful</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extended Children & Family Visits - to self (n=14)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Extended Children & Family Visits - to child/ren (n=14)	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	13
Kinship Care Support Group -to self (n=4)	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	1
Kinship Care Support Group -to child/ren (n=4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
One-to-one support - to self (n = 6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
One-to-one support - to child/ren (n = 16)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Telephone support - to self (n=7)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Telephone support - to children (n=7)	-	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
RATING TOTALS	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	57

Examples of kinship carers' appreciation of the helpfulness of KCSS services appear below:

Children's Visits: *I leave the children, and go back for them and they spend some time with their Mum. They do enjoy it.*

Family Visits: *There was a balloon-maker, they got braids in their hair. There were activities in booklets. They got the bond back. I think that's really important. The longer you don't see someone, the more difficult the relationship is.*

Kinship Care Support Group: *This has made me speak to other people about the situation, where I wouldn't have done otherwise. You feel so much better to know others have the same (sometimes worse) problems than you and you listen to them and find that there are different ways of handling things. I am extremely grateful for the support I have received from (KCSS Manager) and that group.*

One-to-One Support: *She (KCSS Manager) is always there, will always talk to me, make me feel at ease. That 5 hours was the only time I got to myself in over 7 months. I always had to be strong for work and for the children.*

Telephone Support: *If she (KCSS Manager) hadn't called me, we wouldn't have known where to start. Her calling was really helpful to us.*

6.9 Referral to other organizations or professionals: The kinship care respondents were asked whether the KCSS had referred them to other organisations or professionals for more specialised help. Five carers either said 'No' or couldn't remember, especially if time had passed and the child's mother was now released. The others answered in the categories depicted in **Table 24** below, also indicating whether they had found the advice from the referred sources helpful or not.

Table 24: Referral and extent of helpfulness to other organisations & professionals

REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS OR PROFESSIONALS	NUMBERS	ADVICE/HELP USEFUL OR NOT?	
		YES	NO
Family Learning in prison (LLU+)	1	1	-
Adfam/Drug Support	1	1	-
Children's (Social) Services*	3	3	-
Family Rights Group	3	3	-
Grandparents' Association	3	3	-
Housing	2	2	-
Local Support Services	1	1	-

*Respondents often refer to the more recently created Children's Services as 'Social Services'.

6.10 Difference KCSS advice or help has made to kinship carers, prisoners and families:

Members of the kinship carer sample were asked if the advice or help they had received from KCSS had made any difference to them, their children, or their wider family members. Table 25 below shows that the main difference was to themselves and, usually because of that, to the children.

Table 25: Difference KCSS advice or help has made to kinship carers, their children and other family members

Difference to Service User	18
Difference to prisoner's children	9
Difference to other family members	2

The following quotations illustrate some of the differences carers felt the KCSS had made to themselves or the children they were looking after:

Mother: *This support was just for me for a change. My whole life has been blown apart since this happened 3½ years ago and this has helped me keep it all together for everyone.*

Mother: *A great difference to me. I could be more relaxed knowing that if I didn't hear from her (imprisoned daughter) I could call the KCSS Manager or make an appointment to see her. It was very reassuring when I met her. Just to sit here and think about them is a big headache.*

Friend: *It helped me to get Parental Responsibility.*

Sister: *It did, but emotionally. That made a difference, all the leaflets. She (KCSS Manager) told me something I didn't know about Social Services (sic). She told me to say something about care of duty (i.e. duty of care). When I did say that, they said they would pay for this and that.*

Daughter: *It's nice knowing you have a support system there if you need it. It's good support and (for me) confirmation of what you already know. I'm someone who goes and finds out, but not everybody can.*

Sister: *Just knowing I could ring any time if I needed advice about the children and also that she (KCSS Manager) is there as a link between me and my sister. I know she feels more settled because of that and the children benefit because she talks to them more happily on the phone, whereas at first, she just used to cry when she heard their voices – and then so did they!*

These comments provide a sharp flavour of the combination of emotional support, a known contact point for advice, and information to help with the range of practical and legal challenges that kinship carers of prisoners' children uniquely face, provided by the KCSS. As shown later at

6.16, many of these carers would not have known where else to turn for this kind (indeed, for most of them, any kind) of help. This is a situation also described in the evaluation of the pilot Family Support Worker Service in eight prisons in England and Wales (Boswell, Poland & Price, 2010).

6.11 Maintenance of contact between kinship carer and prisoner mother: The kinship carer respondents were asked how important they felt it was to maintain contact with the prisoner mother during the prison sentence. They rated this on a scale of 1 – 10 where 1 = not at all important and 10 = extremely important. Prisoner mothers had universally rated the importance of this contact at 10 (see **Section 5.13**). Of this group of 24 carers, 17 (71%) also rated it at 10, with the rest rating it in the top half of the rating scale. One carer described how she and her family maintained this contact, highlighting a further relatively unseen responsibility that the kinship carer takes on:

Sister: *The children talk to her on the phone just for a few minutes. She's not that well so we try our best to see her every two weeks to see she's OK. My other sister went on Saturday. She's fine, she's doing well, but we're worried about her health. She's lost her home, but she sees that the kids are fine and we're coping. It lowers the tension.*

6.12. Helpfulness of KCSS in encouraging maintenance of kinship contact: Respondents were asked whether the advice or help they received from the KCSS had encouraged them to maintain contact with the prisoner and/or between the prisoner and her children. **Table 26** below shows their responses.

Table 26: Helpfulness of KCSS in encouraging maintenance of kinship contact

ENCOURAGEMENT BY KCSS ABOUT CONTACT	YES	NOT NEEDED	NOT APPLICABLE
Between carer & prisoner	10	13	1*
Between children & prisoner	8	15	1*

* One member of the sample who had not had contact with the KCSS

Table 26 above shows that 10 members of the sample (42%) felt that help and advice from the KCSS had encouraged them to maintain contact with the prisoner mother, and that 8 (33%) felt similarly about contact between children and prisoner. However, a majority of carers (54% & 63% respectively) said that they did not need outside encouragement, as they would have maintained such contact in any event. Of those who felt encouraged by the KCSS to stay in contact and/or to promote it between the children and the prisoner mother, the following comments respectively indicate its importance for the child who is the prime casualty; for the carer for whom the prisoner mother's wellbeing can be verified by KCSS (since some prisoners will 'put a brave face' on their situation for the carers' and children's benefit); and for the mother herself whose needs the carer/daughter was so concerned about:

Mother: *Very important because the poor child doesn't know what's happened. He's innocent but he*

has to bear the consequences. These people (the ones who send people to prison) don't realise the greater part of the stress is with the family.

(Male) Partner: *I am not in touch with my partner's family, so I was reassured to learn from KCSS that she was alright in the prison. She tells me that on the phone, but she could be lying.*

Daughter: *It's been more important for my Mum. It's good. It helps her frame of mind. It's given her a focus.*

Three others who would also have stayed in contact but nevertheless felt supported by the KCSS to maintain it through difficult times made these comments:

Mother: *I would have maintained contact with my daughter and between her and her daughter without question anyway. We are all close but even so (or perhaps because of that) there have sometimes been tensions between my daughter and me, and the KCSS has helped to iron things out. It's really good to know that that service is available.*

Sister: *I would have stayed in contact anyway. I did fall out with her though. I didn't go up to visit for about 3 months and I didn't speak to her. I got her friend to take the kids up. The children kind of looked at me. She (KCSS Manager) told me to speak to her again, said she's worried and so on.*

Daughter: *Yes, but we would have done anyway. We are her children as well as me being their carer.*

Mother: *I would have anyway. But even though my daughter is not in Holloway (see Table 20) she (KCSS Manager) even helped me. She's doing an excellent job.*

6.13 Some outcomes of help from the KCSS:

As reported at 6.1 above, eight of the telephone interviews were with carers whose prisoner relative/friend had already been released for periods ranging from 6 days to 14 months. All had received some level of service from the KCSS. As far as was known, none of these women had reoffended; in 5 cases their children were living with them again; in 2 cases Children's Services were involved because of the mothers' drug-taking or psychiatric histories, but the mothers were seeing them every day, one with a view to having them home again quite soon. In the other case, it was not clear from the carer what the post-release outcomes had been. In this case, however, the mother had only served 6 weeks in custody and had had care of the child previously, so that it might be assumed that she returned to look after the child whom a friend had hurriedly stepped in to care for on the day she was taken into custody. These carers appeared happy with the outcomes for the children who had been in their care, and several praised the KCSS support which had enabled them to keep going in their role, and the prisoner and child to maintain their contact, which may well have contributed to the apparently stable family resettlement of most of them.

6.14 Extent to which kinship carers consider the KCSS meets its 4 aims: Twenty one kinship carers answered this question, two others feeling insufficiently familiar with the service to be able to take a view as to how well it was meeting its aims, and one other having run out of time to answer this set of questions. Tables 27a,b,c and d below give respondents' answers in respect of each aim on a rating scale of 1-10, where 1 = not at all well and 10 = extremely well.

Table 27(a): Extent to which the aim to support and advise families & friends who care for children whose mothers are in Holloway is being met: the carers' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kinship Carer ratings (n = 21)	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	3	13

Table 27(b): Extent to which the aim to provide links to a wide range of sources of support is being met: the carers' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kinship Carer ratings (n = 21)	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	3	13

Table 27(c): Extent to which the aim to ease the process of contact between children and their mothers in prison is being met: the carers' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kinship Carer ratings (n = 21)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	14

Table 27(d): Extent to which the aim to help to resolve any conflict between children's carers and their mothers in prison is being met: the carers' view

<i>Not at all well..... Extremely well</i>											
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A*
Kinship Carer ratings (n = 21)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	6	9

* These carers had not experienced kinship conflict situations with which they felt they needed help and so did not feel they could offer a rating

It can be seen that most of these ratings are extremely high, and all are in the top half of the rating scale except for one person who rated the first aim at 4, without further explanation. These ratings are very similar to those given by the prisoner mothers (see Tables 13a,b,c and d) and, placed together, show that, as far as the recipients of the service are concerned, the KCSS is meeting all its aims at an exceptionally high level.

6.15 Kinship carers' levels of satisfaction with the KCSS: Members of the sample were further asked to rate their satisfaction levels with the service. Their responses appear in Table 28 below.

Table 28: Kinship carers' satisfaction levels with the KCSS

<i>Not at all satisfied..... Extremely satisfied</i>											
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Kinship Carer ratings (n = 24)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	20	1*

* One member of the sample who had not had contact with the KCSS

These ratings clearly show that satisfaction levels with the KCSS are very high indeed, with 20 carers (83%) scoring at the very top of the scale. Taking this together with the very high scores at the four Tables 27 above, and the equivalent scores of the prisoner mothers, it continues to be apparent that this Service is meeting a great need on the part of kinship carers and prisoners alike, with a concomitant effect on the children being cared for. The two short case studies at Appendix B afford a holistic sense of the way in which this process operates.

6.16 Availability of alternative sources of help and advice: As recounted at 6.10 above, this sample of kinship carers felt the KCSS had made a big difference to them and their ability to manage the dynamics of what could be a challenging triangular relationship. When asked whether they knew of alternative sources of help and advice to which they could turn, all but three (one of whom cited a solicitor, one a social worker, and one who cited staff at another prison) said that

they did not. Again, like the prisoner mothers, few had any contact with Probation Officers and those who did had only received telephone contact to ask if they could house mothers on Home Leave or release. This lack of contact, or knowledge about who could help, bears out findings in many other studies of prisoners' families (Boswell & Wedge, 2002; Murray, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2007; Hairston, 2009).

6.17 Suggestions of kinship carers for improvement to the KCSS: Like the prisoner mothers, kinship carers felt that the most fundamental need was for the KCSS to be better staffed and resourced to enable it to reach more people who needed it. Their various suggestions for setting up a resource for fathers, for a young carers' support group, for outreach work in the regions, for more of everything that was already delivered, might all be possible if there were more staff with more hours to give to service delivery and development:

Mother: *Be more pushy about being here and available in order that more people benefit from the Support Group meetings.*

(Male) Partner: *Although KCSS helped me, they do not normally support fathers and I think there should be something for Dads. I couldn't find anything on the internet. Also my partner worries about what I might be up to on the outside, and this must be the same for other Dads and partners (NB: two other [black] fathers with small children encountered briefly by a researcher in the Visitors' Centre said they had no idea of where to find any support).*

Daughter aged 18: *Maybe set up a support group for young people who are also carers.*

Although this resource already exists on website links, one person suggested a booklet for children explaining what their mother is doing in prison every day, as they had been given one in a male prison, so it may be that such booklets need to be more readily on offer in the Visitors' Centre itself. There were other suggestions which only the prison system and staff could address, such as the need to deal with problems like the endless queuing up on stairs with small children; visits starting late but still ending on time; insufficient 'handover' time on Children's Visits to be able to explain what the child's current needs were, or to hear how the visit had gone at the end, so the carer would know how the child might be feeling. There is a liaison role for the KCSS here, but there is little doubt that they are aware of the problems and periodically try to intervene to improve such situations.

Like the prisoner mothers, however, kinship carers were highly appreciative of the KCSS itself and its Manager. Again, her compassion, her knowledge, swiftness of response and overall professionalism were frequently cited. Some final comments from kinship carers appear below:

Mother: *I was wonderfully surprised by the support.*

Sister: *She's doing very good work – she's hardworking down there.*

Daughter: *She's so busy, but she always helps and we trust her.*

Mother: *This service is so much needed – no-one else offers support to carers of prisoners' children. I just hope they don't try to cut it like everything else, as who would we turn to then?*

6.18 In summary: This section has set out the views and experiences of a wide range of kinship carers who were receiving support from the KCSS. The respondents came by their caring responsibilities in different ways, some already having the children living with them, others having to run the gamut of Children's Services, and still others having taken on the children unexpectedly and in a crisis situation. While these carers have a wide range of characteristics, there are (with some possible caveats) apparently fewer BME members of this sample than in the prisoner mother sample. This may be a matter of chance, but may also suggest that there is more work to do in respect of hard-to-reach BME carers. The carers themselves have recounted a variety of ways in which they have been helped by the KCSS Manager. Their ratings of the helpfulness of the Service, the difference it makes to them and the children, the extent to which it meets its aims, and the satisfaction rate with the KCSS are very high indeed. In some cases, just the knowledge that the Service was there, helped carers to get through. The eight carers whose prisoner relatives/friends had been released, reported on relatively stable resettlement of children with their mothers, mostly residential, but otherwise with daily contact, apart from one where the outcome was not clear. As far as was known, none of the mothers had reoffended. The next section will set out the views of relevant staff on the effectiveness of the KCSS from their professional perspectives.

7. Views and Experiences of Relevant Staff

7.1 Key Pact and prison staff, other professionals and members of allied organisations: This section recounts the views and experiences of personnel who have knowledge of the KCSS and its work. Interviews or parallel questionnaires were held with/received by the following: prison-based Pact staff representing the KCSS, the Family Support Worker/First Night Service, the Visitors' Centre management and Pact's overall Service Management; and two prison service staff representing the Governor grades and the Children and Families Pathway. Short interviews/questionnaires were held with/received by representatives of allied organisations: LLU+ Family Learning; the Grandparents' Association (Family Support Management, and Project Development); and Adfam (though the service is no longer funded to run at Holloway). The section examines the way in which the three stated aims in the KCSS service leaflet are carried out, beginning with the reflections of the KCSS Manager on the work which supports each aim, and followed by evaluative comments and ratings from the personnel who have had knowledge of or involvement in that section of the work.

7.2 Aim 1: To provide support and advice to family members and friends who care for children whose parents are in HMP Holloway

The work which supports this aim necessarily lies in contact with both prisoner mothers and kinship carers in the interests of the children being cared for. The KCSS Manager perceives her role as occupying the centre of the triangle of the kinship carers, prisoner mothers and their children (see **Figure 1**), prioritising the needs of the latter:

KCSS Manager: *I am in the middle, making the contacts and meeting their needs. I start with the children, and then focus on the carer or the prisoner, as required. If the prisoner is only focusing on her own needs, I will have to say 'I'll help you now, but for the future you will have to go to 'x'.*

She describes her average weekly workload as consisting of: phone calls to kinship carer families; one-to-one work with prisoner mothers; one-to-one and group work with kinship carers and children who come into the Visitors' Centre for the Kinship Care Support Group and the Homework Club; researching resources and connecting people to them; keeping case records and monitoring information; and updating the Facebook and KCSS websites. Roughly two thirds of the week (i.e. 2 days out of 3) is devoted to direct service user contact and one third to other related work. The proportion of contact type is estimated at 40% face-to-face, 35% telephone and 25% email (the latter consisting largely of referrals to other professionals on families' behalves). Direct service user contact tends to be divided fairly equally between kinship carers and prisoner mothers, and marginally less with the children, in whose interests the work is being done with the adults. However, the prison environment is one of great human need and boundaries are not always easy to maintain:

Some work is just about providing basic information; other contact is never-ending. Some of it is not

my role. Occasionally, I can end up spending 3 hours on a case that is not related to kinship care. I try not to, but I also know that if I don't, no-one else will sort out this problem for someone who is in need.

As emphasised throughout this report, limited resources require that the KCSS is based on identified need (whether by prisoner mothers, kinship carers or prison/other staff or organisations) rather than as a universal service. Both quotations above indicate the value of the KCSS having developed basic and specialised written and on-line information, and a referral process for every service user. All of these constituents contribute to the provision of support and advice to kinship carers. The Senior Service Manager also highlights the importance of the outcomes of these activities for the children and of monitoring the work which the KCSS is doing to this end:

Senior Service Manager (Pact): *She (KCSS Manager) is available in the prison, offering support and signposting to prisoners and doing the same with numerous phone calls to and from carers, tailoring information around kinship care and building up resources on the website. We meet formally every 6 – 8 weeks and informally most days. She has a quarterly work plan – for example, I ask for evidence that the website is updated, resource packs completed, and I sign them off. I also look at her casework and stats. I'm very satisfied with her work. She meets her targets and she's very creative and enthusiastic about the role. Feedback from families is so good and she gets 'Thank you' cards from them. She goes the extra mile. When someone else should be doing a particular task, but doesn't, she will do it. She also thinks out of the box and will work with the community and services externally and bring back those ideas into the prison. It's all about looking for better outcomes for children. Through these forms of support, we hope to enable children to have better outcomes in terms of their education, health, housing and general well-being. They don't usually get that support through statutory services, which is why Pact specifically fund-raised for this. It's a unique service across prisons – and it's incredible that we haven't got more such services.*

Other involved professionals comment on their experience of the KCSS in relation to its aim of supporting and advising kinship carers:

Assistant Visitors' Centre Manager (Pact): *We give a lot of referrals to the KCSS, where we learn of kinship carers who need help or advice. She (KCSS Manager) also refers non-kinship care family support needs to us. Being able to do this makes both our jobs easier. We have ad hoc meetings to make sure our liaison and link-ups are being effective. It's women who are the main care-givers and the effect on the family of their incarceration can be devastating, ripping the heart out of the whole family. They and their children's carers need information, guidance, leaflets, advice about schools and schooling – it's a key role. The KCSS Manager is fantastic, what she does and how she does it. She is so well-informed. But more hours and more staff are needed for that Service.*

Family Support Worker/First Night in Custody Link Worker (Pact): *The KCSS office is next door to ours. We make relevant referrals from women's first night in custody. We complete a 'Holloway Passport' form on them; the last question on it is 'Does your child/ren's carer need any extra support with looking after them?' If that is the case, we give them the KCSS leaflet and explain that KCSS is part of Pact, not Social Services (which can frighten women off seeking help). We go back in 10 minutes after they've read it. If they want support for themselves and/or their children's carer, we then pass the information to the KCSS Manager who goes to see them to find out what is needed.*

She does a really good job – we have really missed not being able to refer women to her at times when she has been away. We update each other during the week as to how cases are progressing. It's such an important project. Carers get blocked out. No-one thinks about them. You get a lot of grandmothers taking on the children because they don't want to see them go into care. Many have to leave their own jobs to do it. Even a short phone call from her (KCSS Manager) can make all the difference to them. Carers need to be recognised.

Family Learning Tutor: *I have attended the Kinship Care Support Group, where I knew two of the carers. Creating that space and time to share worries and concerns, laughter and tears, and give each other support was very valuable to those carers. It's good that they are also referred to other services. One grandmother was referred to a Sure Start Children's Centre and ended up doing a parenting course which really helped her with the children.*

Grandparents Association (GPA) representative (1): *I was very impressed with the Kinship Care Support Group, which I attended alternating months (with GPA rep. 2 below). The KCSS Manager provided a lovely lunch for the carers, which helped encourage them to stay on site, and a separate room where we could sit and chat. Understandably, some people were upset, and I feel sure they felt able to express their feelings and needs in a quiet closed room with others in the same/similar situation. It gave us (GPA) the opportunity to work with the carers, and either signpost them to receive specific support or information, or find out what they needed, and we were able to source and fund white goods for one grandparent, and a holiday with their grandchildren for the other person. This would not have been possible without the KCSS and the Manager, who provided tailor-made information for individuals, as we were able to, due to the fact we had the opportunity to discuss exactly what their needs were in a relaxed atmosphere.*

I rate this project very highly and have held it up as an example of good practice on a number of occasions as, without it, we would have been unlikely to have accessed these grandparents and carers who, I know, need support by the barrage of questions voiced at every meeting and who, I feel sure, have benefited from the project.

Grandparents Association representative (2): *It is my opinion that the service to Carers' groups was run in a relaxed yet professional manner. Ground rules applied and everyone treated each person's opinion with respect, as well as being respectful to each other. I was under the impression that, for those who attended, they found it to be very informative, thought-provoking, and also it brought a sense of unity. Irrespective of their diverse backgrounds, they all shared two things in common – the imprisonment of a family member, and finding themselves carers. Everyone serves the sentence and life-changing challenges. The children enjoyed the play area and the fact that their carer (on the Family Visit) was always in sight. Personally speaking, I enjoyed attending.*

Former Holloway Adfam (Drug treatment service) Manager: *I feel it to be absolutely essential for families/others of women in prison to have support in their own right. I would feel the service as a whole is excellent on all counts, as it is the only service that is available to women and their families and children within criminal justice, as was Adfam. The only other agencies that work in the prison are purely to support the women. The families really do benefit from having someone there who can support their needs and also that of their significant other on their treatment journey.*

Reducing Reoffending Governor: *I am aware of the Kinship Care Support Worker's remit and have received positive feedback from some offenders regarding the programme. Due to our high turnover of offenders at Holloway, it is not always possible to ensure that they are aware of all options and services available to them.*

The foregoing comments highlight the way in which the first aim of the KCSS is being met. The KCSS Manager describes her support role as lying at the centre of the kinship care triangle, but also acknowledges that, despite limited resources, she sometimes crosses that boundary in order to help with other unmet need. Her own Manager emphasises first that the KCSS work is regularly monitored and found to be of a high standard and, second, that the focus is always on better outcomes for the children. The other two Pact workers, and the four representatives from allied organisations, describe some very effective internal and external agency partnership work, highlighting the particular needs of kinship carers and, again, the high quality of service given by the KCSS Manager in order to meet those needs. The Governor's contribution also records positive feedback from prisoners and notes that logistics prevent all of them learning about the KCSS, a further reminder that one part-time worker cannot hope to extend the service to all who may benefit from it.

7.2 Aim 2: To help resolve conflicts between the carers and parents of the children

In respect of this second aim of helping to resolve mother/carer conflict, the KCSS Manager begins with a pre-emptive approach which affords respite to the carers:

Supporting carers to bring the children to visit, but ensuring they get a break on the extended visits, particularly the Children's Visits, where they don't go into the prison themselves, but may take the chance of a 5-hour break to go shopping, or spend part of it at the morning Kinship Care Support Group. For some carers, this is the only break they ever get from their child-care responsibilities. (These services are further discussed at 7.3).

However, direct mediation is sometime necessary where, for example, carers who live a considerable distance away from the prison struggle either physically or financially to make the journey with the children. Prisoner mothers who are desperate to see the children sometimes find this difficult to cope with, and the KCSS Manager has to explain one to the other. Members of the prisoner and carer samples had also expressed their appreciation of the KCSS' help with conflict situations (see **Sections 5** and **6**). A colleague Pact worker gave a further example of KCSS intervention in a conflict situation:

Assistant Visitors' Centre Manager: *One prisoner got really upset and difficult about her mother taking the child and wanted joint custody. But the KCSS Manager talked to them both about this and helped them resolve it. She (the prisoner) is now a quite different, lovely character and is going to a residential drug rehab. Centre after she leaves prison. Then she'll apply to have her child back.*

If conflict appears to be ongoing, referrals will be made to Family Mediation, Marriage Care,

prison-based counselling or, if the children are affected, to Place2Be, Young Minds, or to head teachers, whom the KCSS Manager usually finds supportive. A member of the prison staff commented:

Pathways Manager, including the Children and Families Pathway: *The KCSS does a lot to resolve conflict between mothers and carers – it's a very sensitive area. She makes a lot of links with wider support organisations who can help more, like the Grandparents' Association, who made a very good link with her blog. But sometimes it's a struggle as some boroughs won't take responsibility.*

Overall, then, the aim of helping to resolve conflicts between carers and parents is implemented via a three-pronged approach of prevention, direct intervention/mediation and referral to appropriate agencies though, as the last commentator points out, this latter depends on the referral recipients being willing to take responsibility for this task. An encouraging development is that Local Authority Statutory Guidance on Family and Friends Care support has recently been developed, an exercise into which the KCSS Manager has had an input and in which the KCSS and Pact are cited (Department for Education, 2011). As a consequence, Local Authorities were charged with putting such a policy in place by 30th September 2011. Material to children of prisoners being cared for through an informal arrangement with family or friends is the following passage:

Where support services are identified as necessary to meet the child's needs, these should not be withheld merely because the child is living with a carer under an informal arrangement rather than in a placement with a foster carer or with a person with a residence or special guardianship order or an adopter (Dept. for Education, 2011:10)

Thus it is possible that some support for the KCSS at Holloway can now be expected to come from the borough of Camden and Islington and that such support for children living in informally arranged settings can help to clarify the legal position of the carer and, thus, obviate some of the potential for mother/carer conflict.

7.3 Aim 3: To help facilitate contact between children and their parents in prison

Aside from the indirect facilitation which is effected through liaison between prisoners and carers, the primary way in which this contact is facilitated is through the KCSS' work to plan, deliver and staff (in partnership with other staff) the Children's and Family Visits, and the Homework Club. These arrangements have been described at various points in this report (notably **section 4.5**) and will not be repeated in detail here. In respect of this third aim, the KCSS Manager describes her approach:

We're looking at behaviour that works. People know I'm there for families. Where I know the family, I can pass information on to the Children and Families Pathway Lead. So, for example, where 3 out of 4 children are brought to a visit and one remains at home feeling left out, this doesn't augur well for mother and child resettlement later on and so it needs intervention. I would love to be able to spend more time on longer-term resettlement myself, and to be able to visit families at home, but there isn't

the time in 3 days a week!

Since the KCSS teamed up with London Southbank University to bring Family Learning into the prison, I think we've been able to improve the quality of contact between children and mothers. I do the booking in now and have themes for both sets of visits. We observe National Reading Day and get books from the Libraries for this. I devise a room plan for the whole day and we always have an area for reading.

The above quotations describe both an individualised approach to facilitating contact between children and their mothers, and also a more strategic approach tied in to Family Learning. The LLU+ Tutors explained that they gently encourage mothers to interact with their children as much as possible on these visits and do activities together, putting into practice what they have learned on the Family Learning course. The researchers witnessed several mothers (including a lifer) doing art/craft activities with their children, such as drawing, cutting and sticking, making cards. Some mothers read with their children in the Book Corner, which the KCSS Manager had described setting up, and some played games like badminton. It was nevertheless apparent that some mothers found it hard to sustain this interaction and, especially on the Family Day, some preferred to engage with other family members. This highlighted a need for further strategic support and guidance to help them to understand the importance of interaction with their children and this is something that it would be worth the KCSS taking forward with the new Family Learning providers. In relation to the current KCSS role, however, one of the LLU+ Tutors made the following comment:

Family Learning Tutor: *She worked closely with me, dropping in to Tuesday afternoon sessions, and sharing information and experiences. The Mums in that group found her support invaluable. I can remember one particular Mum who was very upset and felt very much helped by her (KCSS Manager).*

Although it did not prove possible for researchers to contact families whose children had attended the Homework Club, another Pact staff member described the KCSS role in this and in the other settings involving children and mothers:

Family Support Worker/First Night in Custody Link Worker (Pact): *She (KCSS Manager) is always here on Children's Visits and Family Days. She has links with the carers and the prisoners know her. It's probably the only time you'd get all three together with her and she interacts with all of them. She does the Homework Club on a Tuesday, when I am usually around. I saw a father and daughter come in at 3.30 for a 5.30 visit. She sat down and did some maths and colouring with the child while the father went out for a break.*

In respect of the Homework Club, the KCSS Manager is keen to provide educational experiences for children, many of whom had experienced disrupted schooling due to having moved house/area to live with their kinship carers. Given the potential for intergenerational offending of prisoners' children and the known protective factor which good education provides (Wilson & Reuss, 2000), this is extremely important. The Club was not an original objective for the KCSS project but has evolved in relation to the needs of a relatively small number of children. It tends to be seasonal and, like most other KCSS activities, needs extra resources. The KCSS Manager is due to take over

the Parenting in Prison (PIPS) programme now that Spurgeon's has taken over Pact's other services. In terms of service development, she sees this as an opportunity to make the Homework Club part of the prison system and for the prisoner mothers to be involved in it.

Overall, it is clear that the KCSS is a key presence in settings which seek to promote contact between children and their imprisoned mothers, that the importance of the educational element in these settings is recognised, and that strategic development in a number of areas is both desirable and on the KCSS Manager's agenda.

7.4 Links with other groups and resources (a fourth aim)

Although this fourth aim is set out in the Pact leaflet for service users as a means of support to meet the other 3 aims, it appears in other KCSS documents, including the 'Logic Model' which describes the Service's objectives (i.e. the 4 aims), its related inputs and outputs, as an aim in its own right. This needs to be clarified (see also **Section 4.6**). The fourth aim is described as being to 'Provide links to a wide range of local and national service groups and resources for support'. Since this activity has constituted a *leitmotif* throughout this report, and within the other 3 aims described above, there is no need to labour the evidence at this point. It is clear that, for reasons both of workload management and provision of the most appropriate kind of support, the researching of links and resources, and signposting and referring service users to them is fundamental to the modus operandi of the KCSS.

7.5 Relationships with prison staff: Although relationships with prison staff are not a focus of the project, the mills of the prison system grind slowly and sometimes contrarily, and it is as well for any service to invest in building positive relationships with staff in order to 'oil the wheels' which have to turn to meet the service user's needs. However, the understanding and commitment of some prison staff to the needs of prisoner's families and kinship carers do not appear to be great and, as some of the mothers and carers in the evaluation sample have noted, leave much to be desired in relation to the Visits arrangements, none of the remedies for which lie in the gift of the KCSS. A 2010 Inspection Report of Holloway by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons praised Pact's range of support services and made several approving comments about the Kinship Care Support Service of which the following is an example:

The visitors' centre offered a good range of services and the PACT kinship worker provided a valuable service (HMIP, 2010: 91)

However, the report went on to note that the Children and Families Pathway was underdeveloped, that prisoners were not referred to the Kinship Care or Adfam (at that time) services on induction, and that:

There was little evidence that officers were aware of the needs of women as mothers (HMIP, 2010:91)

Further: As in 2002, 2004 and 2008, there continued to be little evidence that officers had much understanding of the needs of women or any knowledge of their individual circumstances.

Wing files contained comment about the difficulties and anguish some women experienced at

being separated from children, but these were usually from staff other than officers
(HMIP, 2010: 93)

Operating against this kind of background is challenging, but the KCSS Manager nonetheless remains positive:

The prison system can be a stumbling block, but I always work my way through it and try to meet the challenge. I try not to dwell on the negatives, but to take them on board and make them work. I set myself a target that there is a resolution for everything – for example that people come out smiling from Children’s and Family Visits. I have made good relationships with Wing staff who now refer women to me, and with Resettlement, which will become my first port of call after the First Night in Custody Service goes. I look at the women’s ‘Holloway Passports’ there and do now feed into the Custody Plan – that’s how the Inspectors picked up on the Kinship Care work – and they will call me if they see a case where Kinship help is needed.

The other professional respondents confirmed that the KCSS has established good relationships with a wide range of staff. When asked if the existence of a KCSS Manager made their own jobs easier, all agreed that it did because it was a specialised service which they could refer people to, rather than having to deal with kinship-related issues themselves. The following respondent also commented on its potential for reducing prisoners’ stress levels with an attendant benefit for staff:

Reducing Reoffending Governor: *It is a piece of work that is completed by a specialist with knowledge and experience of the overall resources available to offenders. I am sure this work has an impact on lowering offenders’ anxiety and stress levels, thus supporting operational staff in their day-to-day duties.*

and also that the Service made a significant contribution to both Safeguarding within the sphere of Public Protection, and to Safer Custody within the prison, by addressing mothers’ anxieties about their children at an early stage, thus reducing risks associated with self-harm and suicide attempts. In terms of Sentence Planning too, the Service is positively viewed:

Reducing Reoffending Governor: *The main reason is that signposting is carried out during the interventions. The Support Worker’s knowledge of what is available (in terms of external agencies and support networks) greatly supports the sentence plan.*

Perhaps one way of improving the situation further could be to draw Governors’ attention to two of the HMIP report’s recommendations under the category of Resettlement and offer to engage in some relevant planning and training towards their implementation:

Para. 9.81: *Family days should be open to all women and without cost to them.*

Para. 9.84: *All staff should be briefed and trained about the specific issues affecting women separated from their children and should actively identify needs, provide support and make appropriate referrals. (HMIP, 2010:94)*

7.6 KCSS training and development needs: The KCSS Manager has undertaken training in Safeguarding, Adult Protection, Family Rights/Legal Options for Kinship Care, Family Mediation training, and in-house Prison training. She has also provided a great deal of training herself on Kinship Care issues and Human Rights issues, has trained Pact volunteers, delivered NVQ training, training for Clinks (a national membership organisation that supports voluntary and community groups working with offenders) and spoken at a number of conferences. Her manager identifies the possible need for refresher courses in Safeguarding and family mediation. The KCSS Manager herself sees her training needs as a strategic part of the development of her role. She would like to develop the capacity of the KCSS, so that she can start doing outreach work with families, and perhaps provide a service in Courts which would encourage them to think about the care of children of parents on whom they are considering imposing custody (as the current project she has contributed to is trying to do – see **Section 5.5** above). If it is to be without further funding and further cost, her view is that the administrative part of the service could be run by recruiting and training more volunteers (at present, there is only one trained volunteer) and that, if she were to undertake the NVQ Assessors' Award, she would be eligible to take social work and other students on placement, who could undertake some of the casework under her supervision. She and the Senior Service Manager (whose role has subsequently been transferred to Spurgeon's) both feel strongly that capacity must increase to meet the very great need associated with the kinship care triangle:

Senior Service Manager (Pact): *Kinship carers don't get the support they need, let alone those looking after the children of prisoners with the accompanying stigma. They need information, support, finance to make their role more do-able. A lot don't want to go to Social Services and say 'I'm not coping', as they fear the children being taken into care, so where do they go? KCSP should be mainstreamed within the Prison Service, and in a way that ensures carers feel it's a safe environment in which to ask for help, and that they can talk safely with staff.*

It's a service that is essential. In my 7 years of work here, I have seen how carers suffer, particularly Grandparents who are taking on a role they didn't think they'd have to do again. It's an inspiration to see how the KCSS has been set up, but it reaches only a small proportion of the huge number of carers who need help and we can see how much it's needed. At a political level, it's about keeping families together, because it's less cost to the Government. It just makes sense. So I'm glad to have been part of that.

KCSS Manager: *This is one of the best things I've ever done. I would love to see it continue and develop. The need is there. It's needed nationally and consistently, whether it's delivered through the prison or through the Local Authority; the localised support is needed.*

7.7 The quality of the KCSS at Holloway: Finally, all 8 respondents (excluding the KCSS Manager and Senior Services Manager) were asked to rate the quality of the Kinship Care Support Service at Holloway along a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 = very poor and 10 = very high. **Table 29 below** depicts these ratings.

Table 29: Views of relevant personnel as to the quality of the KCSS at Holloway

<i>Very poor..... Very high</i>										
Rating scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relevant personnel ratings (n = 8)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	3

*Excludes KCSS Manager & Senior Service Manager

The eight respondents to this section of the research were invited to rate the quality of the KCSS service at Holloway. All did so in the top half of the rating scale, none scoring lower than 7, and 5 scoring 9 or 10.

7.8 In summary: The high ratings of KCSS quality in **Table 29** confirm everything that has been recounted about the views of staff and other relevant personnel in this section: the need for the service is great; the aims surrounding the kinship care triangle are largely met; the work is carried out to a high standard; staff and allied professionals report that they and service users alike feel supported, reassured and relieved by the existence of this service; the KCSS alleviates prisoner stress, thereby contributing to safe custody; partnership, referral work and an emphasis on education as a protective factor are key; and to improve quality even further, there are some significant challenges and developments to be strategically undertaken.

8. Implications of the evaluation for the future of the KCSS

8.1 This evaluation report has firstly presented the quantitative data about the numbers, types of referral issues, and services to service users covering the last 12 months, returned by the KCSS to the Research Team. Secondly, it has extracted relevant data from a total of 67 qualitative interviews with 57 service users, and interviews/questionnaires with 6 Pact and prison staff, and 4 members of allied organizations. The following paragraphs re-state the six research objectives (see **Section 3.1**), summarise the evaluation's salient findings, and set out their implications for the future of the Kinship Care Support Service.

8.2 Numbers and types of Service Users receiving support - derived from KCSS monitoring data

In **Section 4**, **Tables 1 - 3** showed that nearly 3000 service users (56% prisoners and 44% carers) had received support from the KCSS over the last year, around two thirds of these cases being ongoing to some degree. Advice was most frequently sought about the visiting and prison regimes, but community support, legal advice, housing, benefits, and schooling advice were also requested. In response, the KCSS provided referral and signposting to other specific services, and delivered its own direct services either face-to-face, by phone or email. The KCSS monitoring systems did not easily capture the very considerable variety of requests for help, nor the wide range of agencies and individuals to which service users were referred, many having to be placed in an 'Other' category. Ethnic monitoring was limited, though a start had been made. Even with the high numbers of BME service users reached in this sample, proactive monitoring in this field is always required (Home Affairs Committee, 2008). Systematic service user feedback also remained to be developed.

❖ *Implication*

This unique service reaches many prisoners, kinship carers and children. However, as noted throughout the report, there is a limit to what can be done by one person over three days a week, including developing a sophisticated monitoring system. Some assistance with this activity is needed if good evidence of who is and who is not using this service is to be obtained, and hard-to-reach groups identified and provided with accessible information about the service.

8.3 Key areas of support provided - derived from KCSS records, a small number of KCSS case studies, and observation of support services

The main areas of support which were sought by KCSS service users have been described in **Sections 4** and **8.2** above. They surround the need for information and contact of various kinds, as these relate to those involved in the kinship care triangle (see **Figure 1**). Scrutiny of ongoing KCSS case records and case studies posted by the Manager on websites have shown how the KCSS occupies the centre of this triangle to meet the wide-ranging needs of kinship carers, prisoner mothers and their children through one-to-one, group and telephone support. Observation of Children's and Family Visits, interviews with those who have attended the Kinship Carer Support

Group, and one staff respondent account of the Homework Club, have confirmed that these aspects of the Service also contain a preventive element through their provision of contact, information and encouragement of education for the children. It is also of significance that the KCSS and the services it offered were praised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP, 2010). Given the necessary funding, there is scope for all these services to be made accessible to more users, and for prison staff to enable the day-long visiting provisions to be more child-focused by, for example, removing the need for lengthy queuing, starting visits on time, and ensuring that swimming pool, to which the children look forward, is available.

❖ *Implication*

The main inference to be taken from the current provision and quality of KCSS services is that they meet a great deal of need and, therefore, with further resourcing, should be made available to more service users. As noted in **Section 5**, most of the aspects of the Children's and Family Visits services which needed attention were not in the gift of the KCSS and depended for their improvement largely on prison service staff. Section **8.6** below considers the ways in which the KCSS Manager might contribute to the raising of staff's understanding about the importance of promoting family ties, but there is also a question of procedural adherence here, which may need to be further pursued through line management liaison.

8.4 The extent to which the KCSS has been able to develop advisory and information resources, such as leaflets, the homework club, Facebook support, a family-friendly website, and inter-agency/partnership work – derived from documentary and website information and conference attendance

Scrutiny of information leaflets and websites, and attendance at a Family Learning conference, have provided considerable evidence of the extensive ways in which this Service has been publicised and in which the partnerships it has forged are working. The fact sheets on legal options for kinship carers, developed in partnership with the Family Rights Group are a prime example of innovative practice in this area. As suggested in **Section 4.6**, an aspect of written advisory information which may need revisiting is that of the leaflet about the KCSS, which needs better to represent its aims, range of services, and the diversity of clientele it seeks to reach and serve. It is also possible that this piece of work could serve to reduce the confusion expressed by a small number of research respondents in **Section 5.6** about the status of respective 'helping' personnel. The Homework Club, an evolved rather than an original aim for the Service, is probably the least developed of the face-to-face facilities, but is said by staff and some carers to be valued for the opportunities it provides to children who live close enough to Holloway to benefit from it. The contribution of the KCSS Manager to the development of Pact's and allied organisations' awareness-raising programme to families, friends, defendants, solicitors and sentencers in Courts, has also exemplified her innovative approach to the work and to the continuing development of wider policy to recognize the rights and needs of the children of offenders.

❖ *Implication*

Information in a clear and accurate written form is crucial for letting a wide range of people know what services may be available to them. For this reason, and time and resources permitting, a re-ordering of the existing KCSS information leaflet to more accurately represent its aims, services and intended clientele would be desirable. In respect of the Homework Club, the KCSS Manager has plans to take this forward via the prison parenting programme in a way which enables prisoner mothers to share responsibility for their children's education. This would afford some division of labour and also provide a more realistic view for them of their children's educational progress than may currently be the case. This proposed initiative should be supported within prison policy and procedure. The attention of the KCSS to the development of wider policy to support the needs and rights of children whose parents are imprisoned and likely to find themselves living with kinship carers, is both practical and prescient and again, with time permitting, should continue.

8.5 The extent to which kinship carers, prisoners and their children feel supported and their situation improved - derived from satisfaction scales and qualitative interviews with a sample of this user group

Sections 5 and 6 of this report have provided both quantitative and qualitative data derived from interviews and satisfaction scales from kinship carers, prisoner mothers and children in a wide range of situations. The simple interviews with children themselves highlighted their centrality to the KCSS endeavour, and the sadness for them of coping with life and schooling after their mothers have been removed from their everyday lives, and for a reason which it is difficult to explain either to themselves or their friends. The carers and prisoner mothers recounted a variety of ways in which they had been helped by the KCSS Manager. Their criticisms were minor and usually associated with prison procedure that the KCSS could not significantly influence. Their ratings of the helpfulness of the Service, the difference it has made to them and the children, the extent to which it meets its aims, and the satisfaction rate with the KCSS were very high indeed. In eight cases, where prisoner mothers had been released, successful resettlement with children had mostly been established and, as far as was known, offending had not recurred.

❖ Implication

The only real implication which can be derived from these findings is that, within its limited resources, the KCSS was providing a much-needed and high quality service for which carers, prisoners and, usually more indirectly, children were extremely grateful. Although the information was second-hand and, to an extent, had to be inferred, it did appear that mothers had resettled with their children on release and not reoffended. This outcome, in itself, would justify the continuation of KCSS funding, and the expansion of its services to a much wider user group, of whose need for it there can be little doubt.

8.6 The extent to which key prison staff consider the KCSS has impacted on their work, on prisoner welfare and attitudes, and on safer custody – derived from qualitative interviews or questionnaires, according to their convenience

Section 7 of this evaluation confirmed, through involved staff and allied professionals' high ratings of the quality of the KCSS in **Table 29**, their positive views and experiences of the service. They reported a great need for this unique resource operating, as it does, at the centre of the kinship care triangle. In their experience, service users' stress was greatly alleviated, and sometimes pre-empted, contributing in the prisoner mothers' case to safer custody, and they themselves felt reassured and relieved that they could refer people to a relevant and reliable service. The KCSS' referral and partnership work enabling, amongst other things, reduction of conflict between prisoner and carer, and an emphasis on the protective factor for children of education were also extremely highly regarded. However, in line with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP, 2010) those staff with knowledge of the KCSS also felt that the understandings of some prison officer staff, especially those in the wings and on Visits, about the importance of family ties and their links to reduced reoffending, needed to be expanded, as this could improve still further the overall quality of the KCSS delivery.

❖ *Implication*

These staff and allied professional respondents identified a great need for the KCSS and were concerned that it should reach still further to those who don't know about it and to other prisons also. Again, this requires an investment into extra staffing time for the Service which, arguably would be offset by the reduction in time which other staff would need to devote to the requests arising from kinship care problems. Extra time would also enable the specialised knowledge of the KCSS Manager to be utilised in the training of wing and Visits staff about the link between maintenance of family ties and reduced reoffending, and in awareness of the specific needs of women separated from their children, as recommended by HMIP (2010)

8.7 Relevant Pact staff members' own views and experiences of the role, including training and development needs – derived from in-depth interviews with them

The observations of the KCSS Manager, the Senior Service Manager, the Family Support Worker/First Night in Custody Link Worker, and the Assistant Visitors' Centre Manager, all at that time employed by Pact, were set out in **Section 7**. All made it clear that the role served an otherwise unmet need on the part of prisoner mothers, kinship carers, and the children around whose interests the service centred. Training needs for the role included, notably, refresher courses in Safeguarding and Mediation. The former, in particular is a constantly developing field; the potential for kinship carers to 'slip through the net' through failure of professional skill, interprofessional communication, procedure adherence and adequate resource injection, has been highlighted in particular by the tragic case of Victoria Climbié, abused and murdered by her Great Aunt and partner into whose care her parents had placed her (Laming, 2003). Additionally, the KCSS' Manager's own identification of training needs streamlines strategically with her view of the service's development needs. This would entail undertaking the NVQ Assessors' Award, so that she could supervise social work and other students on placement, as well as training more volunteers, so that KCSS capacity could simultaneously be expanded.

❖ *Implication*

These findings again reinforce the need for an expansion of the staffing of the KCSS to meet the needs of larger numbers of kinship carers, prisoner mothers and their children. Ongoing training in Safeguarding and Mediation, to ensure the skill and knowledge bases to update and strengthen good practice in the very specialized field of kinship care, should be provided and undertaken. Continuing funding for the KCSS is necessary to be able to resource existing services as well as some expansion. The KCSS Manager's own strategic aim to undertake student supervision training should also be met, so that outreach development to bolster resettlement prospects can also be created at modest cost.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, this evaluation has described a vital, but part-time service which currently depends for its undoubted success on the commitment and energy of one person operating for 3 days a week. It is a service which is unique across the prison estate and the need for it, not just by the carers of women prisoners' children, but by any prisoner who is a primary carer, and the children themselves, has been well-chronicled by the respondents to this research. Likewise, the limited evidence about successful resettlement of mother and child/ren and apparent lack of re-offending, lends further weight to its importance. In common with any such endeavour, the Service contains areas which would benefit from further development, and these have been suggested in **Section 8** above. However, it would be impossible to conclude from this evaluation anything other than that the KCSS Manager has built and delivered a high quality service to as many service users as possible, within the limitations of the resources available to her.

Kinship carers interviewed for this study did not, for the most part, know where else they could go to get the specialised help and advice that the KCSS offers. Just knowing that there was someone they could go and talk to if they needed to, and receive a sympathetic, respectful and knowledgeable response, was a source of huge reassurance and relief to these carers, many of whom had been catapulted into a role they would not have chosen but did not wish to shirk either. Staff and other personnel who worked with the KCSS confirmed that, not only did it relieve prisoner and carer stress, but that the resource it constituted made their own workloads less pressurised also.

In respect of the Service's own stated aims, evidence within this report from the prisoner mothers, the kinship carers and relevant staff have convincingly demonstrated how well these are being met. In terms of outcomes, it is clear that service users are being informed about kinship care and prison-related issues. Further, at least some of them are also able to take advantage of the visiting and support group facilities which afford both a voice and mutual support for kinship carers, and continuity of parent/child contact, thus strengthening the potential for stable child placement and family resettlement. To make these services available to a wider range of people, further funding is needed. Local Authorities also now need to be encouraged to take their share of responsibility under the terms of the Family and Friends Care Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (Department of Education, 2011).

Not only should the role at Holloway continue, it should be made full-time, so that the KCSS Manager can extend her role into much-needed work with families in their homes, as the prisoner progresses along the journey to resettlement. This outreach role would further facilitate the maintenance and strengthening of family ties across the kinship triangle, and thereby potentially contribute to the prevention both of parental recidivism and intergenerational offending. Finally, the Kinship Care Support Service should be made available in all women's prisons and also, in some form, to male prisoners who are primary carers.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Number and Type of Qualitative interviews and Questionnaires responded to during Study Period

INTERVIEW/ Q' AIRE TYPE	SEMI- -STRUCTURED INTERVIEW *	SHORT INTERVIEW **	QUESTIONN- -AIRE	RESPON- -DENT NOS.
Prisoner Mothers *	25			25
Kinship Carers	23	1		24
Prisoners' Children	7	1		8
Pact Staff	4			4
Relevant Prison Staff	1		1	2
Members of Allied Organ- -isations		1	3	4
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	60	3	4	67

* Twenty five interviews were conducted with twenty two prisoner mothers, thus enabling three respondents to reflect on their experience of the KCSS over time

** For practical reasons, short interviews were conducted with one kinship carer, one small child, and one member of an allied organisation encountered in the course of Children's or Extended Family Visits, where the KCSS was in operation

APPENDIX B: TWO CASE STUDIES (ALL NAMES ARE PSEUDONYMS)

The two case studies below, written by the KCSS Manager, are included here to provide a holistic sense of the different types of processes involved in providing services within the Kinship Care triangle (see **Figure 1**). The first study is an example of pro-active ongoing contact by the KCSS Manager with a foreign national prisoner, in which the kinds of support provided to the prisoner mother, the kinship carer and the children are set out in conjunction with the (not always successful) negotiations within the prison system that have to ensue, and the referrals to more specialised services which give the family much-needed specific information. The second study describes a shorter-term case, which shows how the KCSS has to be ever-vigilant about child protection issues.

Case Study 1

I met Gina on the Resettlement Unit. She had been in prison for several months and was coming to the end of her sentence. Her sister was looking after Gina's two children. Gina felt that her sister needed some support, and also wanted to be able to see her youngest son on his fifth birthday. I explained to Gina that her sister could arrange a visit to see her with the children on his birthday, providing Gina first issued a Visiting Order. If this was done, I could then try and transfer the visit to the Family Room to ensure that she had quality time with the children on her son's birthday.

I later telephoned Gina's sister, who confirmed that she would visit with Gina's son on his birthday. I also sent her an introductory letter, informing her of the Kinship Care Support Service, as well as details of free local activities the children could take part in, which would offer her more support with caring for them. I returned to see Gina on her unit to explain where plans were up to, but also that I couldn't guarantee the transfer to the Family Room.

To try to organise the Family Room transfer, I rang the Senior Officer but he was unavailable. I sent him an email explaining the circumstances and asked if he could allow the visit to be moved. I rang him again the next day when he said that, due to staff shortages, he could not allow the visit to be moved, as no officers were available to supervise the Family Room area.

However, after the visit, I went to see Gina to ask how the day went. Despite not having the visit in the Family Room, she told me that the visit had gone well, she had been very happy to see her child on his birthday, and was very grateful for the help and effort provided to her and her family. I had several subsequent contacts with Gina and her sister to help them arrange a Children's Visit, and then spent time with them all on that visit, to see how I could assist further. Through this, and later visits, the children came to be happy to see a familiar face both when they arrived at the Visitors' Centre, and later on in the Gymnasium, where the visit was held. The family said it was great to be able talk to someone who knew all about the issues they were facing.

Gina's sister had been anticipating Gina's imminent release, but remained worried that Gina may be facing immigration concerns. A week after her release date, I noticed that Gina's name was still showing on the prison's Live Register. I went to see her, and she told me that the Immigration Authority had now taken over her case, that her detention continued, and she was now unsure when she would be released. At this point, I referred Gina to Hibiscus (a charity supporting foreign national prisoners) who could give her specialised advice about immigration concerns. On a further Children's Visit, I also advised her sister about her rights in terms of her continuing care of the children, including support from the Local Authority.

I invited Gina's sister to join the Kinship Care Support Group. She attended this and much appreciated the opportunity to talk freely with others in similar situations about the concerns she had. I also referred her to Hibiscus and to the Family Rights group Advice line, which offers advocacy work for families in Gina's situation.

Gina's Immigration Hearing is due soon. As she and her family anxiously await the outcome, I continue to support both Gina and her sister with ongoing contact.

Case Study 2

Olga was referred to the Kinship Care Support Service by the First Night in Custody Team. She had told them that her child was being cared for by her sister, and provided them with her telephone number. I telephoned her sister to offer KCSS support, but felt concerned, as she was very unforthcoming with the details.

I returned to see Olga, who was adamant that her son was safe with her sister and that her sister did not need any support. Her abruptness and urgency to dismiss my efforts raised alarm bells. I again telephoned her sister who, this time, revealed that the child was not with her and that she did not know where the child was. The only other contact I had was the Solicitor. I rang him and he confirmed that the child was indeed not with Olga's sister.

I then took steps to obtain Olga's home address, after which I contacted the relevant Local Authority Children's Services, who informed me that the child had been taken into their care following Olga's court appearance. It seemed that Olga had felt too embarrassed to reveal this. At this stage, I informed the prison's Public Protection team who were then able to arrange for the Social Worker to bring the child to visit Olga.

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Wilson, D. & Reuss, A. (2000) *Prison(er) Education: Stories of Change and Transformation.* Winchester: Waterside Press.

NB: Further information about the work of the Kinship Care Support Service at HMP Holloway, the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), the Family Rights Group, the Kinship Care Alliance, and the Grandparents' Association, can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.kinshipcareuk.org.uk/kinship-care-holloway>

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

www.frg.org.uk

http://www.frg.org.uk/kinship_care_alliance_campaign.html <http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk>
