



ARREST



COURT



PRISON
VISITOR CENTRE



FAMILY
LINK WORKERS



COMMUNITY
SENTENCE



RELEASE

Real People, Real Lives

Annual Review 2009-10



..... POPS CONTINUUM OF CARE



Farida's Welcome



The voice of offenders' families calling for change saw POPS (Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group) emerge in 1988. The organisation has developed over the years but the principle of

empowering families by placing them at the forefront of our work remains pivotal to our ethos, mission, vision and values. It's who we are.

For so many families the challenges associated with supporting an offender can leave them feeling as if they have failed, unable to see a way forward. By providing them with a platform, through which to influence and shape their respective situations, POPS encourages families to take control of their future. Ultimately the failure

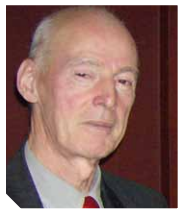
is not in these families falling down but if they are not encouraged to stand again. It's what we do.

The concept of 'Big Society' is not new to us, or indeed to the countless organisations working within the voluntary sector. For many years POPS has pioneered work throughout the Criminal Justice System, and beyond, to specifically encourage families and communities to identify and address their own needs. 'Real people, Real lives' reflects our founding belief in the importance of 'those living it, telling it like it is'. We hope you will see that the concept of 'Big Society' is not merely an idea – it's our core business!

My thanks to the board of trustees and all the POPS staff for their commitment and hard work this past year. In particular my thanks go to Diane Curry OBE, POPS Operations Director, for her vision, tenacity and friendship.

Farida Anderson MBE

Bill's Welcome



Welcome to the POPS Annual Review 2009-10. I am pleased to be able to share it with some of the people who are so vital to POPS and our work.

At our last AGM the annual accounts revealed

the positive outcome of careful financial management throughout POPS over a year when the state of the UK economy squeezed so many other organisations. Resourceful management has seen our reserve position strengthened, the benefit of which is significant. Through an upgrade to our strategic planning process we anticipated the challenges, the outcome of which

will be seen increasingly in the months ahead. As a result we face the current period of uncertainty with healthy finances and an enviable reputation for service and reliability.

The concept of service to families at all stages of involvement in the Criminal Justice System continues to grow. By continually adding to our understanding we have strengthened our position as an advocate for the interests and role of families to government. In an eventful year, senior management have provided the leadership to take POPS forward and credit is due to Farida and Diane and all their staff. It is essential to back all this with an effective Board of Trustees and I want to thank our trustees for volunteering their time with the commitment which is essential to the success this review is celebrating.

Bill Ashberry, Chairman



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Steve Cook

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Damian Ganley

Prof. Carole Truman

My voice, heard.

Sharon

I was catapulted into a world I knew nothing about when my son was sent to prison a little over three years ago. I felt so utterly powerless – POPS changed all that for me.

POPS not only offer offenders' families much needed support at every stage of the Criminal Justice System through the 'continuum of care' concept, they also empower families by giving them a voice. That's why I am more than happy to be involved in producing this review - because I know the difference POPS makes to 'real people'.

Only three years ago I was still trying to come to terms with the devastating blow that had hit my family whilst at the same time frantically trying to get to grips with all the prison rules and regulations conveyed through a bewildering array of acronyms and jargon. It seemed impenetrable, like a big brick wall.

Fortunately, it wasn't too long before I first came across POPS when my son was transferred to a Young Offenders Institution. It was such a pleasant surprise to be warmly welcomed at the visitor centre by the POPS staff. The team were a constant source of support and practical advice encouraging me in particular to come to the monthly family forum meetings attended by POPS staff, family members, governors and prison officers. It was here that I found my voice was first heard. The agenda was simple, to discuss how best to resolve issues raised by families—it works!

This revelation was key in my decision to join the POPS Family Information Network (FIN) through which I have attended countless consultations and steering groups. Through the FIN, POPS enable family members to discuss important issues and inform local and national policy makers across sectors including Education, Voluntary,

Children's Services and the Criminal Justice System. I have been given the opportunity to address an audience of hundreds at Barnardos' 'Beyond Conviction' Conference alongside my daughter, who joined me again to speak at the Justice Awards. I have written newspaper articles and, only last week, accepted an invitation to be interviewed live on BBC Radio Manchester.

I became a POPS volunteer because I wanted to help others get involved in the FIN, to have their voice heard. But it is not merely a platform to speak from. The FIN is also instrumental in underpinning the means by which families access peer support through stress management meetings, creative writing sessions, volunteering and much more.

In 2009 I became a POPS employee during which time I was delighted to be involved in the Arrest Referral Helpline, a pioneering project that consolidated the POPS 'continuum of care' by providing support at the point of arrest. My ongoing involvement with POPS has helped give me a clear understanding of why the 'continuum of care' concept is so essential. By engaging families from their first point of contact with the Criminal Justice System through to release POPS not only acknowledges the intrinsic value of family support in addressing re-offending, but enables families to play a key role in steering the future direction of support services for offenders' families.

I'm proud to be part of POPS team. It's humbling to know that over two decades later they continue in the struggle to empower offenders' families. Research has shown again and again that engaging offenders' families is not only essential to improving inter-family relations, it also reduces re-offending rates. It improves the communities we all live in!



Arrested? What now?

Gillian



The POPS 'continuum of care' concept begins at the point of arrest. Established in 2009, the Arrest Referral Helpline, funded by the Department of Education (formerly the Department for Children, Schools and Families), was pioneered in partnership with Greater Manchester Police in Trafford. POPS recognise the impact an arrest can have on a family and aim to pursue a more integrated response to identifying family support needs at this early stage. Family member Gillian reveals how she came to contact the helpline:

"I'd heard of POPS many years ago. I used to be a lawyer and I represented someone who ended up receiving a prison sentence. His wife was distraught as she had never visited a prison before" says Gillian, "She received a lot of help from POPS and eventually became a volunteer".

Years later Gillian found herself in a similar position when her partner was sent to prison. However Gillian faced a different challenge. "The thought of visiting my own partner was so humiliating. All the visits staff at the prison knew me because of my previous job". For seven weeks Gillian didn't go to visit her partner. "I couldn't face it, but it was so hard, my daughter was getting really upset about not being able to see her dad".

In the end Gillian took the initiative and got in contact with POPS. "I knew that if I didn't go to visit my relationship would fall apart. I realised it wasn't just about me but that it was affecting my daughter as well".

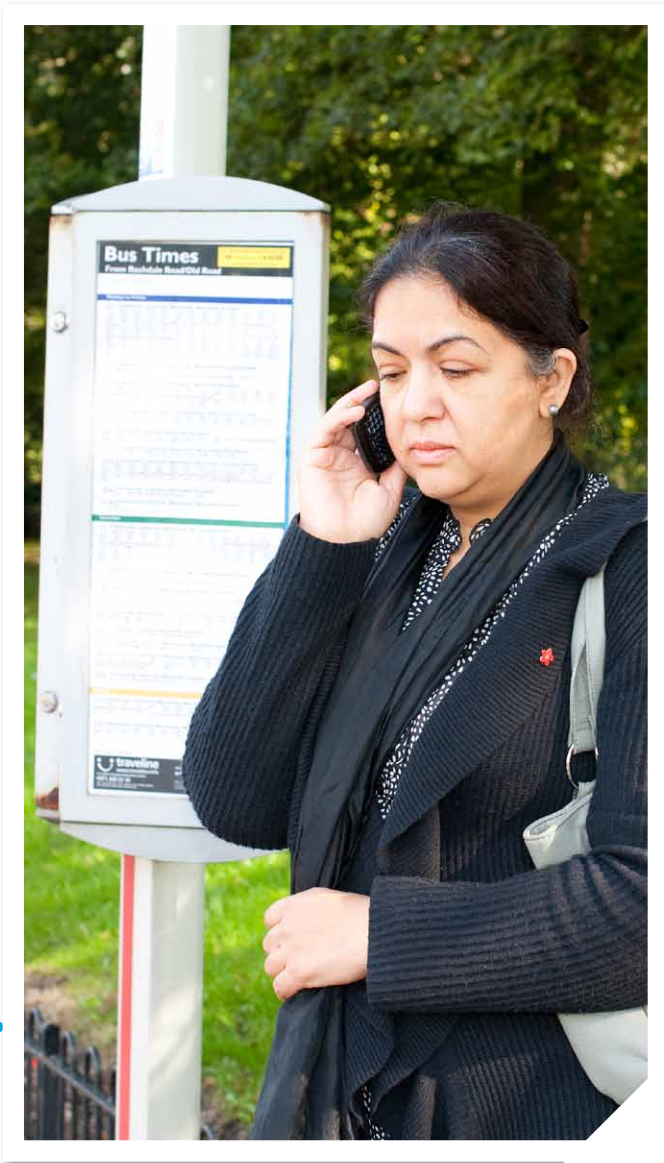
The first person she spoke to at POPS was the Arrest Referral Coordinator. "I explained the whole situation,

My first thought was 'where do I go? What do I do?'

that I was no longer practising as a lawyer and the embarrassment I felt about returning to an environment I knew only from a professional perspective. POPS gave me a lot of confidence, they reassured me that I hadn't done anything wrong".

Through POPS' working relationship with the prison they were able to contact the visits manager to explain the situation and establish if there would be any issues around Gillian visiting her partner. "There weren't any issues and I was reassured, so I booked a visit".

"The first time I visited the prison was incredibly daunting but I met up with the POPS Family Link Worker and she came with me to book in". It was the first time Gillian had come face-to-face with the prison officers as a visitor and not in her professional capacity as a lawyer. "Having the Family Support Worker with me really helped. The officers obviously recognised me but everyone was very polite and courteous". Since then Gillian has gone on regular visits and has recently begun the process to train to become a POPS volunteer, working on the helpline. "Without POPS I would not have gone on that visit. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend POPS to anyone in the same situation".



It began when Ben rang to say he wouldn't be home for tea.

Ben's mother, Kerry remembers the phone call vividly. "It was very traumatic when Ben told me he had been arrested. Being a mum you don't think about your own feelings first. You go into protective mode and think about your kids and how they are".

Ben faced a 12-18 month custodial sentence. "It was my worst nightmare come true", says Kerry, "Hearing your child might go to prison". Kerry had heard of POPS through a friend. "I typed 'POPS' into the internet and it came up with the website. I found the Arrest Referral Helpline number and gave them a ring".

Kerry spoke to the Arrest Referral Coordinator, who advised her about what would happen next and the support she could access. "I cried my eyes out and she listened. We were facing a terrible situation

but I knew it was important to find out about the practical stuff. It doesn't take the pain away but it made me feel better as a mother to make sure I knew what Ben could take with him and which prison he was likely to be taken to".

Continuing support for Kerry was offered by POPS in the form of a series of training sessions focused on 'dealing with stress'. "It was very helpful to be around people in similar situations. I am normally a very confident person but I lost it all with Ben's arrest. I was off work and didn't want to see anyone but the sessions slowly helped to rebuild my confidence".

Kerry is now back at work and is going to University in September. "POPS has helped me get back into society and helped me to look at things in a different light".

Kerry, Family member



I was first made aware of POPS in 2009 when they were invited to come to speak to the officers from the Sale Neighbourhood Policing Team.

We were first able to utilise the help of POPS with a family in Sale, who had been involved in a family dispute which tragically escalated in a serious assault. The incident was traumatic for all involved and there was a desperate need for support on all sides.

This was provided by POPS through the Arrest Referral Team and was very well received. We could not have given the time and support that

POPS provided for this family. I am extremely proud of the work they do and grateful to them. We often forget about the families left alone after others have been sent to prison and our job is seen as done. This has shown my team that the work continues for much longer and there is a great support organisation here, which we need to use as much as we can.

Laura Burgess, Inspector, Sale Neighbourhood Policing Team GMP



Off to Court

Caroline



For many families the shock of a loved one's arrest is swiftly followed by the intimidating prospect of appearing in

court. To support families through this often unfamiliar and bewildering experience POPS has piloted a court-based support project at Manchester City Magistrates Court in partnership with Greater Manchester Probation Service. Funded by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the project is headed up by a Family Support Worker supported by a team of volunteers recruited through Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Caroline tells us of her experience at court:

"It was when I reached the hospital that I realised the full extent of what had taken place."

"The police were there and they told me that James was going to be arrested, charged with stabbing his girlfriend. The reason he was in hospital was because he had also attempted to take his own life. I was totally stunned; it felt like I was in a dream. It didn't feel real". When James recovered sufficiently from his injuries he was arrested." The first time I went to court was really scary", says Caroline. "I had the contact details of a number of support organisations but it was POPS that really stood out, so afterwards I gave them a ring".

Caroline was put in contact with the POPS Family Support Worker at the court where her son was going to be sentenced. "It meant that when James' sentencing came along I had already been in touch with a lovely lady. She met me at the court and was very kind and supportive". The POPS Family

"They should have something like this at every court"

Support Worker was able to explain what the court would look like, who would be present and arrange for Caroline to sit in an area away from the victim's family.

"Words could never comprehend how I felt, and I'm sure I will never know how James felt. I wanted to speak with him, hold him, to let him know I would never be far away. That my love for him has never changed and never will". After James was sentenced Caroline was very distressed but she was immediately able to sit and talk with the POPS Family Support Worker about what had taken place. The support didn't stop there. "The Family Support Worker at the court referred me to the POPS team based at the prison. The POPS staff are all so friendly and supportive. They are always at the end of a phone. They have made a massive difference to our lives".

- In the past year 502 family members received support through the POPS Court Family Support Service.
- 49 family members were referred from the court project through the POPS 'continuum of care' to other Family Support Workers at different stages of the Criminal Justice System.
- Questions regarding what happens next, prison visits and submitting property were raised by 37% of family members encountered.
- 22 family members required support around benefits or financial assistance with travel costs to visit a relative in prison.

Volunteer week - June 2009

During Volunteer Week 2009, the POPS Family Support Team at Manchester City Magistrates Court were joined in their voluntary role by members of the Greater Manchester Probation Service. This additional assistance came in the form of Senior Probation Officer Ruth Keane, Probation Service Officers Pamela Simpson, Ruth Brooks and Gareth Collins and Operational Support Officer Aaron Rouse who all gave up their valuable lunch breaks to promote the service by providing leaflets and information to families coming to court.

The work undertaken by the probation staff throughout Volunteer Week 2009 helped to support the existing volunteer team all of whom are studying for a degree at Manchester Metropolitan University. The partnership POPS has established with Manchester Metropolitan University enables students studying law to come and experience the Criminal Justice System first-hand and learn about the challenges facing offender's families.

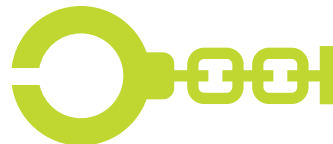
The role of the volunteer in and around the courtroom is to provide support to the families of offenders who have a loved one appearing in front of the judge or magistrates. This support can be in the form of good quality and accurate information about the next stage in the sentencing process. It often includes explaining what prison a loved one will be taken to and the visits process at that establishment, or

advising a family member on the best way to support an offender through a curfew or a Probation Service accredited programme. Support is also offered to families prior to a court hearing. Explaining what will happen in the court room during the hearing and some of the terminology used can make a terrifying experience a lot less daunting – regardless of the eventual outcome.

Alicia Craythorne
POPS Family Support Worker

I think POPS provides a very valuable service to the families of offenders, both within court and in the community. I have always been conscious that a supportive family can be a key factor in reducing re-offending as my work is very much focussed on NOMS Reducing Re-offending Action Plan. I was very excited to be given the opportunity to volunteer with POPS during Volunteer Week 2009.

Ruth Keane
Senior Probation Officer
Manchester City Magistrates Court



More than a visit

Louisa



POPS continue to invest time, energy and finance in improving the experience of families visiting prisons across the UK. At a local level this is achieved through successful tendering to run visitors centres across the north of England. Nationally POPS have enabled families to have significant input into the Visitor Centre specification. Louisa tells us of her experience:



'I didn't take the kids to see him at first'.

Louisa's partner, Andrew, was sentenced to nine months custody last year and was initially reluctant to take their children to visit. 'The first prison Andrew went to was not very child friendly. It was only when he was moved to HMP Kirkham that I started

to take the kids along'. It was at HMP Kirkham that Louisa first came across POPS through Karen, the Visitor Centre Coordinator. 'The kids had been really apprehensive about visiting, especially Lucy my eldest, but Karen immediately made them feel at ease. The way she spoke to us and made the children feel special really helped. It's made the process a lot easier'.

The POPS Visitor Centre staff at HMP Kirkham arrange activities for visiting children every week. 'There's a different theme every time we go, you can tell a lot of thought has gone into it. The girls go and play whilst we have our visit, but if we want to, we can join in'.

Karen and the other visitor centre staff go out of their way to make children feel relaxed and at home.

"Back in February I went to a prison for the first time in my whole 47 years. This was so new to me words could not tell anyone how I felt. Without POPS, I am not sure how I would have coped. They helped me all the way"

'What's lovely is that when the girls do a drawing one week, the next week the team will have made a display. The girls love to look for their work on the wall'.

'Karen also told us about the Family Days that POPS help run at the prison'. Family days are a chance for prisoners and their families to spend better quality time together and to have fun whilst partaking in a programme of activities designed to engage children of all ages. 'You forget where you are after a while. The kids were playing all sorts of games with their dad, musical statues, pass the parcel - I think it's a great idea. Lucy still talks about it months later'. 'The team are all so friendly. It makes it easier, knowing there's someone there'.





Making change happen



POPS currently run the following visitors centres:

- HMP Buckley Hall
- HMP Doncaster
- HMP Garth
- HMP Hindley
- HMP Liverpool
- HMP Kirkham
- HMP Risley
- HMP Wymott

At HMP Kirkham, POPS have started up a library in the visits hall with the help of Lancashire Libraries. They have supplied us with books to fill the library, book stands and children's boxes. We have also been given a book stamp, stickers, certificates etc. Now the children can choose a book to take home and stamp it out themselves. When they bring it back on their next visit, they tell me a bit about the story and then they receive a certificate. The library is a huge success, the children love it and the parents have said that their children cannot wait to come back.

Karen Flitcroft, HMP Kirkham Visitor Centre Coordinator

POPS and HMP Liverpool have worked in partnership to completely change the visits experience this year. We have new furniture within the whole of visits, the chairs within the visits halls are now leather look and comfortable. We have displayed the offender's art work on the walls and placed plants around the rooms. Through our partnership with Surestart we secured a £2500 grant which has been used to replace all our play area furniture in the hall and the visitors centre. We are running our family days on a more frequent basis and story book dads is back up and running.

Paula Funston, HMP Liverpool Visitor Centre Coordinator



Family Days

Family days are fantastic. The prisoners prepare a big buffet, which we sit down to eat as a family, and the POPS staff arrange loads of different activities.

The last one we went on they had arranged for a birds of prey display. A man brought in some owls and the kids had the opportunity to put on a big glove and have the owl land on their arm. They loved it. The prison is surrounded by a farm and the team brought over some cows and a calf for the children to have a look at. They have also set up some vegetable plots where the children can plant seeds and cuttings. It's all really good fun. The team play some mad games with the kids including one with a big parachute - even the governor got involved! I didn't expect any of this when my partner was moved; the POPS team do a great job.

Sarah, Family member

Family days are run at HMP Wymott as part of the wider children and families pathway strategy. These are closely linked to resettlement and reducing re-offending including parenting courses and the therapeutic community.

As part of the days, families are encouraged to interact, positively play and practice their parenting skills. POPS are fundamental in the running of these days. They work closely with the prison, families and prisoners and provide advice, guidance, activities and generally help with the organisation.

Holly Dalgleish, HMP Wymott Governor

Linking Families

Sarah



POPS have always provided a variety of services across its 'continuum of care' to address a diverse range of issues. A unique partnership with Manchester's Drug and Alcohol Strategy Team (DAST) has led to two POPS Family Link Workers being commissioned to work with families visiting HMP Manchester. Through the provision of in-depth support and advice, particularly around drug-related issues, the Family Link Workers promote the well-being of families and encourage them in their role as an 'offender supporter'. Sarah has experienced the benefits of such support:

Sarah's partner first spoke to a POPS Family Link Worker whilst he was on the drug treatment unit at HMP Manchester. He asked the worker to make contact with Sarah as he was aware she was struggling on her own.

"I have three young children, I needed to move house. It was riddled with damp", says Sarah. "I applied to the local housing association but I didn't get anywhere at first. They kept telling me there was something wrong with my references".

"It was great being able to talk to the Family Link Worker. She helped me sort out the problem with the references and I've since been offered two properties", says Sarah. "Now if I'm worried about anything I'll give the Family Link Worker a ring, especially if it's something to do with my partner. She helps to put my mind at rest".

One of the biggest issues Sarah has faced is the uncertainty of how long her partner was going to be in prison for. "He's got an IPP sentence which means we've got no release date to work towards", says Sarah "I've met a lot of people who don't know what an IPP is, or how it works". The Family Link Worker at the prison regularly help families understand and come to terms with the sentence their loved one is subject too. They were able to explain to Sarah exactly what an 'IPP' or Indeterminate Public Protection sentence involved and offer support around the possible outcomes. The support provided by the Family Link Worker includes encouraging families to attend consultations designed to promote the families' voice. Sarah has attended a number of these events where she has been able to talk about how her partner's drug use has affected her life and contribute to the development of advice materials for use by other families. The Family Link Worker also invited Sarah and her daughter to attend a child-focused family forum. During the event Sarah's daughter had the opportunity to express how she felt about her dad being in prison.

Since that time Sarah and her partner have talked more about how the situation is affecting their children and Sarah has seen her daughter open up about how she is feeling. "Now she will tell me if she's finding it hard not seeing her dad. She's completely changed since the forum".



POPS, in partnership with Manchester DAST provide resources for a family link worker service here at HMP Manchester. This service provides practical support to families and prisoners, particularly those with drug-related issues, working closely with prison staff and other partners of HMP Manchester. Feedback from families highlights a high quality support which is appreciated. The men in custody accessing this service find the assistance invaluable.

Paul Keeble, Head of Resettlement HMP Manchester



Tackling drug related issues together

- Over 200 families engaged, advised and supported by the POPS Family Link Workers at HMP Manchester.
- In partnership with the NHS, POPS facilitated accredited 'Relapse Prevention' training for families with the aim of equipping them to better support their loved one on their release from prison.
- Four family consultation events hosted by POPS about the Integrated Drug Treatment Service (IDTS) informed the design of a 'Concerned Other' information leaflet. This leaflet was produced in partnership with the NHS and is used to promote IDTS to other families supporting prisoners with drug issues at HMP Manchester.



'Beyond Conviction' Conference.
Raising the profile of offenders' children and families

Left to right, Martin Narey CEO Barnardos, Farida Anderson MBE CEO POPS, Marie McLaughlin Interventions Manager (NOMS), David Hanson MP.

Strength in partnership

POPS has always believed in the strength of partnerships in adding value and improving delivery. A key partnership over the past year has been our working relationship with Barnardos North-West which developed through a mutual recognition of the strengths of each others work and increasing cross-over in areas of service delivery as the profile of offenders' children and families has grown.

Our partnership with Barnardos North-West has had a positive impact on many levels. It has facilitated training for staff throughout the organisation, from play workers through to senior management, and reinforced our influence at a government level helping us to better integrate the work we do into local authority structures. Ultimately it has improved the service we are able



Barnardo's

BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

to provide to the children and families of offenders. As well as partnering to deliver front-line services within the Criminal Justice System this joint working approach has improved the access for families of offenders to services in the community. Developing this area of 'through the gate' provision is key for POPS as we look forward to strengthen the 'continuum of care' at point of release.

Serving Communities

Wendy



POPS recognise that the issues facing families of offenders sentenced to a community order can be just as complex as those faced by families supporting a loved one in prison. By assisting families to identify and address their own support needs POPS believe families can resolve their own issues and create a supportive family environment reducing the likelihood of re-offending. One of the specific projects POPS partner with through Greater Manchester Probation Service is the Intensive Alternative to Custody (IAC) pilot. Launched in April 2009 the Manchester and Salford IAC pilot targets 18–25 year old males offering an intensive community-based disposal as an alternative to prison including intervention from a full-time POPS Family Support Worker. Wendy tells us of the support she received and how it has impacted her and her son:

"It all started with my son getting an ASBO", says Wendy.

A few years later and Wendy's son got caught, along with his mate, selling cannabis in the local area. "I thought he'd been growing up having finished his ASBO", says Wendy "but they think selling drugs is ok, but it's not, it's not worth it".

Wendy's son was looking at a two year custodial sentence. "I went to court with him because I thought he was going to prison". As it turned out, Wendy's son wasn't sent to prison. Instead he received a suspended sentence and a one year community probation order with the IAC project.

"I had no idea what an IAC order was, no-one told me anything at first". It was when Wendy's son started his order that she received a call from Tracy, the POPS Family Support Worker, based at the IAC project. "Tracy explained all about the order. She said she was there to help me".

"With Tracy's help I've come off the drink. My son's so much happier now that I'm off it. I'm in a better position to support him and he is able to concentrate on completing his order because he's not worrying about me. Tracy's helped us so much, she's a diamond".

Wendy is a recovering alcoholic. Life hasn't been easy. "I really needed to speak to someone", says Wendy "Tracy came with me to visit a local walk-in centre where there were support groups I could go to during the day".

During one conversation with Tracy, Wendy also revealed the struggles she has had with literacy having left school at an early age. Wendy was keen to learn to read and write properly. "Tracy helped me get on a college course". With help from POPS Wendy now has a chance to change her life and in doing so better support her son.

"With Tracy's help I've come off the drink. My son's so much happier now that I'm off it. I'm in a better position to support him and he is able to concentrate on completing his order because he's not worrying about me. Tracy's helped us so much, she's a diamond".





The POPS Family Support Worker makes an important contribution to the Greater Manchester Intensive Alternative to Custody (IAC) pilot. Engaging with, and supporting, the families of young men subject to IAC Orders has helped the team take a holistic, family and community-centred

approach to tackling offending. The team has found that when better informed, families can often offer the right kind of support to help the person in their life achieve lasting rehabilitation. POPS Family Support has helped strengthen numerous family relationships and provided a new route for identifying and helping deal with difficulties within households. The service supports good parenting where children are present and has also helped tackle serious issues like domestic abuse, homelessness, racist harassment, mental health problems and 'hidden' substance misuse. POPS' innovative approach to encouraging young adults to improve the relationship they have with their family or partner has helped IAC achieve an excellent reputation in its first 18 months of operation.

Paul Pandolfo
IAC Business Manager



POPS' work in the community is not limited to our work with the IAC pilot. POPS have worked on a number of other projects this year in a community context.

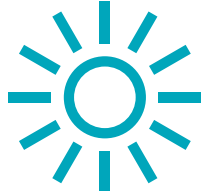
- POPS partnered with Community Payback in Manchester to devise training to support the families of offenders serving a community order. The training was designed to encourage positive family relationships and improve the support structures surrounding offenders to promote compliance and increase the number of offenders that complete their orders.
- The Family Support Worker based at Manchester City Magistrates Court has forged significant links with community probation teams across Greater Manchester, developing the referral process for families affected by a community order and facilitating wider promotion of the work of POPS.

The IAC Family Support Worker has had contact with the families of over 250 offenders.



Turning the Tables

Debbie



At POPS the voice and opinion of offenders' families is essential in the development of our 'continuum of care' and the services that POPS provide as part of this concept. However it imperative that the influence of families goes beyond the voluntary sector to implement change at a statutory and government level. Debbie talks about her experience and explains how she saw change come about through her involvement in a POPS family forum:

"I was at my mum and dad's house about to sit down for my dinner when there was a knock at the door", says Debbie. Opening the door she was met by the sight of a police officer presenting his ID. "My first thought was that my worst fears had been realised and that my partner had been involved in a car accident and was seriously injured". Instead the police told her that her partner had been arrested. Debbie's partner was eventually found guilty and sentenced to five and a half years in prison.

"I knew nothing when he first went to prison. There was very little literature available. You feel powerless". It was on one of her first visits to the prison that Debbie noticed a poster for a POPS family forum. "I wanted to get more involved so I applied to join it".

The family forum that Debbie joined brought together family members and prison staff, including governors, to discuss issues affecting prisoners' families. "Meeting with senior staff from the prison and being able to express our concerns and issues was really empowering. We didn't want to challenge everything the prison did; we just wanted to make circumstances better".

"At first the prison were anti-everything. But slowly things began to change". As a result of the family forums regular family days were set up. The forum also appealed to the prison to clarify the opening hours of the visitors centre and the ID documents required for a visit. This resulted in clearer information being made available to the general public. "We tackled all sorts, from the cleanliness of the desks in the visits room to staff attitudes"

In time Debbie's partner was moved to HMP Kirkham. She got involved straight away in setting up a family forum at the prison. "It's about having a voice to change things. I respect the job the prison staff do, they are just human beings. If I'm angry and bitter they won't necessarily listen but if I put across an idea in a polite, reasonable manner, they will listen and do things about it".



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The family forum at HMP Wymott was set up in December 2009. Family forums give extra support to prisoners' family members and enable specific problems and concerns to be discussed in a confidential manner.

Guest speakers, invited by the forum members to address specific queries, have included representatives from Alcohol Awareness, the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) and a Personal Officer giving an overview of his role in supporting the prisoners. Family members have found the meetings to be useful in realising they are not alone in the problems they encounter while their loved ones are serving their sentences. They are also helpful in developing solutions to issues which otherwise may not have been as apparent.

Family member

Our biggest achievement through the family forum at HMP Risley has been increasing families' access to the visits bookings line. The booking provision previously consisted of one phone line and one clerk but after consultation with the families around the difficulties they faced in booking a visit this has been increased to two lines, two clerks and the option to book whilst on a visit. It has made the process a lot less stressful for families.

Andrea Whittaker
HMP Risley Visitor Centre Coordinator

Delivering Services, Influencing Change



'Securing the Future' Conference.
Staff from POPS, Surestart and HMP Buckley Hall.

SureStart

By raising the profile of offenders' families POPS aim to empower families to bring about change in all areas of their influence. In developing services and encouraging external agency engagement around the 'continuum of care' concept, POPS seek to go beyond the Criminal Justice System to develop the support available for families of offenders in their local communities.

Our partnership with Surestart began as a creative approach to delivery at HMP Buckley Hall Visitors Centre in which resources were pooled and experience shared to maximise outcomes and share costs. In time this led to the 'Securing the Future' Conference through which POPS, Surestart and HMP Buckley Hall were able to share good practice around partnership working and demonstrate what can be achieved through our collective strengths. Raising awareness of the wider work of POPS in turn resulted in further opportunities to partner with Surestart in Bolton. Commissioned to conduct a mapping exercise of the services available to offenders' families in the area, POPS were once again in the position to give families the opportunity to express their views and affect change. The research concluded with a series of recommendations that sought to influence not only local service delivery but to inspire wider transformation around the way in which services approach offenders' families.

Putting Race **back** on the Agenda

Aalia



Race equality has always been an important part of POPS' service delivery, both for families from diverse cultural backgrounds and for BME offenders who are dealing with elements of institutional racism on a daily basis. POPS have worked tirelessly to highlight the issues raised by BME offenders and their families, and to provide a voice for them to be heard. Both policy and practice have been influenced during the course of the year and POPS remain committed to ensuring that race issues are kept firmly on the agenda of all agencies who provide a service within the Criminal Justice System. It is essential that recommendations for future development of such services are embraced by those who can bring about change. Aalia's story explains the importance of services that understand the specific issues facing offenders' families from BME communities:

Aalia considers she's a good mother.

She grew up in an Asian family with strong values. When her sons were born she brought them up to live by similar principles. Aalia's family have lived in the same area for years; the kids always attended school. They are part of a close knit community where people look after each other. But her life as she knew it was turned upside down when her sons were arrested. 'It was a total shock to the system when all four of my sons were arrested'.

At first Aalia struggled to talk to anyone. "I couldn't talk to my family, I was so ashamed. I didn't go out for months. I just didn't want to bump into anyone. I gave up my

university course as I couldn't concentrate." By isolating herself from everyone around her Aalia hoped to avoid people's questions. Contact with the police was frowned upon in the local community so pretending everything was normal seemed to be the only option.

'I couldn't bear the thought of what they might think about our family. I felt humiliated. Was it all my fault? What happened? I had no idea what to do. I was really stressed and couldn't do anything without wanting to cry.' It was on her first visit to the prison where her sons were being held on remand that Aalia came across a leaflet advertising the POPS Family Support Service.

"I really wanted to speak to someone" says Aalia. "I felt like I had been bottling up all my emotions for weeks and had no-one to turn to so I gave POPS a ring when I got home. The lady I spoke to was really helpful. It was great to just be able to talk about how I was feeling and ask all the questions that had been on my mind".

From that initial phone call Aalia has gone on to access regular support from POPS. She considers it more than just an advice service. "I could hear simply from their tone of voice that they cared. It was such a relief to talk to someone who understood". With the support of POPS Aalia has come to feel more in control of her situation. "The situation is still challenging, two of my sons are now serving prison sentences, but I have slowly begun to tell people around me what has happened and things have started to get easier".



Addressing Mental Health in BME Communities

In 2008 POPS was asked, alongside the Pakistani Resource Centre (PRC) and the African Caribbean Mental Health (ACMH) project to take part in a piece of research to identify barriers to the commissioning of mental health services to BME offenders. POPS interviewed over 30 BME prisoners at HMP Haverigg and questioned them about their cultural needs, health and well-being and environment. From these responses, and others gathered by PRC and ACMH about secure units and community-based services, the 'Informing Commissioning' report was produced. As a direct result of the recommendations of this report, POPS was asked to "house" a new post, namely the Race Equality Coordinator.

The objectives of this post, over a two year period are to improve mental health services for BME Offenders in Greater Manchester, provide strategic direction, and facilitate and improve communication with the aim of encouraging effective partnership working.

In January 2010 the Race Equality Coordinator set up the Race Justice Mental Health Forum, which now meets quarterly bringing together senior staff from prisons, probation, and police, CPS, Secured Mental Health Units and the NHS to discuss BME Offenders mental health needs and to take appropriate action where necessary to improve services.

I think POPS is doing a brilliant job in improving mental health service provision for BME offenders, identifying and sharing good practice.

**Atif Kamal, Community Development Worker,
Pakistani Resource Centre**

Discovering Identity



"Completing Routes2Roots has allowed me to understand myself, my actions and how I am going to change".

Marlon, Routes2Roots participant

In 2009, POPS, in partnership with Merseyside Probation Service (as part of NOMS) delivered its Routes2Roots course to a group of men from BME backgrounds under supervision in the community. In August of the same year the course was also delivered to 12 prisoners in HMP Everthorpe. Designed to empower BME offenders, the course utilises community-based facilitators to encourage participants to explore their culture and historical background and to discuss personal experiences. The course aims to tackle issues of racism and provide offenders with the opportunity to learn new skills. By doing so, the course enables those taking part to better engage with the conditions of their license and eventually prepare them for employment. The use of community-based facilitators encourages and motivates participants through the use of peer mentoring, shared experiences and by providing a 'safe space' to explore issues pertinent to them.



Identifying Issues

POPS have also completed a Muslim Prisoners Families survey on behalf of HMPS Equality Group as part of the Race & Equality Action Group (REAG) which identified particular issues that these families face when supporting somebody in custody. POPS partnered with the Ethnic Minority Training & Education Project, EMTEP (Newcastle) and the Refugee and Migrant Development Association, RAMDA (Manchester) to access families from Asian, South Asian and East African origins. Issues identified such as access to information, cultural support, understanding the system, stigma, safety of the prisoner and resettlement opportunities will be pursued by POPS with the relevant agencies.

Platforms and Partnerships



Left to right, Farida Anderson MBE, Diane Curry OBE, Anna Davie.

Anna Davie, POPS trustee and volunteer, talks to Farida Anderson MBE and Diane Curry OBE about the future for POPS and its challenges.

Anna: This year we've seen the 'continuum of care' model firmly established so what comes next?

Farida: Well, we've worked really hard over the last twenty years to engage the Prison and Probation Services, and more recently the Youth Offending Service, to raise awareness of the importance of family involvement within the Criminal Justice System. But this issue has a much wider impact: on education, health and local authorities. My vision would be for us to spend the next twenty years putting families on the agendas within these sectors. That's the target.

Diane: We've got to continue to promote the 'continuum of care' and encourage other sectors to understand and engage with the families of offenders in order to encourage the development of appropriate interventions for this group. Ultimately, our aim is to see the 'continuum of care' concept embedded into existing structures and understood by those we are asking to deliver on it.

Anna: What is POPS role in this?

Diane: POPS can't be the deliverer of all services, but what we can be is the enabler of other organisations to assist them in providing what they should be for this group of people. It should never be just us. It's about bringing other people to the table and raising awareness of prisoners and offenders' families needs amongst other agencies.

Farida: POPS can only develop and maintain its service if we understand and welcome the experience of people who are currently going through this situation. The minute we don't want to hear what they say, the minute we say 'we've done all that, it's not relevant anymore', then we may as well close the door.

Diane: We must give people a chance to come and air their opinion, to be heard. Families coming into POPS are given a platform from which to speak out but we also challenge opinions and help families to understand how to affect change.

Anna: What are the challenges for the future?

Farida: The challenges for the future will be around commissioning and competition. It will be important to establish whether or not the future for the charitable sector providing public services will be one in which partnerships are encouraged. There's a danger, with competition in commissioning, that what we've always previously worked on in harmony becomes divisive.

Anna: How can POPS overcome these challenges?

Diane: It depends on how the commissioning process develops. If partnerships are integral to the commissioning process then that makes you look at who you can partner with because you know you're not going achieve anything by yourself. POPS can argue that the process of commissioning has so far been a positive thing as it has enabled us to do much more. It's been a learning process and certainly a challenge. But because our ethos isn't intrinsically self-centred we have looked for new partners to take up commissioning opportunities with and those partnerships are now beginning to flourish and develop.

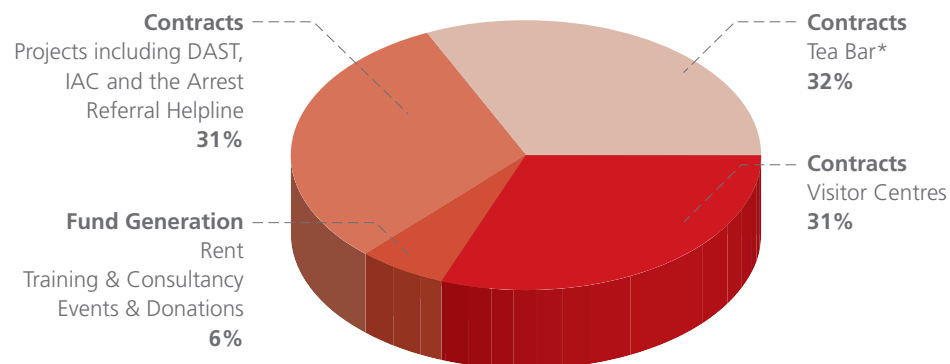
Anna: Can you give an example?

Diane: Our partnership with Barnardos North-West is one example where both agencies realised they couldn't satisfy all elements of delivery but that by working in partnership we could add value to each others work. As a result we embarked upon a process of commissioning for visitor centres. Now all our visitor centres that have been through the commissioning process have Barnardos as partners. And it's not just about service delivery. The key is our shared ethos and experience which doesn't simply add value but multiplies it.



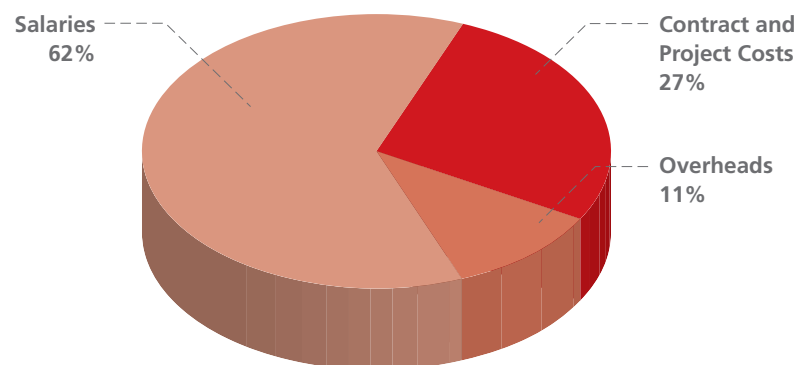
Financial Overview

Income



HMP Buckley Hall*
HMP Doncaster
HMP Garth*
HMP Hindley*
HMP Kirkham
HMP Liverpool*
HMP Risley*
HMP Wymott*

Expenditure



Despite the global financial downturn POPS ended the year 2009-10 in a strong position with our gross income exceeding that of the proposed budget at £1,169, 526. Savings across the organisation led to a total expenditure of £1,136, 914. A welcome £32k surplus has led to a 7% increase in the total reserves to £493,233, which will in turn enable POPS to commit some of its reserve strength to further develop and expand the charities activities in the coming year.

POPS' financial performance has continued to develop in line with the trustee's budget plan, supporting the progress of the current business plan. The percentage break-down of income and expenditure is illustrated above. If you would like to view a copy of the full audited accounts for 2009-10, please contact our finance department.

Partners and Funders

POPS has partnered with and/or been funded by a variety of organisations over the past year. Our thanks go to:



Thanks

POPS would like to thank all our staff, volunteers and trustees for their commitment and hard work throughout the year.

Particular thanks go to all those who contributed to this review, particularly the families and individuals who have told their stories. For your words, creativity and commitment – thank-you.

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