

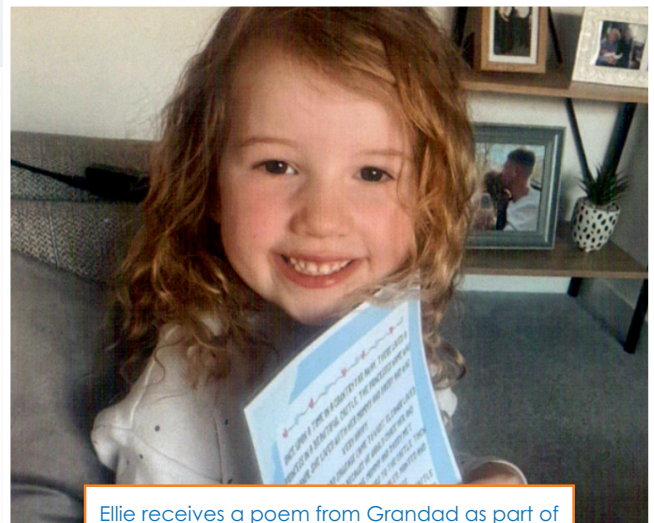
Meet Aimee - Pact's Children and Young People lead

In this, our legacy edition of Fresh Start, we're introducing you to our wonderful colleague Aimee Hutchinson. Aimee's worked for Pact for almost 10 years, and has recently taken on a new role focusing on prisoners' children. 125 years ago, the child "Roots" was our first beneficiary; things have changed a lot for prisoners' children since then but their need for our care and support remains. We will continue to minimise the harm of parental imprisonment on children like Ellie, just as we did for Roots 125 years ago.

Prisoners' children are hidden within the criminal justice system, people are often unaware of what they go through. My job at Pact is to make sure these children have a voice and that we do everything we can to support them. I have two main priorities. The first is ensuring that children visiting the 60+ prisons we work in feel safe and relaxed. My second priority is to lead strategically on the issues facing children and young people affected by imprisonment. We make sure their voices are heard, and the people around them are better informed and can provide the support they need. Everything we do is based on talking and listening to what children tell us about how they feel coming into prisons.

Every day is different! I might visit one of our services to conduct a child's-eye-view. This is a start-to-finish review of the prison visit experience from a child's perspective. For example, are signs and displays age-appropriate and understandable to children? Can we make the experience of going through security checks more child-friendly? Do children know there will be sniffer dogs, and how many are scared of dogs? We are always looking for ways to improve our services! We use William the Bear – our friendly cartoon - to explain the visiting process to younger children. Helping them know what is coming next and explaining in a softened, humanised, child-friendly way is vital. The whole experience for children visiting a parent in prison is difficult enough without unnecessary surprises!

We recently had a little girl, Anna, who was terrified of the sniffer dogs at security. Our staff worked with her and the prison dog handlers over several visits to help her get used to the dogs. And the work has paid off. The last time she came in to see her dad, she cried because she wasn't first in line to see the doggies! This is the level of care and attention that Pact staff provide to children up and down the country.



Ellie receives a poem from Grandad as part of HMP Sudbury's Parental Poetry initiative

A crucial part of Pact's ethos is strengthening the bond between imprisoned parents and their children. I work to ensure families have opportunities to spend quality time together. Much depends on the prison, so we work closely and collaboratively with prison staff. I create materials to use for displays, write and share plans for special family days in prisons and train Pact staff, school practitioners and the Police. The work supports my colleagues working in prisons so they have more time to help children like Anna feel relaxed and happy about coming to prison.

A major goal for me this year is to work with schools to improve their support for children and young people affected by imprisonment. We often have schools reaching out to us for training and guidance on how to help, and they tell us they don't know how to broach the subject with affected families. Families often try to hide their situation, too, telling teachers children are sick or have to go to the dentist. The whole issue is surrounded by shame and stigma, but it shouldn't be, particularly for the children. At the moment, I'm working on a pack to help schools improve how they support children with a parent in prison.

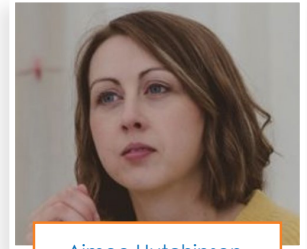
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Children and young people have complex and conflicting views about their loved ones going to prison. A young person whose father was in prison for a long sentence recently told me they understood why he had to be there. They weren't angry anymore; they just wanted him to get better. We often talk about children's grief and loss, particularly when a parent goes to prison. But there can be a range of associated emotions: relief that their loved one is somewhere safe and hope that someone will look after them and release them from prison in a better state than they went in. We owe it to children to do our part to ensure that happens.

The impact of imprisonment on prisoners, their families and their children is not something many people want to think about. This makes your support all the more valuable. You are helping to give a voice to those who need to be heard and sending them the message that people care about their struggles. Thank you!

Aimee will be speaking at an online See the Impact event at 9.30am on 5th July 2023 - please email fresh.start@prisonadvice.org.uk for further information!



Aimee Hutchinson,
Pact's Children and
Young People Lead

125 years of serving prisoners and their families

Pact's journey began in 1898 as the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society. The charity was founded by Canon Cooney, a Priest who cared for Catholic prisoners and their families in London. Today, Pact provides a wide range of services that support people affected by the criminal justice system throughout England and Wales. What remains constant is our belief in each person's innate dignity and that everyone can make a fresh start.

From our archive...

1898

The first recorded beneficiary of Pact was a little girl referred to in the charity's inaugural minutes of 1898 simply as "the child Roots". While we know very little about the child, save that her mother was in prison, we know that provision was made for her care.

1903

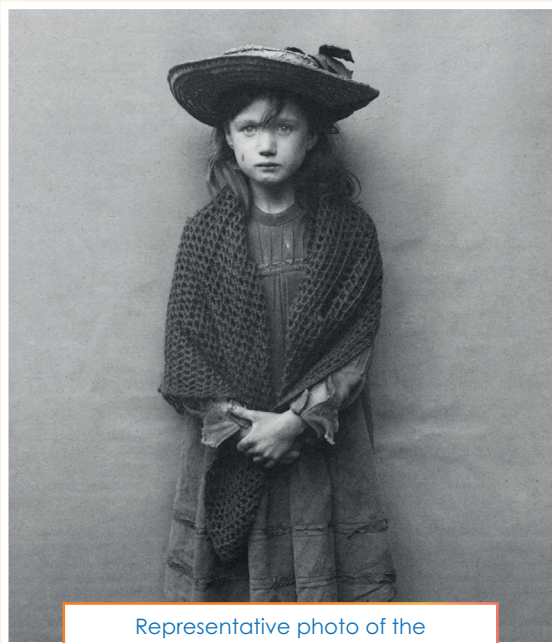
A group was formed to meet women discharged from Holloway Prison at the gate to accompany them to arranged lodgings and buy them provisions.

1923 - 1997

Prisoners received our support, including a man discharged after serving a seven-year sentence who had a wife and two children. His case entailed 25 letters and reports and 14 visits to his house. One year after release, he was in full employment.

1993

A play scheme opened at HMP Wormwood Scrubs, staffed by volunteers. The scheme offered four play sessions a week and a place for children to relax amid the challenging environment of a visits room.



Representative photo of the 'Child Roots', from Spitalfields Nippers

Your Catholic Legacy Week

28th May to 3rd June

Pact is a member of Your Catholic Legacy – a group of Catholic charities working together to inspire legacy giving. This week (28th May to 3rd June) is Catholic Legacy Week.

Over the last year, Pact has been able to support prisoners and their families thanks to six gifts left to us by Catholic supporters in their wills. These gifts are making a lasting difference to the lives of people affected by imprisonment.

If you're thinking about leaving a gift in your will to Pact, and would like to speak to us about this, please get in touch with Chris Dunne by phone on **07710170942** or by email mylegacy@prisonadvice.org.uk.



Avengers – and others – assemble at HMP Moorland

Dads and children enjoyed a superhero-themed family day organised by Pact's staff and volunteers at HMP Moorland in South Yorkshire. The team supplied t-shirts for children to decorate on the understanding that they would grant their dads the same superpowers reflected in the design. At the end of the day, the super dads paraded the visits hall to show off their new attire, with prizes for the winning families. The prison will store dads' t-shirts so they can collect them on release.

One of the dads who attended the family day was recently released. After he passed through the gate, he changed into his superhero t-shirt to meet his children and family, having promised his son that he would wear it. His son had decorated the t-shirt with, 'I love you, Daddy' alongside drawings of all the family and their names. After all, family is the best superpower!



Pact Marathon runner Agnieszka Zbieranska after finishing in 3 hours 42 minutes!

Thank you to our London Marathon runners

Our warmest thanks go to our runners in this year's London Marathon! **They have raised over £11,000** and gone above and beyond to support our cause. They went through months of gruelling training during winter to represent Pact in this iconic race – and they were all thrilled with their times! **Congratulations to Agnieszka Zbieranska, Alex Karnacz, Kevin Meeks, Lucy Moore, Naomi Thrower, and Yuecy Lee - thank you so much!**

Plans underway for Prisoners' Sunday 2023

'This day...with me...in paradise'. Luke 23:43

This year's Prisoners' Sunday takes place on 8th October. It's never too early to start planning in your parish!

Last year we asked some of our Catholic bishops to mark the day by celebrating a dedicated Cathedral Mass, a practice that is gaining momentum. At the time of going to print, we expect a Prisoners' Sunday Mass to be celebrated in eight cathedrals across England and Wales. We hope each diocese will be inspired and energised to reflect and join in prayer with and for those affected by imprisonment.

Prisoners' Sunday is Pact's main annual appeal. It makes a huge difference when parishes commit to holding a second collection to raise funds to support prisoners and their families.

We can also provide a speaker for your service if you'd like us to. A 2022 Pact volunteer speaker said, "It was an absolute privilege to represent Pact on Prisoners' Sunday. I was bowled over with the acceptance and generosity of the congregations with whom I met." A priest told us, "Thank you for all the good work you do at Pact. I was in my local prison a few times and the women or men were in such need of kindness and friendship. You are really making a difference to people who can be in such awful situations. Keep up the good work."



Prisoners' Sunday 2022 Cathedral Mass, Southwark

Get involved...

- Ask your parish priest to mark Prisoners' Sunday. All Catholic parishes will receive a pack in the post in September.
- Invite a Pact speaker, or speak on our behalf – we'll provide the support you need!
- Clash with another event? No problem! Simply organise your Pact collection for an alternative week.
- Organise a fundraising event, such as our parish-to-prison pilgrimage.

Last year's campaign raised over **£56,000.**

Thank you for your support, and particularly to Arundel & Brighton Diocese who donated an incredible **£28,000!**

Supporting our work: Bishop Richard Moth

Bishop Richard Moth is the Liaison Bishop for Prisons on behalf of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. He is a huge support to Pact and the work of our Faith in Action team, as well as ministering to those in prison in his diocese of Arundel and Brighton. You may have seen his valuable piece in The Tablet recently where he said, 'Those who have committed crimes remain part of our society, and it benefits us all to help them improve their future, rather than merely punish them for their past.'

In May, Bishop Richard met with staff and volunteers at our London office. He joined CEO Andy Keen-Downs, and Theresa and Marie from the Faith in Action team to discuss our joint work and plans for the year ahead. Bishop Richard will co-preside at our London Carol Service this year with his Anglican counterpart, Bishop Rachel Treweek.



Bishop Richard Moth visits Pact's Central Office

More ways to keep in the loop

  @PactFaithAction
 pact1.link/signup

Calling all Facebook and Twitter users! We have recently launched two new social media channels that use the language of our Catholic Christian heritage to amplify the voices of people affected by imprisonment and respond to Jesus' challenge: 'I was in prison and you visited me'. **You can find us on either Facebook or Twitter with the handle - @PactFaithAction.** We'd love to know what you think! Like or follow us, make a comment, and share our posts! It's great to see parishes sharing posters about our workshops, roadshows and events on their own channels.

We've also introduced a new monthly email bulletin offering the latest news, views and campaigns in a bitesize format. The eBulletin offers Pact friends and supporters another way to hear about our work and how they can get involved. **You can sign up or update your preferences at pact1.link/signup.**

Dates for the diary

Go to www.prisonadvice.org.uk/events or scan the QR code



- **Parish to Prison Pilgrimage**
St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church to HMP High Down
- 16th June
- **JustPeople online workshops**
- Wednesday 5th July, 9am – 1pm
- Friday 15th September, 9am – 1pm
- Wednesday 25th October, 9am – 1pm
- **Birmingham Roadshow**
- 15th July
- **Northampton Roadshow**
- 18th November
- **Prisoners' Sunday**
- 8th October



Pact is the national Catholic charity supporting prisoners, people with convictions and their children and families. We provide caring and life-changing services at every stage of the criminal justice process: in court, in prison, on release, and in the community.

Pact's journey began in 1898 as the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society and our vision, mission and values are taken directly from Catholic Social Teaching, Scripture and the tradition of the Church. We believe in a society in which justice is understood as a process of restoration and healing, in which prisons are used sparingly and as places of learning and rehabilitation, and in which the innate dignity and worth of every human being is valued. We work for the common good of Society, taking a public-health based approach that intersects criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health & social care.

Contact Us:

Website: www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Email: parish.action@prisonadvice.org.uk



The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers support for families who have a loved one in contact with the criminal justice system.

www.prisonersfamilies.org

member
caritas
social action network

Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Pact is registered in England and Wales as a charity (no. 219278) and a company limited by guarantee (no.356443)