Executive Summary Doctoral Research.

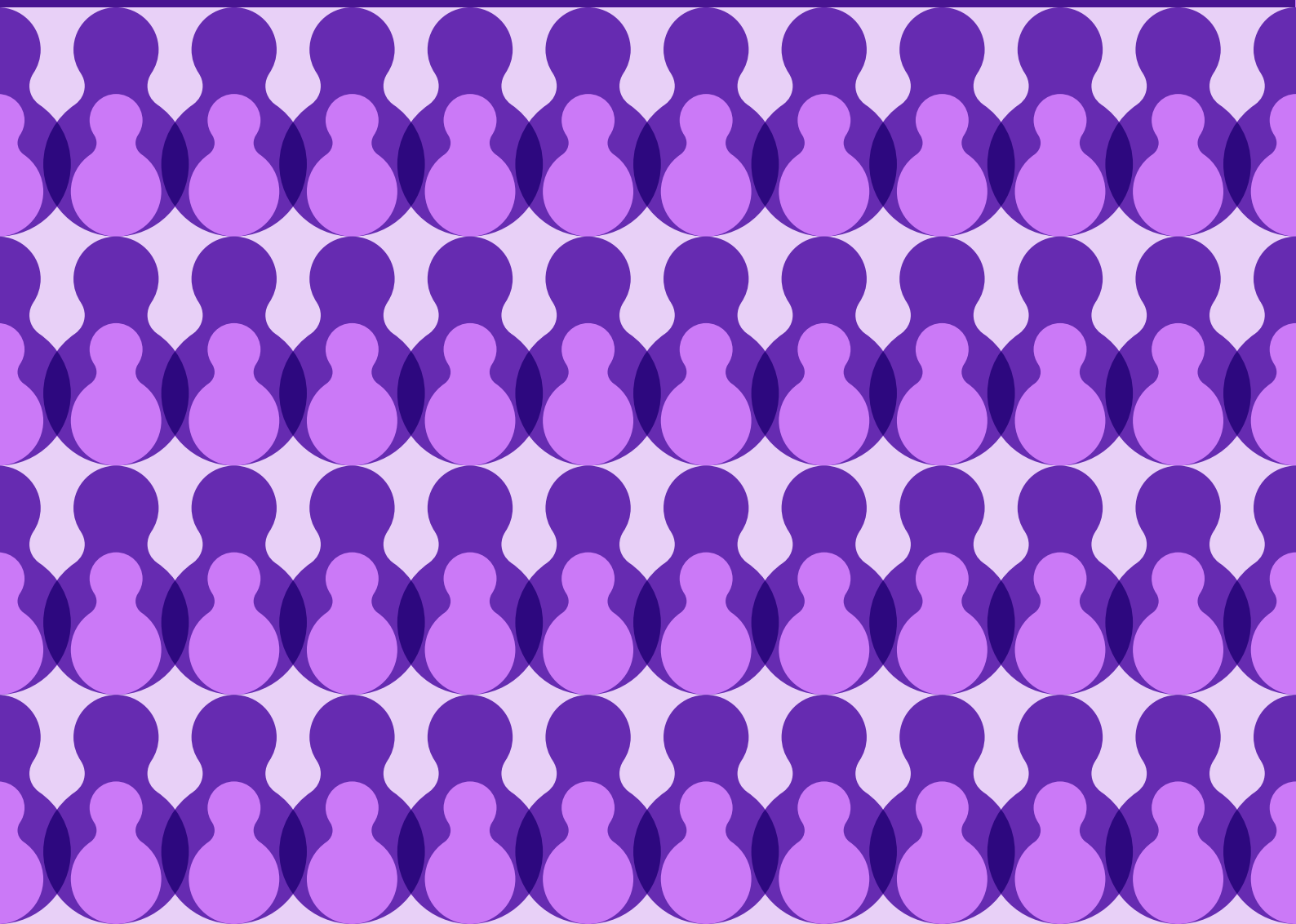
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

Motherhood Challenged:

Exploring the persisting impact of maternal imprisonment on maternal identity and role.

Dr Lucy Baldwin

January 2021



Thank you to the mothers who generously and bravely gave their time and emotions to this study. The mothers and their circumstances are presented in greater detail in the original thesis than is possible in this document. Nonetheless this document presents and centers your voices.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to Beth and Emma, two mums who tragically died during this research study. They are not, and never will be, forgotten and this work is dedicated to their memory and the memory of all those who tragically have lost their lives in or after prison.

The full Doctoral Thesis can be found here.

https://dora.dmu.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2086/20813/Baldwin%20L.%20Final%20Thesis%20published%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Contents

1. Foreword

The persistent and enduring pains of maternal imprisonment, especially beyond five years post-release, is underexplored. A particular knowledge deficit concerns maternal identity and role. This medium scale study combined feminist and matricentric lenses to explore criminalised motherhood through prison and beyond. Via a matricentric (mother focused) and feminist framework[1], **43 c r i m i n a l i s e d** mothers contributed to the design and execution of this qualitative study through one-to-one interviews and letters. This research centres the Mothers[1] and their voices and experiences. The Mothers described criminalised motherhood as a paradox; they experienced judgement, discrimination and oppression alongside joy and hope. When motherhood was combined with criminalisation, the judgement and gaze the Mothers experienced in a patriarchally constructed and influenced society were magnified. Navigating through the criminal justice system and especially through imprisonment was a painful experience for Mothers. Not least because of the physical separation from children, but additionally due to institutional thoughtlessness and lack of recognition concerning their maternal identity, maternal emotions, and maternal role; which pointedly occurred at every stage of the criminal justice system. Subsequently resulting in missed and lost opportunities to support mothers and their children. The investigation produced new knowledge and understanding about the profound, traumatic, and enduring impact of maternal imprisonment. Furthermore, that impact was intergenerational and had implications for Mothers' w e l l b e i n g , e n g a g e m e n t i n r e h a b i l i t a t i o n a n d d e s i s t a n c e . In addition new knowledge was gained concerning the experiences of criminalised grandmothers, again especially in relation to maternal identity and role. The findings conclude with matricentric-feminist criminological recommendations for research, policy and practice that would contribute to understanding and challenging the social, political, and criminal justice context of mothers who break the law. If implemented, they would lead to fewer mothers being imprisoned and better outcomes for criminalised mothers, which in turn would facilitate better outcomes for children and society.

[1] Where 'mothers' is capitalised it refers to the Mothers in the study, known hereafter as the Mothers or Mothers

[1] See original study for more theoretical and methodological detail.

2. Introduction

This research investigated the intersection of motherhood and criminal in the UK in order to better understand the experiences of mothers and grandmothers before, during and after prison. The original thesis presented the argument, and provided evidence, to suggest that in order for the needs of mothers in the criminal justice system to be met more effectively, significantly more attention must be paid to their maternal-role, maternal identity, maternal emotions and maternal experiences, before, during and after imprisonment. The thesis concluded with a call for the development of a focused matricentric (mother focussed/factored in) approach in relation to criminalised mothers and imprisoned motherhood.

Context and Landscape in the United Kingdom

Currently twelve women's prisons in England accommodate around 4,000 women at any one time. Six mother and baby units (MBUs) have the capacity to hold 66 babies and 54 mothers[2]. Accounting for 5% of the overall prison population in the United Kingdom (UK), around 9,000 women are received into custody annually (Prison Reform Trust (PRT), 2019)[3]. Research suggests that 66% of those will be mothers of children under 16 years (Caddle and Crisp, 1997; PRT, 2015), meaning that an estimated 17,000 children are separated from their mothers annually, either via remand or sentenced imprisonment (Kincaid et al, 2019). It is important to emphasise that this figure does not include mothers of older children (i.e. over 18 years). Therefore, there is currently no accurate figure representing the *actual* number of mothers held in custody. Grandmothers and mothers of older children do not feature anywhere in the statistics; if included this 'invisible' population would place the actual number of mothers in custody as being much higher, nearer to 80% (Minson et al, 2015; Baldwin, 2015). Of the children left behind as a result of maternal imprisonment, only 5% remain in their own homes; 14% are taken directly into the care of the local authority (LA), and the fate of the remaining 81% is mixed. Some children are cared for by relatives (mainly their grandmothers), others are cared for by their fathers (9%), and the remainder are displaced into the care of other family members and carers (Caddle and Crisp, 1997[4]; Minson et al., 2017; Beresford, 2018). Significantly, these figures originate from the last large-scale study undertaken by Caddle and Crisp over twenty

[2] There is an allowance for twins, hence the difference in number.

[3] The Bromley Briefings Fact file collates Ministry of Justice (MOJ) information and statistics related to the CJS annually on behalf of the Prison Reform Trust (PRT),available at:
http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Publications/Factfile

[4] The Caddle and Crisp Study is over 20 years old, but is the only comprehensive study available in the UK at this time, and is therefore the study most often quoted – smaller scale studies, for example the Baldwin and Epstein (2017) study (and others e.g. O'Malley, 2018), present a slightly different picture - for example in the Baldwin and Epstein study (*ibid*), and O'Malley's, study 25% of the children were cared for by their fathers- therefore we have to accept the possibility that cultural shifts in parent care may have impacted on the Caddle and Crisp (1997) figures.

years ago. This study urgently calls for the undertaking and funding of an up to date large scale study, as currently, there remains no officially recorded data concerning the numbers of children affected by parental/maternal incarceration and the circumstances of their care. There were calls for this to change following a recent enquiry[5] and that call is repeated herein. What *can* be taken from the available statistics is that *most* of the UK female prison population are faced with mothering-related emotions and/or challenges during their imprisonment and following their release.

Women, prison and gendered aspects of incarceration have been extensively researched. However, research has tended to focus on gender-based interventions and outcomes in relation to how the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and prison estate responds to male and female law breakers/prisoners. Others have explored how differently males and females might experience custody. However, in the UK, prior to 2015 (thus at the outset of this study), mothers, and especially grandmothers[6] had often been 'invisible', subsumed or missing from research surrounding women and prison (Codd, 2008:129; Baldwin, 2015:140). The academic and policy landscape concerning mothers and prison has changed significantly over the duration of the study. The author's '*Mothering Justice; Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings*' (Baldwin, 2015) was the UK's first complete book to take motherhood as a focus in relation to the impact of the CJS. Since then, maternal imprisonment has garnered attention and a number of recent publications have added to the knowledge in this filed (Masson, 2019, Booth, 2020, Minson 2021).Thereby raising the visibility of mothers and grandmothers affected by the criminal and social justice systems by applying a matricentric lens to female criminalisation. The author is currently working several forthcoming publications, including a book based on our research about pregnancy, motherhood and imprisonment with Dr Laura Abbott, a book of this Doctoral research, and two edited collections focussed on the gendered and maternal experience of criminalisation, all of which will add to knowledge in this field. All are due to be published in 2022/23[7].

Maternal imprisonment has recently gathered momentum, garnering interest in the UK and Ireland, with studies related to maternal imprisonment, the effects on the children, and alternative means of responding to women/mothers in the CJS, representing a rapidly developing body of work. In addition, maternal imprisonment has recently been the focus of attention in developments in policy and

[5] Joint Human Rights Committee enquiry into maternal imprisonment and the rights of the child, chaired by Harriet Harmen QC: https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/right-to-family-life-inquiry-17-19/

[6] Grandmothers under the umbrella term of 'mother' are present in this research as there was no upper or lower age limit placed on the mothers included in the study.

[7] One edited collection is sole authored by me the other with Natalie Booth and Isla Masson as part of the WFCJ series- the second in the series the first available here https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/critical-reflections-on-women-family-crime-and-justice

practice, for example the Farmer review[8]; and in sentencing practices following the Joint Human Rights Committee into Maternal Imprisonment and the Impact on the Child[9] (both of which include evidence from this research). However, despite the increased interest in maternal imprisonment, and with the exception of Masson (2019) (who interviewed women up to five years post-release), there remains very little research in the UK relating to the *persisting* impact of maternal imprisonment on maternal-identity and longer-term mothering, or the relationship with supervision and desistance. His research responds to this gap in knowledge.

Tragically maternal imprisonment has recently been the subject of intense and focussed scrutiny due to the deaths of two babies born to two imprisoned mothers, and the death of another en route to hospital. There has never been a better or more important time to review current provisions and responses to women, and especially mothers who enter the criminal justice system. Thus although a 'summary' of the original thesis, the mothers voices are centred and central in this report, and as such the author makes no apologies for the volume and representation of voice contained herein.

The main aims of this research were twofold - to extend the knowledge and understanding of the impact of maternal imprisonment, and to determine its enduring effects in terms of maternal-identity and role.

The specific objectives of the research study were:

- To critically explore the in-prison and post-prison experiences of mothers, particularly in relation to maternal-identity, and the mothering role.
- To consider the relevance of motherhood and maternal experiences, in relation to sentence planning and post-release supervision.
- To develop an understanding of the enduring impact of maternal imprisonment.
- To formulate matricentric recommendations to inform and shape policy and practice in relation to mothers in and after prison.

Forty- three criminalised mothers contributed to the study by way of one-to-one interviews with post release mothers, and letters from mothers both in and after prison. I decided to focus solely on the mothers to facilitate the full representation of their experiences, however, I did also interview family members/caregivers, and professionals working with criminalised mothers, and although they in the

[8] Importance of strengthening female offenders' family and other relationships to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farmer-review-for-women
[9] See 3 also

end did not form part of the main thesis, the findings from those interviews will be written up in a forthcoming report/publications.

3. Conclusions of the study and recommendations

This research provides empirical evidence of the disproportionality of punishment when a mother is criminalised and imprisoned. Alongside reiterating the widespread enduring and intergenerational harm of maternal imprisonment caused to the children and families of imprisoned mothers; the study demonstrates the significant and sometimes life-threatening harm caused to an identity and role many women regard as their most important. It has demonstrated how motherhood, and mothering are defined, experienced and judged within broader structures and systems, but nevertheless motherhood remains an experience treasured by most women who choose to take on this role (whether mothers have children in their care or not). The study revealed the strength and resilience of mothers who continued to mother, often 'against the odds' in a society that judged them harshly.

Powerfully demonstrated by mothers in the study was the number of failed, missed and lost opportunities to support the mothers prior to imprisonment, and often before their criminalisation. Opportunities which had they been seized or acted upon, may have prevented many of the mothers entering the criminal justice system, and ultimately prison, at all. - which would have produced better outcomes for both the mothers and their children. Many of the missed opportunities dates back to mothers own childhoods but were certainly present in most mothers lives in the months and years preceding their imprisonment. Where good practice occurred, and it did, both in and after prison – mothers and their children benefitted from the support and understanding provided.

However, this research demonstrated that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) is, largely designed by men for men, and that in places it essentially fails criminalised women, especially mothers; whose needs have often been neglected or ignored. It further highlighted the continuation of missed and lost opportunities to support mothers and motherhood though imprisonment and post release – revealing that the consequences of that failure had an impact on mothers and children's lives, often for decades. Furthermore, the research highlighted the current failure of the whole Criminal Justice System (CJS), and particularly prison and probation, to fully embrace or take the opportunity to harness motherhood as a motivating and rehabilitative factor – which resulted again in many missed opportunities to facilitate prolonged desistance/ prevent reoffending. This clearly indicates a need for motherhood to be factored into supervision and sentence planning. Furthermore, this research calls for the acknowledgement that engaging criminalised Mothers in supportive relationships requires

understanding, compassion, mindfulness and resources, but that doing so will return a safer, more compassionate environment, which will in turn result in more positive outcomes for mothers and their children, and sometimes their children's' children.

Recommendations for Prison and Probation

1. **Extending Consultation and Training for All those Working with Mothers in the CJS[10].** Motherhood, maternal identity, role and emotions should be factored into all work with criminalised mothers. All prisons and probation services should consider and be willing to engage with consultation with relevant experts and organisations in how best they could work positively with criminalised mothers. Areas for improvement and the sharing of good practice should be formally pursued, and all staff working with mothers should have profession specific training on how to work effectively, mindfully, compassionately and safely with mothers (all mothers; to include grandmothers and mothers whose children have been removed from her care)[11]. Prisons and the Probation service should appoint a named individual responsible for coordinating policy and practice concerning mothers in prison and under supervision – this is over and above the recent policy guidance regarding pregnant and new mothers in prison.

2. **The Female Prison Estate Management Structure and Prison System Should be Reviewed.** The female estate currently inherits and replicates without thought aspects of the male estate that are not appropriate/suited to the female prison population. The closed prison female estate does not appropriately reflect the offending characteristics of the female population. Given the nature of women's low risk of harm offending, consideration should be given to redressing the balance of open/closed prisons in the estate (currently 10/12 are closed). Currently women are not always placed within the open/closed system according to their 'risk' category and as such they are unjustly experiencing the impact of closed prisons and a closed regime. Closed prisons and closed regimes, as this research has shown, can impact negatively on women, especially mothers. This then impacts negatively on women's/mothers' access to supportive relationships and how they are able to experience contact with children. The female estate should be restructured following trauma informed and gendered guidelines and be managed separately from the male estate. Moves between prisons should be kept to a minimum, but when moves must occur they must not occur at short

[10] The author is already involved in work with Sodexo to improve the care of mothers in prison as part of a 12 month consultation and training package – this should be extended and rolled out across the estate. Furthermore the author already provides training to prison officers via the 'Unlocked Graduates' schemes – this needs to be extended to the POALT. The author has also provided training to Social Workers and Probation Officers and has provided written guidance for Probation Officers which is now held on the Probation Service Intranet and is accessible to all current probation officers.

[11] See 9 also

notice (wherever possible) and should only be done in consultation with residents/prisoners and after checking whether this will impact negatively on any already booked or future visits/contact with children[12]. Whilst ever the courts continue to send mothers of dependent children to prison (and obviously the preferred option is they do not), there must be a parallel approach to systematically improve conditions for mothers and children. I note some of the positive plans to improve visiting spaces, cells and overnight access/childcare ROTL etc, but this should be accompanied by a closure of the equivalent 500 spaces in the female prison estate. The reduction of the female estate should be being pursued, not its increase. A reduction would be in line with the long standing evidence base for this argument, and indeed recent Government stated intentions as outline in the Female Offender Strategy (2018)[13].

3. **Family Engagement and Social Workers in Prisons.** All prisons should have a permanently funded family engagement and prison based social work team (and ideally a return to prison based probation teams too). FEW's and SW's should work closely with mothers inside and families outside, as well as (where appropriate) with relevant services outside to ensure that mothers and families are receiving all of the support they need to maintain positive and active relationships – even where visits are not possible or taken up. FEW's and SW's should ensure that mothers involved in care proceedings have an advocate and are informed and involved in all decisions about their children[14]. Prisons should ensure that conferencing facilities are available for mothers to attend SW meetings where in prison attendance isn't possible or practicable. Mothers involved in care proceedings must be supported at all stages of the proceedings but especially post separation/adoption. Staff must be trained in this support. Mechanisms need to be in place to ensure mothers in this situation do not go undetected and unsupported. Childcare ROTLS must be extended where possible and practical to grandmothers and women who are grandmothers should be supported in all the same ways mothers of dependent children are – (e.g. eligible for family day visits). FEW's and SW's and Probation staff if (inside and outside), should work together to ensure that wherever possible mothers are better prepared for release, and particularly that they have an advance outside healthcare appointment made, and financial arrangements and housing in place for the point of release[15].

[12] Worthy of note are the proposals put forward by Governor Carl Hardwick in relation to the structure of the female estate.
[13] The Female Offender Strategy, a new programme of work to improve outcomes for female offenders published June 2018, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy
[14] There is a pilot running currently at HMP Low Newton regarding maternal advocacy ran by NEPACS and under evaluation by Dr Hannah King and Dr Kate O'Brian at Durham University https://www.nepacs.co.uk/post/new-service-launched-to-help-strengthen-family-ties-for-prisoners
[15] See Exit model successfully ran by Sodexo at HMP Peterborough- contact Bev Stephens at HMP Peterborough for details

4. **Mothers/Family Lead for Probation.** Currently there is a commitment and drive to ensure that all Probation services for women are gendered and trauma informed, this is a welcome pursuit. The trauma of maternal separation and maternal experiences within the CJS must be factored into this trauma informed awareness. The maternal role, maternal identity and maternal emotions, as this research has shown, often remain the primary concern for imprisoned and post release mothers. Currently mothers do not feel acknowledged or supported in supervision concerning their motherhood and this has the effect of missed and lost opportunities to engage and motivate mothers in their rehabilitation and prolonged desistance. Each region should have a named individual responsible for coordinating policy, practice and training to ensure that family life and motherhood is accounted for in terms of knowledge, understanding and supervision.

Recommendations for Wider Services

1. **Magistrates and the Courts.** Current 'recommendations[16]' provided to magistrates regarding the sentencing of mothers must become 'requirements'. Improved, consistent and compassionate Magistrate's decision making is key reducing the impact of maternal imprisonment. There must be increased consistency, accountability and responsibility placed on magistrates to actively pursue community options in relation to nonviolent convictions in women, especially mothers. The remand of mothers in all but the most extreme of circumstances must cease. Pregnant women should not, again except in the most extreme of circumstances, be sent to prison or remanded. There should be consideration given to 'Women Only' courts, where Magistrates in those Courts have *chosen* to sit following gender specific training. Furthermore, they should have matricentric (mother focussed) and trauma-informed training concerning women's pathways into and out of crime and the impact of imprisonment on women. There should be a return to the pursuit of the abolition of short prison sentences for nonviolent offences [17] . Where imprisonment is considered the *only* possible/appropriate outcome at court, no mother with dependent children should *ever* be

[16] See the Bangkok Rules https://www.penalreform.org/issues/women/bangkok-rules-2/ and additional guidance provided by the report following the Joint Human Rights Committee Inquiry into Maternal separation and the Rights of the Child and the expanded guidance (effective from Oct 1st 2019) https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/overarching-guides/magistrates-court/item/general-guideline-overarching-principles/
see also https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/155167/judges-must-consider-interests-of-child-when-sentencing-mother-urges-committee
and the work of Dr Shona Minson on maternal sentencing https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/people/shona-minson

[17] See Baldwin and Epstein (2017) Short but Not Sweet: The impact of short period of imprisonment on mothers and children. https://www.nicco.org.uk/userfiles/downloads/5bc45012612b4-short-but-not-sweet.pdf

sentenced unexpectedly or without a PSR. In the case of *all* mothers, if a custodial sentence is imperative and likely, there must be a period of deferment to allow mothers to make provision for her family and prepare her children. Immediate custody and/remand should cease, and remand should *never* be used if a custodial sentence would not be a *definite* outcome at sentencing, as currently over 60% of women remanded do not go on to receive a custodial sentence (PRT, 2019). This would avoid situations as described in this study where mothers were imprisoned not knowing who would collect her child from school, and which had a dangerous and detrimental impact on the Mothers mental wellbeing, not to mention the Childs. Furthermore, all magistrates must be fully aware of the community resources ad alternatives to custody available in their local area.

2. **Police.** Police must be mindful and compassionate of maternal distress when they have mothers in custody and must take steps to address this. Furthermore, they must factor in children wherever possible when they are arresting parents – wherever possible arrests must not be witnessed by children and if they are Police must consistently and routinely provide someone to the family to explain what will happen to their parent and to inform and comfort the child in the immediate post arrest period. Information posters and booklets should be provided for parents and pregnant mothers in the police station in case of immediate remand to inform them of the procedures for contacting children/carers or making arrangements and/or to apply to MBU spaces where appropriate.

3. **Schools and Colleges**. All schools and colleges must appoint a designated individual whose role it will be to support children with an imprisoned parent. This individual must have specific knowledge and training about what support is available to such children in their community, as well as providing direct support to the child. Schools must 'authorise' time off school for prison visits so as missed schooling for visiting parents is not logged as an 'unauthorised absence' (which it is currently).

4. **Social Work.** There should be a new 'branch' of social work called 'Criminal Justice Social Work' (similar to the current system in Scotland). Criminal Justice social workers should have teams based both in the community and in every prison (this should happen even if this 'new branch' is not created). These CJSW's will work positively and proactively with all criminal justice agencies at every stage of the criminal justice journey (pre criminalisation, arrest, court, imprisonment, post release). Criminal Justice Social Workers will work directly with prisoners/residents and prison and community professionals to 'bridge the gap' between the inside and outside, ensuring that prisoners will not be released homeless/without access to healthcare/ in-place post release support. Furthermore they will play a significant role with

mothers who are involved in care proceedings to ensure that mothers are informed and involved at all stages and that *both* the best interests and needs of the child and the best interests and need of the mother are considered and supported (even in the event of an agreed mother/child separation).

5. **Multi Agency Working**. Improved multi agency support for Mothers and Motherhood. Tailored support via specific matricentric policies and procedures. Support for mothers and motherhood needs to be factored in at all stages of the CJS (from prearrest, through arrest/court /prison/release), to avoid the missed and lost opportunities to support mothers at key moments in their lives. Furthermore, when mothers have a child removed into Local Authority Care (for any reason) – this must trigger a post separation support package for mothers. This must address the background, context and cause of the removal (i.e. substance misuse as a result of trauma), as well as post separation grief and emotions. This will reduce the chance of repeat future removals thereby improving the lives of mothers and children and being cost effective to society in every way.

6. **Women's Centres.** Women's centres must be permanently and centrally funded to facilitate the development of stable secure, community-based provision. This research has echoed what is previously known, i.e. that women are more effectively supported and less likely to re-offend if their needs are met in the community in a gendered, trauma informed way. There needs to be some recognition of the enduring impact of maternal imprisonment with the possibility of ongoing support (for mothers no longer subject to licence), or an outreach for post-release support funded and attached to and delivered by women's centres. Women's centre services could and should be expanded to include residential alternatives to custody-modelled on existing provision like Anawim and Trevi House – both of which are models of excellence.

7. **Family and Caregivers**. The Mothers described struggling with the family relationships during and after prison. To better support Mothers and families and improve outcomes, there must be improved support for caregivers and prisoner's families during the period and of incarceration and post-release. Mothers described how providing formal support for families engaged in caregiving for children of imprisoned parents especially financial support, would improve the stability of caregiver relationships and reduce the tensions between caregivers and imprisoned mothers. This would result in better co-parenting partnerships and improved outcomes for Mothers and their children. Furthermore, Mothers stated that positive caregiving relationships would improve their mental health and wellbeing in custody, enabling them to engage more fully in sentence planning and rehabilitation. Family engagement workers in the

prison should be permanently funded and should work actively with in prison and out of prison social workers to ensure support is readily available and that mothers have access to advocacy and involvement in any childcare proceedings that may be ongoing.

8. **Social Justice.** An increased commitment to social justice and tackling gender inequality and poverty. Women's pathways into offending are often rooted in poverty, disadvantage, multiple personal challenge such as substance misuse, mental ill health and abusive relationships. Providing permanent, well-funded resources to facilitate comprehensive, multi-agency, gendered support to women before, during and after criminalisation will have a significant and positive impact on outcomes for women and children.

4. Introduction to the Research, Findings and Discussion

Introduction and the Need for a Gendered Response

Prison is a gendered experience. The Corston Report (2007) provided an opportunity to stimulate and provoke the passions of activists and academics working in the field of women's imprisonment. Baroness Corston highlighted the plight of women in prison. Although the report itself did not say anything new, it reiterated what the voices of researchers, feminist researchers and prison sociologists have been saying over the past thirty years; that prison does not work well for women. In fact, prison generally further creates additional harms. However, importantly, Corston did specifically highlight the pains of imprisonment concerning motherhood as a distinct area of discussion in its own merit, in a way that had previously been less visible in prison research and literature. Corston (2007) quoted Baroness Hale in her report:[18].

"*Many women [in prison] still define themselves and are defined by others - by their role in the family. It is an important component in our self-identity and self-esteem. To become a prisoner is almost by definition to become a bad mother.*" (Corston, 2007:2.17:20).

Corston (2007) made a total of 43 recommendations for a 'radical' overhaul of how women in the CJS are responded to. She reiterated in her report the gendered pathways into crime for women, recognising that women in the CJS are often victims as well as offenders. Because of this, women

[18] Corston J. (2007) A review of Women with Vulnerabilities in The Criminal Justice System. Home Office. http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/corston-report-march-2007.pdf

also need gendered pathways *out* of crime - pathways that ought to include wrap-around support and therapeutic interventions and *should,* wherever possible, be community-based and provided by 'one-stop-shop' women-focused specialist centres.

Since the original report and the follow-on report (Corston, 2011) were published, there have been *some* positive and meaningful changes in the women's prison estate regarding improving physical conditions for women in custody. Such changes have come via the broader ambition for positive change of policy makers, academics and practitioners: to reduce women's imprisonment generally, to increase community pre- and post-prison support and to maintain family links. The Female Offender Strategy (FOS, 2018) launched '*a new programme of work to improve outcomes for female offenders*'[19]. The FOS at last included a stated intention to pursue the development of small community-based 'alternatives to prison', although the details of how this will be achieved in terms of timescale and sources of funding remain unclear some two years later. Although the strategy clearly refers to the importance of family relationships and making positive change, until the recent female-focused Farmer Review[20], there had been significantly less focus or development of policy frameworks specifically related to maternal imprisonment, maternal-identity, or mothering during and after prison (Howard League, 2018; PRT, 2015; Baldwin, 2015; Masson, 2019).

The central role that women often play in the family has led many commentators to present the argument that maternal imprisonment is more disruptive to family life than paternal imprisonment (see also Enos, 2001; Baldwin, 2015, 2018; Booth, 2017, 2019; Masson, 2019). As Corston (2007) identifies this 'central role' is often at the root of many of women's anxieties in prison as they continue to attempt to mother and undertake mothering duties whilst incarcerated. Not all imprisoned mothers will experience prison in the same way or have the same emotional reactions to their experience, nor will all mothers have contact and care arrangements before, during or after prison. Some mothers may see prison as a safe space (O'Malley, 2018) or as a positive opportunity to seek support and effect change either for themselves or for themselves and their children. For others, and research suggests it is the majority, it may feel more like the end of the world. Individual and emotional circumstances and experiences will have relevance in the lived experiences of mothers in and after prison. However, whether or not mothers had their children in their care prior to custody or when they leave prison, from the limited research examining mothering-related emotions and incarceration, it is clear that motherhood and mothering emotions represent an additional layer of complexity, which is

[19] The Female Offender Strategy, a new programme of work to improve outcomes for female offenders published June 2018, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy

[20] See also 7.

of significant relevance to those working with many women in prison (see Baldwin, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019).

There have long been debates about whether men and women are, or indeed should be, treated 'the same' in relation to criminal justice. Carlen (2002) argued that there is no solid consistent statistical evidence to support either argument, further suggesting that, even if there was, '*such evidence would be difficult to compute because of the difficulties of untangling gender criteria from others, such as those relating to racism and class* (2002:7). In either instance, chivalry or harsher responses are not metered out equally or consistently to all female criminals. In order to effectively and successful rehabilitation account must be taken of the differing pathways into and out of criminality between men and women. Furthermore that understanding and mindfulness must underpin work with criminalised women and as such must be gendered and trauma informed.

Motherhood is a significant variable which affects outcomes for women in the CJS; the layered identities of women (in terms of race, class, status, motherhood), bear a significant relationship to their experiences within the CJS. Ultimately, not a great deal has changed for women entering the CJS: they are still measured against longstanding ideas and ideals of gender norms and femininity, rendering them doubly or, when it comes to motherhood, even triply deviant.

Criminalised and Imprisoned Motherhood

Walker and Worrall (2000: 28) concluded that female prisoners suffer in distinct and 'special ways', specifically related to loss of fertility, loss of opportunities to be a mother and loss of children or relationships with children. This research has shown that imprisoned mothers experienced profound suffering concerning the loss of their children, their mother status, their maternal identity and role. This echoes previous research findings that the mother's found the 'stripping of the mother role' was 'traumatic'. It is known that female prisoners suffer in distinct and 'special ways', specifically related to loss of fertility, loss of opportunities to be a mother and loss of children or relationships with children.

Arguably, there is no other role in life that attracts as much judgement and pressure as the role of 'mother'. Expectations of motherhood are such that a mothers are deemed to 'just know' how to mother, and that she will do so naturally, unthinkingly and lovingly and selflessly, sometimes against all odds. Furthermore she will be measured against a set of 'standards' the author calls a mother's code of conduct. Mothers deemed to be falling short are harshly and almost universally judged. When a women is convicted of a crime and it is reported in the media, the article will always lead with 'mother

of …/grandmother of….' , the same is not generally true of male convicts. Yet how hard is it to mother well in poverty, or through substance misuse, mental ill health and/or domestic abuse ? – all of which we know is prevalent amongst criminalised women. As baroness hale has stated, a criminalised mother is deemed to be by default a bad mother. This has a significant impact on women, and one that is all too often ignored, sometimes with fatal consequences, guilt is a life threatening emotion.

Research suggests that separation from their children is thought to be a challenging and damaging aspect of women's imprisonment, not least because of the disruption caused to the mother role. Baldwin (2015) suggests that despite facing multiple disadvantages, many - if not most - imprisoned mothers will regard their children as their primary concern throughout their incarceration. Particularly those who had the care of their children pre-prison. The author's earlier work (Baldwin, 2015, 17,18), echoes previous research findings concerning the emotional challenges for imprisoned mothers, highlighting the need for maternal emotions to be factored into responses to mothers in criminal and social justice settings. The findings of this study extend that work and the work of other researchers in this field further and provide evidence for the absolute *necessity* of working positively, compassionately and supportively with mothers in prison regarding their maternal-emotions, maternal-identity and maternal-role. This is important whether or not mothers currently have the care of their children or may be likely to care for them in the future. There is little doubt that the conditions in which a mother is imprisoned has a significant relationship with how she adjusts to and copes with prison, and also impacts on her ability to maintain a maternal-role and her relationships with her children and wider family.

As demonstrated by the wider study, prison continues to be used readily for women and mothers because reactions to crime are fuelled by 'moral emotions' (Canton, 2015; 59). Reactions and responses to crime and 'criminals' do not always reflect the harm they cause but reflect how far removed they are from the accepted norms and values of society. Thus, and as this study has demonstrated, mothers committing crimes are deemed to be acting outside not only society's norms, but also outside the social, emotional and moral framework of motherhood. This represents a perceived perversion of degradation of maternal 'duties' and contributes to why criminalised mothers are judged so harshly- formally and informally.

5. The Impact of Maternal Imprisonment; Experiences of Mothers in Prison

It became very clear during the research that to fully understand the mothers descriptions of the impact of their imprisonment, the mothers broader life experiences and their journey through the whole of the criminal justice system had to be factored in. Most of the mothers in the study, even those who were imprisoned for a first offence, had experienced multiple traumas and disadvantage. Significantly many had previously sought help and support and not been given it/had access, or significantly many had been afraid to ask for support for fear of inviting unwelcome attention into their lives, their biggest fear being losing their children. This resulted in missed and/or lost opportunities to support mothers (and their children), effectively, sometimes meaning that imprisonment became likely or inevitable where it could potentially have been avoided completely.

5.1 Pre-Prison Circumstances

Echoing previous research, the mothers pre prison circumstances were marred by negative experiences around **'Poverty and Mental Health'** and **'Abuse, Trauma and Addiction'**. However, it was also noteworthy that many of the missed opportunities dated back to mothers own childhoods, and many of the mothers described how they have been poorly mothered or not mothered at all, i.e., the third pre prison theme of **'Mothers not being Mothered'**.

Missed and Lost Opportunities for Support

Several Mothers were living in severely disadvantaged circumstances in areas of high unemployment and few opportunities. Many were struggling with mental-health issues, often compounded by their financial circumstances. Mothers described how they felt like they were '*failing*' (Tia) by not being able to provide their children with not only the basics of living but also the latest TVs, trainers, and video games, seemingly increasingly important to a consumerist society and which present an added pressure on mothers to provide.

> *"It's ironic really, you fall into bad ways partly because you want to provide things for your kids, and you end up in prison and it all goes to shit anyway… I feel like a worse mum for being in prison than I did for being skint, but I just wanted them to have nice things you know, not even flash things… just nice things." (Tanya)*

This sense of failure impacted hugely on mothers mental wellbeing and was often experienced 'on top of' additional and pre existing trauma which had been caused by past experiences of abuse. *"Nothing went right in my life from the minute it* [childhood rape] *happened you know, I was a good kid you know, I had plans, I was going places… but after that I just couldn't cope, I was on a slippery slope to nowhere."* (Lauren)

> *"Sometimes just being alive was hard. I was so wrapped up in trying to cope with my past it was hard to live in the present you know… hard to be the mum I should be." (Beth)*

For several mothers this then triggered issues with addiction and substance abuse, which several mothers described as their 'only' way to cope.

> *"The only time I could cope was when I was off my head… the rest of the time it was just too painful… it's a lot to come to terms with you know… all that stuff… it tortures you." (Beth)*

> *"I hated the fact I'd become my mother, I needed alcohol to cope with everything… everything from my past and actually everything I was living in… it blocked it out, dulled the pain… I tried counselling but that literally did my head in… pardon the pun… so I just went back to drinking." (Mary)*

Cynthia had a long history of drug and alcohol abuse and had also used substances as a means of *'coping'.* Others described '*dealing with'* (Ursula) or *'blocking out'* (Lauren) their emotions and trauma as a result of abuse of one description or another:

> *"I was dealing with so many issues, so many issues, it was all brushed under the carpet… the abuse I mean… no one listened to me, so I drank, and I took drugs, I know drinking and drugs are self-harm really, but I didn't know how else to deal with it." (Cynthia)*

Like several mothers, as a direct consequence of her addictions, Nicola's three children were taken into care, two, several years prior to her most recent offence and one at her most recent sentence. Nicola had a long history of substance misuse and addiction which had begun in her teenage years. Nicola had been a victim of sexual exploitation and rape as a teenager and had struggled to cope with her experiences and emotions. Many of the women in the research had either asked for help and had not been supported, or they had not asked because they were scared on losing their children to 'the state'.

"I needed help, but I didn't need to go prison, if the help had been there I wouldn't have, and I wouldn't have been separated from her [daughter]*."* (Annie)

"*I really wanted help but knew if I asked then the spotlight would really be on me, and I just didn't want to risk losing my kids."* (Shanice)

' I knew I was sinking, but Id' lost one (child).. I knew if they knew I was struggling they just take my daughter too and I couldn't have coped with that…. But I just couldn't cope, couldn't deal with the violence and didn't see any way to get help so I lost them anyway .. and then that was it for me .. prison was actually my best and safest option' (Melanie).

Dee described once asking for help *'before things got really bad'.* She described being so *'off her head on crack',* she had *'passed out'* on the sofa and the social worker had climbed in through the window to see her. Dee disclosed to him she was smoking crack, that her partner had died and that she *'needed help'*. She described how he looked in her cupboards, and over the next couple of days phoned the school to check on the children's welfare:

"*He came back – climbed in the window again and said, 'Dee your house is clean, there is food in the cupboards, everything seems to be fine with the kids and school. I really don't know how I am supposed to support you'. My life fell apart after that."* (Dee)

Although commonly noted as a relevant criminogenic factor in the backgrounds of women in prison (Carlen, 1983), women's experiences of being mothered has not yet been well investigated or evidenced in literature. This study revealed a strong link between the mothers own mothering experiences and their lifestyle and criminalisation. Nicola, like several Mothers (n=15), reflected on her experience of being poorly mothered. Concluding this had an impact on her own ability to mother. Importantly, also on how she had coped (or not) with her past trauma, which then impacted on her coping mechanisms- ultimately leading to a criminal lifestyle.

"My mother was shit really; I know that sounds bad, but she was. She wasn't like other mothers … she just seemed blank most of the time. When what happened to me happened… she wasn't really there for me you know, I think the social thought about putting me in care cos they could see it… that

she struggled with it and didn't help me, but I dunno I think they just forgot about me in the end. Anyway, so yeah… I didn't learn how to be a mum from her." (Nicola)

Mothers who spoke of being poorly, negatively or inadequately mothered and the impact this had had on them often described being *'determined'* (Sam) not to repeat the 'mistakes' their mothers had made. Several Mothers became reflective during the interviews. Making connections, sometimes for the first time, about their past experiences of being mothered and their own experiences of mothering. Mothers who had experienced poor mothering were angry with themselves that they had not *'done better'* (Sam), but equally seemed to accept or believe that there was an inevitability about their own *'failure'* (Nicola) as mothers:

"My mother wasn't there for me, I lost her to addiction, she died to addiction, and we went into foster care, I learned through counselling that my addiction… all that happened to me… it wasn't all my fault, I've made bad choices yeah… but it wasn't my fault … not with my life, with my childhood, you know what I mean?... with my mum... two dead addict parents, addiction it's genetic innit?… what chance did I have really, your childhood traumas, they come back… they get you… they gave me addiction, addiction made me a criminal, being a criminal gave me prison... all traceable back innit?" (Dee)

Diane, who was serving a life sentence for killing her abusive husband, was very angry with her own mother, directly attributing her adult experiences and her offence to her childhood.

"I had the most horrendous upbringing from age 4, beaten starved, abused by my mother and stepfather and all of her boyfriends in between. Witnessing all her sour relationships. I stepped out into the world and into violent relationships of my own. I had no chance." (Diane)

Many Mothers were already struggling with poor mental health, many of the Mothers struggled to secure support for their mental-health issues, adding to the complexity of their situations. For several Mothers, their mental-health issues interacted with their limited financial resources, trauma-filled histories and controlling or abusive relationships, creating a 'perfect storm'. Rita, Annie, Nicola,

Emma, Sam and Cynthia all disclosed that they had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder or severe depression. Annie and Rita both offended whilst in a '*full-blown bipolar episode'* (Annie).

> *"I had this fine to pay and I was just obsessed with it… really paranoid. I was facing eviction because I hadn't paid my bedroom tax, I couldn't cope - my brother would just tell me to pull myself together cos he couldn't see I was ill, I'd tried suicide and failed, everything, everything was just too much."* (Annie)

Cynthia disclosed that she had felt suicidal on at least two occasions, she had at various points been received into secure psychiatric care as opposed to prison. She openly stated that some of her offending was '*cries for help',* including setting fire to herself, for which she was imprisoned (because she had been in a public place).

> *"I've done [prison] nine or ten times, twice in a [psychiatric] hospital instead of prison, sometimes came out homeless so then it would never be long before I was back, but mostly I did deliberate acts to get help, self-harm and public disorder to get help, arson to get help, shoplifting to get help. The last time, the judge didn't want to sentence me, he said I needed help, but probation couldn't find a place for me because it was arson… serious isn't it, see?… so I had to go to prison. There was nowhere else, see." (Cynthia)*

A further six Mothers disclosed mental-health issues. Most were not in receipt of adequate support prior to their prison sentences. All bar-one had requested support: some had received intermittent support and three were prescribed anti-psychotic medication (Sam, Annie, Cynthia). Seventeen of the Mothers volunteered information (they were not asked about medication) that they were prescribed anti-depressants or had been in the past. For most of the Mothers their mental-health issues were deeply rooted in trauma and abuse, which for some had resulted in '*self-medicating'* (Dee), which often in turn led to addictions.

Summary of Pre-Prison Circumstances.

Many of the mothers entered prison with an already spoiling maternal identity – they felt they were already 'bad mothers' and this had an impact on all aspects of how they experienced their imprisonment and the CJS. Most of the Mothers entered prison from disadvantaged backgrounds

where they had faced multiple challenges which had impacted on their maternal identity and maternal self-esteem. The Mothers narratives reveal the many missed opportunities to support them, either as children or as adults. Mothers were reluctant to seek as mothers for fear of being negatively assessed and they feared losing their children. Earlier support might have prevented the mothers being criminalised at all.

5.2 In-Prison Experiences

Mothers in this study described how they struggled specifically *as mothers* to adjust to prison life, and how they felt that prison for a mother is *'a million times harder than if you're not a mother'* (Jaspreet). Nonetheless, for some mothers prison was the first time they had been able to access support, or feel safe away – away from domestic abusers, and with a roof over their heads. However, even when mothers felt there had been some positives from their imprisonment, the mothers still felt, that they should have been supported/safe etc. in the community, could still have been 'punished' in the community and should not have been sent to prison. The mothers who were jailed for violent offences did not question the justice of their incarceration but did question the way in which their imprisonment impacted on their motherhood and their children, and all felt there was considerable room for improvement. The remaining mothers felt a community sentence would have not only been more effective in terms of their rehabilitation, but also that it would have been less harmful to them and their children.

> *My kids were bullied, ignored, unsafe, neglected and no one cared ... and I couldn't do anything about it, they suffered so much, and it was such a pointless sentence, for not paying a fine I couldn't bloody afford …. prison because I was skint. They are changed forever they are. It's not right'* (Debbie)

'

Mothers in this research described how being separated from their children, and the lack of acknowledgement of their maternal role and identity had a profound impact on them, and often their children. They described how institutional thoughtlessness contributed to their sense of invisible motherhood, which in turn impacted on their ability to cope and ability/willingness to engage in sentence planning or rehabilitative activities. The research revealed that the mothers felt the effects of maternal imprisonment through the overarching themes of **'Entering the Prison Space and Early Days'**, **'Mothering, Grandmothering from a Distance'** and through the '**Regimes, Rules and Relationships'** of prison life. The mothers described how almost as soon as they entered the prison space their 'bad mother' status was confirmed and reinforced to them – significantly both internally

and externally. The mothers bore the weight of widely held beliefs of how mothers should and should not behave, but they also often felt the explicit judgement of those in charge of their care.

> *"Being in prison made me feel like I was just a rubbish mum... I know she felt abandoned, she missed me, that's all she kept saying, I need you she'd say… that was the one, I need to smell you, I don't know what you smell like anymore… what kind of mother can put her child through that and still think they are a good mum." (Annie)*

5.3 Early Days in Prison

> *''As soon as I got there, I knew I'd let them down and I was a shit mum – but then on times officers told us that too ... one asked how many kids I had and when I told him I had four he said Four???? In a tone that I knew meant I should know better and should be ashamed – and some actually said that. 'you are a mum you should be ashamed' ...but feeling shit doesn't make you feel motivated to change you know … it just makes you want to give up''* (Dee)

Most Mothers found the experience of entering custody and the early days and weeks of their sentences profoundly painful and harmful. Like many prisoners Maggie described how she entered reception and immediately felt a sense of bewilderment and shock at being there at all. She contextualised this by her motherhood. Stating that her bewilderment was *immediately* coupled with a feeling of shame that related to her children *'… that's it… I've let them* [her children] *all down'*. These feelings were especially challenging in those early days and guilt became a life threatening emotion, which when coupled with a sense of hopelessness was dangerous and stressful to the mothers:

> *"I must admit I did have very negative thoughts, I'm ashamed to admit it crossed my mind to take my life… obviously I didn't!"* (Mavis)

Annie, like many mothers, had not expected a custodial sentence (Minson, 2020) and was sent to prison in shock after taking her daughter to school on that morning. Annie expected to be able to make calls to family to find out where her daughter was, who had picked her up from school. She was not given her reception phone call[21], which led to untold stress:

[21] See guidance regarding reception phone calls: https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/psipso/psi-2015/psi-07-2015-pi-06-2015-early-days- see also custody.pdf

"I was supposed to get a reception phone call, but I didn't get it because there was so many of us on the prison transport that day. I was literally going crazy crazy crazy. It was driving me mad not even knowing she was safe. It was hours and hours before I finally got an officer to check for me that she was safe. I genuinely thought I would have a heart attack from the stress." (Annie)

Annie's experience was not unusual, echoing various previous findings by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). Many Mothers (n=14) stated they had experienced delays in accessing their reception phone call. Mothers described how the delayed contact, especially with their children, impacted negatively on them, making their first days in custody - when they were at their most vulnerable, even more challenging. Tia, who experienced a traumatic arrest at her daughter's school and in front of her children (discussed in the following chapter), was remanded immediately. She spoke of her desperation to speak to her daughter, saying, '*I just wanted to know she was safe, to apologise to her, to ask her to forgive me… It was all I could think about'*. Rita did have her reception call, but all of her children were out '*trick or treating'.* Revealing the complex emotions mothers in prison often struggle with, she spoke of feeling *'relieved'* that '*life just carried on for them',* but '*torn*' because she wanted them to miss her, and then also *'guilty'* for thinking that.

Mothers spoke of not being able to *'settle'* (Sophie), *'think straight'* (Cynthia), '*concentrate on anything'* (Karen), '*sleep'* (Annie), or *'eat'* (Sophie), until they had seen or at least been in contact with their children. Missing their children permeated every aspect of their prison life and to many it was all-consuming, especially in the early days and weeks. Taranpreet, who had convinced herself that her toddler children had not recognised her on their first visit, wrote '*I'm totally broken, […]. I'm literally dead inside,[…] the mere fact my own children don't recognise me has torn me apart…[…] I've lost everything*'. Like several of the Mothers, Taranpreet struggled to get through her first days and weeks in custody. Six Mothers spoke of feeling suicidal during that period, sadly not unusual for mothers in prison (Baldwin and Epstein, 2017). It was the most emotionally intense period for most of the Mothers. Beth states, '*I just didn't want to be here anymore, I felt like I'd lost her* [her baby] *forever, if I wasn't a mother anymore what was the point of me*?'.

Importantly, several mothers described how individual and specific officers 'saved' their lives by simply spending time with them or by ensuring contact with children was made- even if it was the officers ringing themselves:

http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Prisoner%20Information%20Pages/04%20Keeping%20in%20contact%20with%20family%20and%20friends.pdf

'*I genuinely don't think I would be alive today if it wasn't for the officer that rang to check on my babies, the girls have told me that loads of women try to top themselves in those first few days and I think I would have you know if they hadn't rang home for me … you just cant see how you'll get through it at the beginning -…being away from them I mean''* . (Taranpreet)

Similarly, Kady felt that it was only the fact than an officer '*was kind'* to her and *'made time'* to support her as a newly pregnant mum that she '*got through that first week'* and if not for that officer, she might have taken her life. About a third (n=13) of the Mothers disclosed they had self-harmed at some point in their lives. Mothers (n=4) spoke of self-harming *directly* related to their mothering pain, especially during the early days and weeks, often the most vulnerable period for Mothers. Sam described self-harm '*as a way of coping* [with missing her son]*…letting out the pain'*. (Sam). Mothers who self-harmed, as most other prisoners, had additional factors contributing to their self-harming behaviour, such as pre-existing mental health issues and trauma histories (Walker and Towl, 2016). Nonetheless, maternal emotions were a factor. Nicola had previously lost two children to the care system and her third child was taken on her reception into custody, '*yeah I thought about ending it, the pain was too much, another child, gone... I felt dead*.' (Nicola). Clearly, Mothers who self-harmed, missed their children and the associated guilt and shame of being a mother in prison was a trigger for both suicidal ideas and self-harming actions. Rita, who had to wait weeks for a visit, summed up how many of the women felt by stating:

"*…at that point, I would have given up all access to all the rest of my family, even my own mum, for that one visit from my children… I didn't feel I could function without seeing them*, *for the first time in my life I considered self-harm for no other reason than I had no idea how to handle the pain.*" (Rita)

Rita spoke of being in the cell next to a girl who attempted (unsuccessfully) to take her life after being informed that her child would be adopted. Rita spent the '*next few days trying to talk her out of killing herself'.*

5.4 Pregnancy and Prison

Eight mothers in the study were pregnant when sentenced, although not all knew this (reiterating the importance of reception pregnancy testing). It is argued that pregnancy is an important aspect in relation to developing a healthy maternal identity (and obviously a healthy child). Being in prison frustrated mothers' efforts to view themselves in a positive light or to develop a positive maternal

identity. Kady, who found out she was pregnant on reception into prison, struggled to articulate her feelings at first but her meaning was clear:

> *"I dunno… it was like… aww man... like pregnancy is a pure time innit… becoming a mum. Its special… and to be in prison for it… I can't describe it. It just felt wrong… more wrong than if I weren't [pregnant]." (Kady)*

The pregnant mothers described how it was challenging for them to feel safe in prison, they were constantly worried about the safety of their 'bump', wary of it 'kicking off', but at the same time not knowing whether they would rather be on the prison MBU (for those mothers who knew of their existence and not all mothers did).

> *''I didn't feel safe in normal location, but I don't think I would have like to been on the MBU either, not when I dint know if I'd get to even keep my baby. But it was awful being pregnant in prison, I felt unsafe, uncomfortable, hungry and upset… all the time'* (Tarian)

Tamika and Tanisha both mentioned the additional guilt and shame they felt as pregnant mothers in prison, especially on occasions such as attending hospital for maternity appointments in handcuffs. However, their 'shame' was not confined to outside appointments:

> *"Being pregnant in prison is awful, you can feel people eyes on you judging you, I tried so hard to hide my bump all the time – I was scared for my baby, but I was mostly just ashamed*." (Tamika)

Most pregnant women in prison spend their pregnancy feeling powerless and fearful of miscarrying or giving birth in prison, or alone in their cells (Abbott, 2018; Baldwin and Abbott et al, 2020), fears echoed by the pregnant Mothers in this study. These complex concerns add to the guilt and shame by 'reminding' mothers that they are pregnant in abnormal circumstances The 'tasks of pregnancy' and preparing for the birth are important aspects for a mother in developing a maternal identity. Mothers in prison are essentially denied this experience, at least until (and if) they secure a place on the prison MBU. Places are often not secured until very late in pregnancy, or even after the birth[22] (Sikand, 2017). Thus, pregnant women in prison do not always go through the process of 'becoming a mother' in the way that free mothers do, via attending antenatal classes or buying baby clothes or

[22] In July 2020 following a review of pregnancy and new mother provisions in custody, new measures and recommendations are due to be implemented which seek to improve outcomes and make the MBU application earlier and easier. Staff are also due to receive training and guidance for working with pregnant and new mothers in custody, as directed by the MOJ: the author is involved in its development and implementation.
See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905559/summary-report-of-review-of-policy-on-mbu.pdf

preparing a nursery (Abbott, 2015:20). This can have a profound effect not only on a mother's maternal emotions and identity, and on the mother-child bond, which can have lifelong implications (Abbott et al, 2020; O'Malley et al, 2021).

> "*I was so concerned with keeping my belly safe in there I didn't really think about it as a baby or even me as a mam… so when the baby was born I felt quite disconnected. I didn't feel like he was even mine"* (Tanisha)

Mothers who had experienced pregnancy in prison were especially grateful to those officers who treated them well, although the Mothers gave the impression this was more to do with individuals acting independently of the rules rather than with a sense of them being accommodated and cared for in any procedurally, structurally organised way:

> *"If Mr Ball was on then I knew I'd get extra food and milk, but not if he wasn't on… he wouldn't put the cuffs on at the hospital for my ante-natals, either. If I'd still been in prison when I was in labour I would have wanted him to be there - even though he was a man. He was kinder than all of the women put together." (Emma)*

The Mothers who gave birth during their prison sentence (n=4) also highlighted how important it was to them to have good officers on duty when they were in labour, and how they hoped for a 'good' officer when they would eventually go to the hospital to give birth. This was best summed up by Kady:

> *"You just prayed it wasn't one like Mrs White[23], or the ones that ignored the bell, we all heard the horror stories of giving birth in a cell, one woman I know did and she nearly died, but the thought terrified me so, yeah, I wanted Mr Pink or Miss Blue, they always made me feel supported and didn't judge me… some of them others well they just make me feel shit as a Mother' man they really did… but Mr Pink and Miss Blue they used to even take the cuffs off me at the hospital scans... they were kind, man." (Kady)*

5.5 Mothering from a Distance – Maintaining a Maternal Identity and Role

Mothering and grandmothering from a distance was challenging for mothers. Mothers described how their maternal emotions and maternal wellbeing was impacted by some of the barriers preventing them from maintaining an active mothering role. Grandmothers and mothers who had lost the care

[23] All Officer/Staff names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

of their children felt particularly 'invisible' and uncatered for *as mothers* in prison. Several Mothers (n=6) had experienced one or all of their children going into either temporary or permanent care of the LA, and all six described this background/invisible mothering, even though they may not - or were not expecting to - regain custody of their children. The Mothers all described their mother identity as significant to them:

> *"I thought about my kids every day, in that sense I was no different to the other mothers." (Nicola)*

One of Dee's children was living with Dee's sister but her sister 'couldn't cope' and so handed Dee's daughter to the LA. Dee stated she was 'beside herself' and 'worried all the time' that she would not get her daughter back. These thoughts consumed Dee and for her meant she could focus on nothing else.

> ''the day I found out my sister gave her up I was supposed to go in a sentence planning meeting – how the fuck could I? I couldn't explain because no one would have cared or done anything , I wanted to kick of, I wanted to hurt myself, I wanted to anything except go into a sentence planning meeting … and you know what they called me uncooperative, unfuckingcooperative' (Dee).

This study, echoing previous research, powerfully highlighted the mothers need to be involved in the act associated with mothering in order to have the best chance of retaining a positive maternal identity (which as will be shown later was key to their resettlement). Not being able to *do* mothering made them feel like failed mothers. For those Mothers who had already lost care of their children or whose return to them was in question, the challenge to retain a positive maternal identity was even greater. Danielle spoke of missing all of the *'jobs'* of motherhood, saying that it drove her *'demented and tortured'* not knowing where her son was or how his days were being filled. Even though she had a good relationship with her mother, who was his caregiver and with whom she was in contact every day, she said:

> "…*it's not the same as doing, or knowing, I don't feel like a mam anymore, how can I be when I'm not there?"* (Danielle).

The Mothers' anxieties and guilt were at their height when they felt their children '*needed them most'*; often, but not always, this would be on special occasions or for specific life events. Shanice spoke a lot about missing the *'little things'* she associated with motherhood and described how she felt her role as a mother was '*diluted'* by not doing them. Shanice felt *replaced* and *displaced* as a mother, jealous that her own mother had taken on *her* mothering role. Although Shanice phoned home daily,

she described those calls as *difficult*. Stating that, afterwards, she would reflect and feel like she was an outsider looking through a window at '*what used to be my life'.* She described how she would try to do some small *'jobs'* of motherhood during contact, such as doing her daughter's hair, or trying to assist with her homework during phone calls with her; but her daughter would always tell her it was *'ok'* and that her '*nanny had done it'*. Shanice said this made her feel *'pointless'*. These frustrations were similarly described by several of the Mothers:

> *"It was hard man, you miss so much of their lives, things you don't even think of on a day-to-day basis, but they are the things that make you a mam. Things like walking to nursery with him, picking my daughter up from school, those journeys in the car where we did most of our talking really. I missed that… watching cartoons with them. Just hearing about their days, even watching them fight and bicker, I never thought I'd say it, but I even missed that!"* (Tia)

Ursula described a phone call in which her daughter was very distressed because she had a gymnastics competition, her leotard was not washed, and they had run out of soap-powder. Ursula knew that if she had been at home she simply would have '*washed it with shampoo or soap, or actually not run out of soap-powder at all!'.* Ursula found this particular phone call distressing because she could not 'mother', she could not solve the problem. This made her feel *'powerless, hopeless' and 'disconnected'.* Ursula hung-up the phone in *'utter despair'.* Annie and Shanice described how not being 'actively' involved in their '*motherly duties' (Annie)* made them feel like '*less of a mother'* (Shanice). Annie described how she did not recognise herself, '*when that gets taken away from you, you don't know who you are. You have lost who you are because that is me, I am a mum'.* Similarly, Shanice stated;

> *"It's the little things that get you, not taking them to school, not knowing how their day has gone, not being able to see what they are wearing that day, not making their packed lunches. You expect to be upset at birthdays and Christmas, not going to parents' evening, that kind of stuff, you expect to miss that and it's not a shock, but honestly the worst pain is in the little things." (Shanice)*

The mothers did their best to continue to mother from prison, and for grandmothers this was a layered experience. They were desperate to stay in the lives of their adult children, but also their grandchildren.

5.6 Grandmothering from Prison – Previously Underexplored

Grandmothers and mothers of older and adult children faced specific and distinct challenges and grandmothers keenly felt they were completely invisible to the prison- even as mothers. it is impossible to ignore the valuable contribution grandmothers often make to the lives of their grandchildren. The significant role grandmothers play in the family, even from behind bars is not to be underestimated. The experiences of older mothers and grandmothers have been almost invisible in UK-based prison research and this study responds to a significant gap in knowledge. Grandmothers in this study experienced prison in similar ways to the Mothers and shared many of the Mothers' emotions and descriptions related to their maternal pain. However, for grandmothers, the challenges of the prison experience were often amplified, not least because their experiences and emotions were 'layered', relating to their own adult children *and* their grandchildren. The grandmothers not only had to contend with imported beliefs about motherhood, but also those about age and the grandmother role. Mothers of older children, and/or grandmothers, in the study described feeling an *additional* sense of shame and judgement *specifically* related to their age and/or their grandmothering identity. The sense of shame alluded to by most, if not all, of the Mothers was magnified for the grandmothers because of the expectations and ideology of both femininity *and* ageing.

There is a lack of research around older women in prison. Wahidin (2004) explored the experiences of older women in prison – but did not specifically look at grandmotherhood in prison. However, Wahidin quotes a grandmother in her study Petra Puddepha who stated, '*You never stop being a mother, you're a mother till the day you die'*. Echoing Wahidin's research, grandmothers in this study felt they lost the status that *'automatically comes with or should come with age'* (Maggie), but more than this they also felt 'reduced' in terms of their motherhood and grandmother status, feeling an additional layer of shame as older mothers '*who should know better'* (Queenie), and invisibility. Mavis, a retired teacher who struggled with depression in prison, described the stripping away of her maternal and grandmother roles as '*uniquely painful'*. She said:

> *"I wasn't a grandmother anymore... that's what it felt like, yet I had looked after my grandchildren every day, but then nothing, it was like I was nothing to them. It's like I am nothing, just nothing."* (Mavis)

Sandra who, as previously stated, felt the officers' judgement of her was exacerbated by her grandmother status, said:

"It was like they just thought we were… I dunno, double wrong, we was last in line for any of the mother stuff… like I said invisible, its wrong really you know, grandkids are just as important to us as our kids." (Sandra)

Similarly, Mavis was frustrated by the lack of recognition for her role as a grandmother, despite her significant role in her grandchildren's lives:

"I used to do all their childcare, in fact because they [her son and his wife] were professionals, I saw my son's children more than he did. I feel so guilty for them, that I'm not there for them, it's bad enough their parents work the long hours they do, at least they had their granny to fill that gap. I should be there for them, for my son and daughter, too, obviously, but especially for my grandchildren. It's what grandmas do isn't it, it's what we are for." (Mavis)

Many of the grandmothers felt that their maternal needs were neglected and that they were not afforded the same courtesies or access to support as the mothers with young children. Wahidin (2004*)* highlighted how failing to meet the needs of older women prisoners constitutes additional punishment, and that was certainly something felt by the grandmothers in this study:

"It was so much worse for us grannies and nannas, we got none of the special leave or ROTLS, we missed funerals and things younger mums would get compassionate leave for, it felt like we were either invisible or extra punished." (Sandra)

Maggie spoke of her frustration at the prison and *'the system'* and its failure to recognise grandmothers and grandmothering as important. She described challenging the rules about what was defined as *'close and immediate family'* and described how she *'took on the fight'* for other grandmothers to help them challenge negative decisions about compassionate or childcare special leave. Maggie's grandchild was diagnosed with leukaemia while she was in prison and she felt that her grandmother role and status was ignored at a time when she was *'most needed',* not only as a grandmother but as a mother to her adult child:

"*I absolutely had to fight for everything……in the end I was given permission to see him* [grandson] *in hospital, but only because he was so ill they thought he might die! Before all of that there was his treatments, his appointments, the diagnosis. I should have been with my daughter for all of that and I would have been. Even when they grow up its times like that your kids need you the most, I was her mum and I wasn't there, it honestly nearly killed me and I know it broke my daughter's heart, it so added to the pain for her, doing all of it without her mum, can you imagine that?*" (Maggie)

Grandmothers described feeling *'ignored' (Queenie)* in activities that focused on mother/child separation or mothering. This made the grandmothers feel that not only had they lost their status and roles as grandmothers, but even as mothers:

> *It was like because we're old, because our 'children' were adults we didn't count… yeah there were some things for mothers inside… but mainly for mothers of little kids like family visits and parenting classes… which weren't parenting classes as such, but where the mothers got together to talk about their kids, but because my kids were grown-ups and even my grandchildren aren't babies then I was ignored as a mother, I feel."* (Queenie)

It is important to note that grandmothers' experiences were not all completely negative. Different prisons had different rules; for example, in one prison where the 'family day' visits were run by a third sector organisation (PACT)[24], grandmothers are automatically included in the reach of eligible mothers, although mothers with younger children were given priority - which was still a bone of contention for one Mother:

> *"It's shit… it just gives the message to my grandkids they aren't as important as the other kids… but they are*." (Sandra)

As a grandmother in custody, Ursula was allowed childcare leave to attend the birth of one of her grandchildren, but the sense of benevolence was not lost on her:

> *"I was overwhelmed with gratitude when I was told I could go but imagine that, man, being grateful for being allowed to attend to your daughter, to your grandchild… imagine having to feel grateful… if I had missed the birth I don't think my daughter would ever have forgiven me – I don't think our relationship would have recovered, it was already hard enough because of my sentence. She was angry with me for missing her pregnancy – if I had missed the birth too… well I think that would have been it." (Ursula)*

As has been stated Mothers were far away from home, so for some visits were few and far between, and for others did not occur at all. For Mothers of older or adult offspring, employment reduced visiting opportunities:

[24] Prison Advice and Care Trust – a large charity working with prisoners and their families by delivering services but also advocating for and championing change in the CJS and penal reform.

"My son would never have taken leave from work to visit, he would not have seen that as a worthy reason to take time off work… and I suppose neither would his employer. Not that he would ever have told his employer where I was. But no, he would not take time off work to come." (Mavis)

The Mothers of older and adult children described feeling the judgement from their children, which was less of an issue for the Mothers of young and very young children. Diane highlighted that children who were *'emotionally old enough to express their feelings'* were able to '*use their words to hurt'* and to make choices that younger children could not – like to refuse to visit. Queenie felt the disparities between older and younger mothers and the expectations of motherhood were never more apparent to her than in her adult daughter's judgement of her and, conversely, her lack of judgement for her father:

"*Her judgement of me was harsh, she gave me absolute hell, 'I should know better, what kind of Mother was I?' worse still, 'what kind of a grandmother was I?' Her verbal was worse than prison, her trying to teach me right from wrong. She just dug and dug and dug and dug, 'I've never known any woman, a woman in her fifties that's been to prison', blah blah… then 'all my life I'm going to be ashamed of you, my own Mother'… no sympathy, none. […]… yet you know what? Nothing about the domestic abuse I went through, nothing about her father. Dad's been to prison, yeah her dad's been to prison for drugs and whatever but nothing about that… she's good with him… but I have let her down being her mother, her children's grandmother and who's been to prison', [...] she doesn't hide the fact he has been to prison, but she does me. It's more normal for a man to go to prison isn't it, more acceptable."* (Queenie)

Ursula also described struggling to deal with the '*judgement, disapproval and disappointment*' of her older children:

"The thing I couldn't cope with was like, the emotional… like my daughter saying that I wasn't a good mother. It was like destroying to the core. She was old enough to know her mind man and that's what she thought." (Ursula)

This research demonstrated that for those Mothers who were also grandmothers, losing their active role as mothers *and* as grandmothers was especially painful. Mothering other mothers gave the women a sense of purpose while creating a kind of prison family. For the mothers of older or adult offspring or those who were grandmothers, replicating motherhood in prison was a means of coping and also of retaining their maternal-identity and role. 'Mothering' the younger women served the purpose of giving the mothers an 'outlet' for their maternal-emotions and their need to nurture, whilst also making positive connections and letting them feel better about themselves:

"I mothered the younger ones... because I could, I liked it, it made me feel better, and them feel better why not? so win win really." (Maggie)

Mavis, a grandmother with a very middle-class background, surprised herself with how her maternal instincts transcended class barriers; she described in her interviews almost '*needing'* to mother as a way of healing her own maternal pain and managing her emotions:

"I would not have looked at some of those girls twice outside, in fact I'm ashamed to say I would have avoided them and been suspicious of them. Yet in prison I just wanted to nurture them, I felt sorry for them and I did used to mother them I suppose. I think we needed each other, they needed to be mothered and I needed to mother." (Mavis)

Rayna goes on to say that she felt many of the women were looking for opportunities to mother someone - *'even the staff*' - and that she observed it '*making them feel better'.* Interestingly, Rayna described how, whilst her own mother was sick, her role as a daughter preoccupied her as much as her mother role. So, for her to have had the opportunity to seek out and find a mother figure in prison was especially important.

5.7 Open vs Closed – It Mattered.

In relation to the '**Regimes, Rules and Relationships',** one of the most significant factors affecting mothers was whether the prison was an open or closed prison. Women are not *always* placed strictly by their risk[25] or in local prisons, unlike in the male estate: women are placed based on the requirements of the prison estate and the availability of spaces; although efforts are made to place them near to their homes, women are often sent over 100 miles away from home (PRT, 2019). Ten of the twelve women's prison in the UK are closed prisons, although some prisons, have both open and closed areas within a closed environment. Guidance from the Ministry of Justice Women's Policy Framework (2018:3:3.20) states that: '*Women are managed appropriately to their current risk level*

[25] In the male estate, prisons are categorised as A, B, C, or D and prisoners are housed based on their risk of harm or risk of escape. Cat A is the highest category of security, and Cat D is the lowest, and prisoners are categorised accordingly, too, and their individual risk category will usually match the category of their location. In the male estate, those not deemed Cat A will go automatically to their local prison – which, as the name suggests, is the prison most local to their home court - and may serve their whole sentence there; or they may be dispersed to one of a correlated category. Male prisoners often move through the categories as their risk reduces: in the female estate, there may not be a 'local' prison, so this does not currently happen and women can be sent to any UK prison dependant on available space: location is often 'considered' but not always, meaning that women prisoners can be sent randomly to an open or closed establishment Governor Carl Harwick of HMP Drake Hall has identified an alternative structure for the female estate that would address some of these concerns. .

and complexities of need, with the aim of reducing risk as their sentence progresses. Where possible, and subject to the considerations of security, good order and addressing their offending behaviour, women are held in prisons that best enable them to maintain their family ties.'

Despite this guidance, women are often located many miles from home, are subject to being moved at any time, and are often held in closed conditions despite their offence and risk levels (in terms of harm or escape) not indicating that necessity. Most of the Mothers experienced at least one prison transfer, while some experienced several. Often these moves would take place with only a few hours' notice, and for no reason other than to accommodate the prison estate needs (as opposed to those of the women). For women who were mothers, such moves could be especially traumatic, as often they would have imminent visits with their children booked in and have no way of informing relatives that they had been moved. The Mothers in this study were often moved further away from home and would often move between open and closed prisons *'without rhyme or reason'* (Mary). Consequent changes of regime impacted on all aspects of prison life, but especially on mothers' contact with their children and caregivers and, therefore, their emotional coping (Baldwin, 2018).

The Mothers described how, when they were held in open conditions, they would *'at every opportunity*' (Maggie) talk about their children and grandchildren and found that motherhood was something that bonded them. Several Mothers spoke of how they would gravitate to other mothers '*because we all knew what we are going through'* (Cynthia). Rita spoke about how she and *'a group of other mums, we called ourselves the Mothers Club',* would seek each other out *'just being mums and talking about life and everything… actually it was always about the kids'.* Karen, who by her own admission tended to avoid social interaction with other prisoners, described how when she did speak to other prisoners, they '*tended to be other mothers'* because she felt that:

> "A*lthough we might have nothing else in common in our lives, as mothers we were often the same. Thinking the same thoughts, just missing our kids, it wasn't so much being a prisoner we had in common but being mothers*." (Karen)

Similarly, Rita highlighted the positives of an open regime, whilst expressing her frustration about the inappropriateness of most women being confined in closed conditions:

> *"We all bonded over motherhood. It felt lovely to be able to talk about our kids, it wasn't all we talked about - but it was mostly… it made us all feel 'normal'. […] we had nothing in common at all other than we were mothers. We probably wouldn't have spoken outside, yet in prison we walked in the grounds, about three miles a day every day… just walking and talking. Closed conditions you can't do that… it*

makes it harder… and for what for? For nothing… most women don't need to be in closed conditions… what were we going to do? Shoplift them or fraud them to death?" (Rita).

Contrastingly, the Mothers spoke of how, in closed conditions they would adopt a stance of emotional control and restraint: they would avoid talking about issues that would upset them the most, i.e. their motherhood and/or their children. They did not want to '*burden'* (Marjorie) other mothers or '*remind them what they were going through'* (Marjorie). Crewe et al (2014) described similar observations related to male prisoners; however, in the male estate this 'emotional control' was a means of maintaining a 'masculine' mask or stance as well as a means of coping. In this study the Mothers described it more in terms of emotional regulation and protection over each other *as mothers:*

"In closed you didn't know them [other mothers] as well, you didn't know if they had their kids in their care, or had had them took off them, or if they had visits… you just didn't know them as well so you'd just keep it light in case they went back to their cells upset like." (Rita)

Annie, Rita, Ursula, Margot, and Carla all explicitly stated that being in open conditions made a significant difference to how they spent their time with each other *as mothers*:

"In open conditions it was so nice, we had the freedom to walk about and mix with who we wanted to, it made a difference and groups with things in common bonded together - like I always bonded with the older mums and grannies, it was funny we were, like a kind of 'Mothers United'." (Margot)

Women in such environments make full use of the outside space and enjoy a sense of freedom within a confined space, thus they create and access their own networks to help them to cope. In this study, this network was often made up of other mothers. The Mothers described how they felt united in a kind of motherhood solidarity. Contrastingly, women in closed prisons are held in much more rigid and regimented conditions, escorted by staff, they mostly mix only with other women on their wing, except sometimes at work, and they spend more time behind the door or locked into their wing, which makes it more difficult to form bonds of choice rather than association.

In closed conditions, particularly, the 'cell' became a private space of concentrated pain and or/hope where mothers desperately tried to create a space where their children were 'present' via photographs and drawings, and to '*make it feel like home'* (Kady). It was also a space where mothers would 'hold' their pain and try desperately to manage their maternal emotions: tragically, when they could not manage, it would be in their private spaces that they would self-harm or attempt suicide (see also Baldwin and Quinlan, 2018). Maggie speaking about being alone in her cell:

"...[in my cell] was when I missed my kids the most and it was always then I would cut up - I never felt safe on my own or in my own head… I coped much better when I was with the other girls, they understood." (Maggie)

Additional aspects of the 'open' or 'closed' status of the prison impacted the mothers, especially in relation to their supportive relationships with each other (obviously this has been significantly impacted further during COVID19 – but these findings predate the COVID19 pandemic). The Mothers described how, when they were held in open conditions, they would *'at every opportunity*' (Maggie) talk about their children and grandchildren and found that motherhood was something that bonded them. Several Mothers spoke of how they would gravitate to other mothers '*because we all knew what we are going through'* (Cynthia). Rita spoke about how she and *'a group of other mums, we called ourselves the Mothers Club',* would seek each other out *'just being mums and talking about life and everything… actually it was always about the kids'.* Karen, who by her own admission tended to avoid social interaction with other prisoners, described how when she did speak to other prisoners, they '*tended to be other mothers'* because she felt that:

"A*lthough we might have nothing else in common in our lives, as mothers we were often the same. Thinking the same thoughts, just missing our kids, it wasn't so much being a prisoner we had in common but being mothers*." (Karen)

Similarly, Rita highlighted the positives of an open regime, whilst expressing her frustration about the inappropriateness of most women being confined in closed conditions:

"We all bonded over motherhood. It felt lovely to be able to talk about our kids, it wasn't all we talked about - but it was mostly… it made us all feel 'normal'. […] we had nothing in common at all other than we were mothers. We probably wouldn't have spoken outside, yet in prison we walked in the grounds, about three miles a day every day… just walking and talking. Closed conditions you can't do that… it makes it harder… and for what for? For nothing… most women don't need to be in closed conditions… what were we going to do? Shoplift them or fraud them to death?" (Rita).

Contrastingly, the Mothers spoke of how, in closed conditions they would adopt a stance of emotional control and restraint: they would avoid talking about issues that would upset them the most, i.e. their motherhood and/or their children. They did not want to '*burden'* (Marjorie) other mothers or '*remind them what they were going through'* (Marjorie). Crewe et al (2014) described similar observations

related to male prisoners; however, in the male estate this 'emotional control' was a means of maintaining a 'masculine' mask or stance as well as a means of coping. In this study the Mothers described it more in terms of emotional regulation and protection over each other *as mothers:*

> *"In closed you didn't know them [other mothers] as well, you didn't know if they had their kids in their care, or had had them took off them, or if they had visits… you just didn't know them as well so you'd just keep it light in case they went back to their cells upset like." (Rita)*

Annie, Rita, Ursula, Margot, and Carla all explicitly stated that being in open conditions made a significant difference to how they spent their time with each other *as mothers*:

> *"In open conditions it was so nice, we had the freedom to walk about and mix with who we wanted to, it made a difference and groups with things in common bonded together - like I always bonded with the older mums and grannies, it was funny we were, like a kind of 'Mothers United'." (Margot)*

In a closed prison the regime is often such that women spend considerably less time out of their cells and have much less freedom while out of their cells. In a typical open prison, women are unlocked for most of the day from their rooms, and they are able to walk around the inside sections of the prison freely during their non-lockdown hours, except when at work. They are often unescorted and are allowed to congregate or associate with a chosen peer group. Women in such environments make full use of the outside space and enjoy a sense of freedom within a confined space, thus they create and access their own networks to help them to cope. In this study, this network was often made up of other mothers. The Mothers described how they felt united in a kind of motherhood solidarity. Contrastingly, women in closed prisons are held in much more rigid and regimented conditions, escorted by staff, they mostly mix only with other women on their wing, except sometimes at work, and they spend more time behind the door or locked into their wing, which makes it more difficult to form bonds of choice rather than association.

In closed conditions, particularly, the 'cell' became a private space of concentrated pain and or/hope where mothers desperately tried to create a space where their children were 'present' via photographs and drawings, and to '*make it feel like home'* (Kady). It was also a space where mothers would 'hold' their pain and try desperately to manage their maternal emotions: tragically, when they could not manage, it would be in their private spaces that they would self-harm or attempt suicide (see also Baldwin and Quinlan, 2018). Maggie speaking about being alone in her cell:

"...[in my cell] was when I missed my kids the most and it was always then I would cut up - I never felt safe on my own or in my own head… I coped much better when I was with the other girls, they understood."

5.8 Institutional Thoughtlessness: 'The System works for the System not for Us'

Alongside whether the prison was open or closed there were other prison specific features that impacted the way mothers experienced their imprisonment and their contact with their children. Tia was sentenced just before Christmas and had not yet seen her children after three weeks in custody. She was told she was being moved to another prison the day before her children were due to visit. She was already more than two hours away from home, the prison she moved to was a further 150 miles away (almost three hours) from her home:

"They shipped me out to [name of prison *the day before the visit] Just because the prison was full they said - simple as that… I said I can't go, I can't go on the ship out I haven't seen my kids yet… they are coming tomorrow, and they just said, 'the visit will be cancelled'. There is no emotion, no sorry… the answer was just 'tough you are going, you are booked on the van'. I was devastated, I couldn't believe it."* (Tia)

Tia goes on to say that staff forgot to cancel the visit and her children (aged four and twelve) arrived at the prison expecting to see their mother, whom they had last seen when she was arrested at the school gates three weeks before. Tia stated '…*to say they were devastated is an understatement, apparently Theo* [the 4-year-old] *could be heard crying right through the hall, I was told'*. Tia's move meant that the children and their caregiver would have to stay overnight in a nearby hotel to facilitate a visit, adding further financial burden to a family already struggling. Nonetheless, the visit was booked, the accommodation was booked with the cheapest no refund option. Three days before this visit Tia was told she had a further court appearance in a Court near her previous prison. However, when she arrived she was told her presence was not required. As she had been travelling for a total of five hours by this time she was asked if she needed a toilet break. She did but the transport from that particular Court only served her previous prison. So that was taken and readmitted to, despite her children's replacement visit being booked at her new prison and where all her belongings were. By the time new visiting arrangements were made, six weeks and Christmas had passed without Tia's children seeing their mother. Tia was far from the only mother who experienced these short notice moves when they had visits booked with their children. Mothers also described how their

motherhood and maternal identity was often 'ignored' or not acknowledged by the prison or prison staff'.

'even on mother's day when you'd think they'd know we'd down there be usually no acknowledgement that that might be a tough day for us … but to honest every day was a tough day, just some were harder than others' (Shanice)

Having to engage in planning meetings or education, or sometimes even just being polite when you are worried sick after a phone call or chewed before or after visits but you get written up if you don't do everything as they think you should… there were so many times when just existing in prison was hard a prison mum and yet it wasn't even considered .. Prison A was so much better than Prison B.. but it was tough.' (Lauren)

''*Some staff were great if they knew you were having a visit s and you'd be worked up before .. and even more after, but most if I'm honest didn't care. Visits to them were just part of their day – their job, but to us they were so related to how we coped…loads of mums would self-harm after or be depressed… and some staff would just say 'what's wrong with you, why are you so miserable'… well duhh'* (Annie)

Mothers described a general lack of consideration of their mother role and identity and how this could impact on their wellbeing. For example, Kady spoke about having to return to education when her baby was only six weeks old, and when she became upset at this, she was simply told to pull herself together and that it was 'prison policy' that she had to return to 'work'. Similarly, several mothers felt that 'no thought' was given to then when it came to things like involvement in child protection proceedings. Several mothers wanted to participate in 'outside' meetings but were told that it would not be possible for them to attend in person or even remotely, either because the prison didn't have the resources or the facilities to enable this.

''*I knew conversations about her care were going on and I wanted to be part of them but the prison just said no… maybe if I had been they wouldn't have took her in the end, I'll never know will I?*' (Emma)

Mothers also felt that there that been a lack of thought in relation to visiting spaces and contact arrangements. Several mothers described challenges regarding phoning home, stating that there were simply not enough phones to go around – or in closed prisons, enough time to make their calls. Some, especially those who did not experience family day visit, felt hat the vsiting spaces were not conducive to child friendly visits – and this impacted on teir decision making whether to allow children

to visit or not – especially if visits took place without mothers being permitted contact with their children.

'just the ugliness of the room. No thought had really gone into how to make that space better for us. for kids and mums, just a bit more thought would make visits bearable, and I wouldn't have cancelled them' (Erin)

5.9 Contact

Experiences of contact between the Mothers and their children was varied and challenging, influenced somewhat by institutional challenges and also by the Mothers' own emotions and relationships with their children and caregivers. It has been argued that for parents, especially mothers, contact with children is particularly important (O'Malley, 2015; Baldwin, 2018; Masson, 2019; Booth, 2020). In fact, more than one of the Mothers felt it was a matter of life or death:

"…if I hadn't been able to see them, I just wouldn't have survived, it's that simple." (Rita)

Most of the Mothers had the care of their children pre-prison and most, though not all, were expecting to resume care on release (Appendix 2). Communication with children and grandchildren provided the most important and concrete strategy for maintaining relationships and an affirming maternal identity for the Mothers:

"…just hearing her say mummy was the best, I missed being called that so much." (Sophie).

Visits and phone calls were an opportunity for the Mothers to engage in 'active mothering', which was important not only to meet the needs of the children, but also to affirm the Mothers' maternal identities and assist their coping. However, contact was often fraught with difficulties. Echoing previous studies, regular contact for the Mothers was often compounded by circumstances beyond their control, reinforcing their sense of powerlessness concerning their children:

"…*you knew a visit could be taken away or ended at any point, it was like a knot in your stomach all the time,"* (Tanya)

The Mothers described contact with their children as *'complicated'* (Mavis). Not unusually, some Mothers, especially those on shorter sentences or in closed prisons (see later discussion) chose not

to receive visits from their children (Baldwin and Epstein, 2017). This was for a myriad of reasons, some related to practicality (i.e. cost of travel, time, distance from prison), or the non-child friendliness of the visiting experience, sometimes because it was *'too much'* (Shanice) either for themselves or for their children. Mothers made what they saw as a 'protective' decision not to allow their children to visit.

> *"I didn't want him to visit because I thought… I didn't want to upset him because I know he wouldn't understand what was going on. I would be the one breaking down when he had to go, and I didn't want him to see that …….because he wouldn't understand why mummy couldn't come out…I didn't want that for me or for him. It would be just too painful." (Shanice)*

Similarly, Danielle had also told her son she was working away, although now she regretted that decision because of the impact it had had on her son:

> *"But now he thinks I've chosen work over them, and he hates me, so I probably should have just been honest." (Danielle)*

Shanice described how she witnessed mothers coming back from visits and self-harming, or just breaking down and not coping at all. Like Rita, Taranpreet spoke of a mother in the next cell to her who had tried to take her own life after a visit with her six-month-old baby. Visits were a source of both joy and pain for the Mothers and described as a '*mixed blessing'* (Rita), and 'bittersweet' because of the complex emotions they triggered, in both themselves and their children. Mothers described complex and competing emotions before a visit, such as anxiety, foreboding, worry, excitement, guilt, shame, sadness and happiness - with a similar range of emotions occupying their thoughts post-visit. On the one hand, the Mothers were desperate to see their children, wanting to *'hug them and tell them I love them'* (Tanisha), but on the other hand, Mothers wanted to '*protect them from the shame of a prison'* (Mavis), or to protect and control their own and their children's emotions:

> *"I was scared of the emotional fall out of visits, mine and hers… I just don't think I would have coped if I was seeing her in person, it was easier to block off my feelings into boxes… by not seeing her I mean. I wouldn't have coped I know I wouldn't, and I don't think she would have either." (Margot)*

Karen's children, aged eleven, twelve and seventeen, only visited the prison once, like Mavis's adult children. Karen, a middle-class professional, had been *'embarrassed'* and *'ashamed'* when her children visited. She did not want to go through the experience again and wanted to spare her children's shame, despite her youngest child pleading to see her.

"I just hated it, I could see Tilly and Oliver just looking around aghast at what they saw and… I know this sounds awful, but at the people in the visiting room, it's just not our world. I think the two older ones were relieved when I said no more visits. I absolutely know Francesca would have come back in a heartbeat because she's a mummy's girl, but I just couldn't allow her. It was too painful, and I don't actually think my husband had any desire to repeat the experience at all. He did not put up a fight when I said no more visits, let's put it that way." (Karen)

Several factors affected the 'quality' and 'success' of a visit between mothers and their children. They found that longer visits, with flexibility of movement and the freedom to hug and enjoy physical contact, were unsurprisingly regarded more positively by mothers and children. Not all prisons facilitate these 'Family Days' or 'Special' visits[26]. Only two of the Mothers on the study experienced them (Tarian and Rita). Several Mothers experienced prison moves at very short notice (as described by Tia earlier), which again impacted on the regularity and possibility of visits. The women felt that their needs as mothers and their children's needs consistently came second to the needs of the 'the system':

"This is my third prison in two months. Just as I have got settled, planned courses, made friends, booked in visits, I'm moved again – visits lost. I haven't seen my kids or grandkids now for five months. I miss them like mad." (Sandy).

The rules of the institution and whether the prison was open or closed had an impact on the quality of the visit for both mothers and visitors, with Mothers describing how these rules around physical contact and free movement within the visiting space were inconsistent between prisons, even between those in the same category. Some prisons allowed only a first hug and then no further physical contact. This included the Mothers holding their very young babies or toddlers or allowing them on their knees. In other prisons (or in the special visits described above) this was allowed. In some prisons Mothers were not allowed out of their seats, which they found incredibly frustrating - especially for Mothers of toddlers and younger children because children would go over to the play area (if there was one) to play with other children and the toys provided. Tia described how on one visit, her four-year-old and another visitor's child made friends and spent the whole visit playing in the play area in the far corner of the room, then sitting themselves down for their '*picnic'* on a separate

[26] A number of prisons have projects running that will allow more meaningful visits between mothers and their children – they are often managed by the third sector as opposed to prison staff. They are characterised by being several hours longer, permitting freedom of movement around the room, and physical contact is allowed. Some schemes, like the 'Visiting Mum' scheme at HMP Eastwood Park (now closed due to lack of funding), also arranged transport and did not require the presence of caregivers during the visit, thereby facilitating a deeper mother/child bonding experience. Some prisons even facilitate overnight contact where mothers are able to cook with their children in a separate house in the grounds of the prison.

table from their mothers. Tia stated it was awful and frustrating, but she and the other mother felt helpless as they were not allowed out of their seats to interact:

> "*Me and the other mother just looked at each other and shrugged, we were gutted, but what can you do… they were happy"*. (Tia)

Mothers therefore spent the whole visit watching their child play from a distance with minimal mother/child interaction, and would spend the visit time engaging with the caregiver or the professional (e.g. foster carer/social worker) who had accompanied the child on the visit:

> *"I had to stay seated at all times, [the social worker] could move into the play area with my kid, but not me. I wasn't allowed… so for at least an hour of the visit I wouldn't even see her. I used to pray to get seated next to the play area... but usually I wasn't nowhere near it. One time my daughter fell over… I wasn't even allowed out my seat to pick her up… if that had happened outside and I ignored her crying… well then that would be abuse. Another time my daughter wanted to give me a picture… [it was] taken off her, not even allowed to show it me. So before she even got in she was upset already… then she wanted to bring some crayons and paper from the play area to sit with me… which is allowed… but this officer told her no. She went round and took crayons off all the kids. My daughter was broken, the visit got ended because my daughter was heartbroken, the social worker took her out and that was it over. I put a complaint in about that but the IMB[27] never did nowt about it. All I could think about was how sad my daughter would be on her way home." (Sophie)*

Another Mother was frustrated that not being allowed out of her seat prevented her from even '*doing the basics'* for her children during visits:

> *"I just wanted to get them the stuff from the café, just to be able to buy their treats. Basic stuff… not even allowed that." (Tanisha)*

It was clear that Tanisha saw buying provisions from the snack bar as an act of mothering. These frequent frustrations of their maternal role affected the Mothers deeply and was one of the reasons cited by them why they might have only one, none, or infrequent visits with their children. This had obvious implications for the maintenance and strengthening of family ties and bonds and, ultimately, the Mothers' desistance (Farmer, 2019). Several Mothers described visits as '*emotionally exhausting'* or *'draining'*. Nevertheless, visits were definitely viewed positively by many of the Mothers and grandmothers and provided them with windows of opportunity to show the love and care for their

[27] **Independent Monitoring Boards** (**IMB**) are statutory bodies established by the Prison Act 1952 to **monitor** the welfare of prisoners in the UK to ensure that they are properly cared for within Prison and Immigration Centre rules, whilst in custody and detention.

loved ones that they had been craving and missing, '*just to hear their news and just to hold their hands*." (Rayna)

> *"We would almost pretend like we were round the dinner table and it would be like a normal conversation at home, me just being a mum and them just being their normal bickery selves." (Rita)*

In this study the Mothers were frustrated by the cost of calls (six times the cost of calls outside of prison), by the delays in official approval of phone numbers and of adding them to the personal PIN[28] list, and just by access to phones generally. Mothers described having to choose between buying stamps and buying toiletries. Because most of the Mothers in this study were single parents the impact of frustrated contact with their children added to their maternal guilt and pain.

> *Theres no thought that its harder for mum to manage financially in prison, especially when you have kids in more than one place – sometimes I had to choose between smelling nice and ringing my kids, washing my air or ringing my kids, buying a little treat for myself or ringing my kids.. even just paying us something extra would have made a huge difference- maybe a pound a week even' (Helen)*

These structural frustrations regarding telephone added to the demands on Mothers to navigate prison rules and regulations, which they saw as serving to complicate and confound their relationships with their children. Rita, like several of the Mothers, spoke of how challenging it was even to access the telephone, particularly when she had been in a closed prison:

> *"…for a time we were only out half an hour a day and told there would be no phone access, but even on a normal day… we were locked up mostly 23 hours a day, in our cells… we only had access [to phones] between three and four, well my kids weren't at home then how could I phone them?" (Rita)*

Mothers described again their mixed emotions. Some of them found it painful, frustrating and difficult to phone home and some avoided it, feeling that it was less painful for them and for their children. Like the mothers in Baldwin and Epstein's (2017) study, some of the Mothers had multiple caregivers for their children and so they would have to 'choose' which children to ring if they did not have enough phone credit to phone them all. Tia described this as *'Sophie's Choice'*[29].

[28] Personal Identification Number (**PIN**) This PIN number allows prisoners to make call to both landline and mobile numbers and you put phone credit on weekly as needed.

[29] A well-known film about the Holocaust and a mother in a Nazi concentration camp who was forced to choose which of her children would live and which would die.

Grandmothers in the study faced similar challenges, as obviously their grandchildren were not all siblings and so were not located in one space, so again they were sometimes forced to choose which grandchildren to ring, and then whether to speak to the grandchildren or to the parents. This is something that Pham, Sandra and Mavis cited as an additional source of guilt. Several Mothers spoke of an 'emotional transfusion' where they would speak to their children and feel their pain, then their children would recognise their mother's pain, and so deep conversations were sometimes avoided as coping strategy – on both sides. This had an impact on the quality of the mother/child relationships (discussed in Chapter 7) and rendered some of the phone conversations superficial - especially, though not exclusively, between older children and adult offspring.

"I didn't want to upset her by telling her it was awful, and she didn't want to upset me by telling me she was struggling… so we were both like 'you ok?''… 'yeah, I'm ok, you ok?''... 'yeah''... it was silly, really, we both knew we weren't... but it was easier that way for both of us to cope." (Maggie)

Mothers of younger children described how they would adopt a forced cheerfulness to try to mitigate the pain that their younger children were feeling, which again would leave them emotionally exhausted:

"I just used to try to distract her and tell her it was ok, mummy would be home soon and just make it sound nonchalant... but inside I was breaking." (Sophie)

For some Mothers phone calls were an opportunity to engage in active mothering, but from a distance. This was essential to the mother's own sense of self as a mother and to her ability to retain an affirming or positive maternal identity. Mothers in the study endured several home crises that they tried to guide and assist their children through, over the telephone and sometimes in visits. These were, of course, stressful times for the Mothers and grandmothers, yet being involved in decision-making and solutions as they might have been had they been at home was an important factor in their retaining a positive maternal-identity and role. As previously stated by Shanice, however, it was often the '*little things*' that the Mothers missed most, and they would phone home as often as they could, often daily, to be able to engage in 'normal' everyday conversations and activities:

"We would actually go through the shopping list together on the phone and I would help her decide what meals to cook for the little ones and her dad… then I'd go through how to do it, step by step. I think I enjoyed those phone calls the most as I was just a mum then... just a mum on the other end of the phone." (Rita, 35)

Mothers described how they would continue their active mothering via telephone and letters, going through homework with their children, phoning to see how their school day had gone or continuing to parent them by disciplining or just listening to them. Carla and Adel both described how their telephone calls and letters home were opportunities to '*build bridges'* and *'mend fences',* which they hoped would stand them in good stead for their release. Both felt that away from the chaos of their pre-prison lives, the telephone calls and letters were a 'calmer' means of communication with their children and families, better than they had had for 'some time'. Four of the Mothers were able to take positives from their incarceration although, as previously stated, this was mostly because they were able to secure help and support that had not been available to them within the community. Prison was described by four Mothers as a 'safe' place where they were able to secure help, and which actually assisted them in the reforming and repairing of fractured relationships with their children and their wider family (see also Lockwood, 2018 and O'Malley, 2018). These Mothers (Annie, Dee, Shanice and Tarian) felt that opportunities to engage in active mothering via the telephone or during visits was an important part of their time in custody and was '*practice'* and an *'opportunity to build up trust'* (Dee) and to repair relationships before they returned home and to motherhood full time. The prisons need to do more to facilitate formal and informal contact – it is an important part of the process of throughcare.

5.10 Caregivers, Tensions and Gatekeeping

Mothers are the 'glue that holds families together', and when mothers go to prison, the dynamics within the family are altered. The importance of maintaining family ties has attracted recent policy and practice attention (Farmer, 2017, 2018; JCHR, 2019). Often it is families who take over the mother work, or caregiving role, hopefully (and where appropriate) whilst assisting the mother to maintain an active mothering role from prison. As demonstrated in this research, the Mothers' efforts, and whether they were allowed to engage in active mothering from behind bars, were varied and challenged; most if not all were constantly trying to renegotiate their mothering role and identity from prison. However, not all of the challenges originated from within the prison. For some of the Mothers, difficulties with family dynamics and caregivers impeded or complicated their ability to continue actively to mother their children and grandchildren, which further contributed to their spoiling maternal identity and feelings of powerlessness. Mothers were reliant on caregivers to facilitate contact and their relationships with caregivers was therefore a significant factor in the shaping of the Mothers' relationship with their children.

The majority of the children connected with the study were cared for by their grandmothers, but a quarter were cared for by their fathers, a significantly higher figure than the most often quoted figure of 9%, which relates to a 1997 study by Caddle and Crisp. For some of the Mothers this was not a positive factor and some ex-partners who had been abusive and controlling of the Mothers pre-prison simply continued their abuse by restricting and controlling their access to their children. Six Mothers experienced violent/controlling ex-partners who engaged in this, which contributed to their sense of powerlessness as mothers. The abuse and control they had previously endured was simply continued through their children. Taranpreet stated, *'…he knew he could hurt me most through the kids'*. That the acts were deliberate and direct attacks on them as mothers *because* it would be the *most* painful way to 'attack' them, was shared by Annie, Jennifer, Pham, Natacha, and Melanie. Melanie illustrates:

> *"I don't have much contact with my daughter, my ex has her whilst I'm in here and he don't want me to have contact with her, it's just an excuse to punish me and control me like he always does. He don't care that it punishes her too. God knows what he's saying to her about me." (Melanie)*

Similarly, Annie described how her violent and controlling ex (the father of her child), controlled not only her access to her daughter, but also what she was 'allowed' to tell her on the phone:

> *"I didn't speak to my daughter for the first five weeks I was in, I cannot explain the emptiness of that time. We have a good bond my daughter and me and we had been together or spoken every day before that [they had a 50/50 shared custody arrangement]. But he wouldn't let me speak to her, I was literally in pieces literally you know, emotionally and physically. I can't describe the pain because she is and always has been the reason I get out of bed. But he told me what I had to agree to say to her before he would let me speak to her. I had to say I'd let everyone down. I had to say I'd done wrong and I was ashamed and that I was a bad person and was now where bad people went. He made me promise to say all of that when she rang and if I didn't he said he would cut off the call and not let her ring me back. He only allowed five-minute phone calls, that's it five minutes once a week… then he would hang up" (Annie)*

Annie goes on to say how she tried desperately to retain a 'connection' with her daughter between these infrequent and highly controlled phone calls. Jennifer's ex, who had secured custody of his son when Jennifer was imprisoned, completely blocked her contact with her son, saying it '*wasn't in his best interests'*. He then moved 300 miles away to his former hometown, taking their son, changing his school and refusing to provide her with an address even to write to him:

"I was powerless to stop him moving as we had shared care, I begged him not to move him - it was his GCSE year, my son had plans, a future, that must all be wrecked now, and I can't even speak to him to see if he is happy or how he coped with the news. He [the ex] writes to me, almost taunting me, but I can't get to my son... I have begged him. How do I even fight this from in here?" (Jennifer)

Violent ex-partners were not the sole source of control and tension Mothers: contact was restricted by other caregivers who acted like gatekeepers, too. One of the ways in which the Mothers were impeded was by caregivers physically restricting access to the children, either by refusing to accompany them to the prison, or by limiting and controlling access via visits and telephone calls, or sometimes both:

"My son and his wife only came once, and they wouldn't bring my grandchildren at all. They said it was not 'something they wanted in their world', which I can understand, I guess. But it was hard having no contact with them… and teenagers, well they don't like to write these days do they. So no, I had no contact at all with my grandchildren whilst I was in prison… and before I went in I had them every day. It broke my heart. I missed them even more than my own children. That bond you have with grandchildren, well its precious isn't it." (Mavis)

Previous research has highlighted the significant financial and emotional pressure on caregivers when they are caring for a child of an imprisoned parent. It can lead to tension, recrimination, anger, frustration and judgement, which the Mothers described would sometimes leak into their communication and contact with caregivers. As the 'gatekeepers' of their charges, other family caregivers sometimes physically restricted or blocked contact with children. Understandably, some of the tensions between caregivers and the Mothers would leak into the visiting space or into phone calls, negatively affecting the Mothers and their maternal identity, even when mothers were sympathetic:

"S*he had every right to be mad at me… I get that. I fucked up and she had to drop everything to care for my kids, I feel bad about it I do… but I was doing my punishment... I didn't need her punishing me through the kids as well. When she came on a visit with them, I just wanted to be a mam and have a nice time and that... not sit there getting told what a fuckup I am in front of my kids. I'd rather she didn't bring them than it be like that, so I told her not to come and I stopped the visits. It weren't fair on any of us having them* [the visits] *be like that*." (Tia)

Several Mothers talked about feeling replaced or displaced and, as Dee states, it was often a feeling that was intensified in the visiting space where conflict, tension and a sometime almost a tug of war occurred between the mothers and their children's caregivers.

"My mother-in-law would deliberately bring them in clothes she knew I'd hate; she'd just talk about stuff they'd been doing and kind of excluded me from conversations with them... I know life goes on and that. But that was meant to be our time… and she couldn't even let me have that hour… it was all about her and what she was doing with them… made me feel crap man… like she was the mother now and I didn't matter." (Dee)

This sense of 'competing' for their children and feeling replaced and/or displaced was a common theme of the Mothers. Most mothers in custody 'retain dreams of a return to active parenting' and indicate that their children are their primary concern, it is then apt to characterize the relationship with grandmother caregivers as a 'co-parenting one'. Whereas previously the mother may have been the family individual with all of the parenting 'power', this is substantially reduced once she is incarcerated. Nonetheless if a coparenting and positive relationship can be fostered, supported and facilitated then this is beneficial to mothers, caregivers and importantly the children. Healthy, meaningful relationships were found where the parenting was shared and without struggle, where the caregiver and the mother both accepted and agreed the relationship and, importantly, who would 'lead' or control the relationship, where good communication, teamwork, problem-solving and compromise were all easily achieved and, finally and importantly, where affirmation and empathy existed for both parties:

"*I was lucky, we had a good relationship, and he recognised my need to parent from prison and made sure I was involved in all decisions about them and even in their day-to-day care wherever possible."* (Karen)

Conversely, a negative relationship will exist if communication is poor and influenced by conflict and power struggles; where each party undermines the other with differences in parenting styles and discipline, the mother is disconnected and experiences an overwhelming sense of despondency, guilt and fear. The Mothers in the study experienced both of these types of co-parenting alliances. Taranpreet described her parenting relationship with her mother-in-law of her twin toddlers as a '*tug of war*'. Like several of the Mothers, Taranpreet had mixed emotions about her children being in their grandmother's care. On the one hand she was '*grateful*' as her husband '*would not have coped',* but on the other she stated, *'A big part of me feels so bitter towards my mother-in-law, like as if she has taken my place'* (Taranpreet).

Mothers described being '*visibly, emotionally and physically reminded*' during visits that they '*no longer had any real power or control'* over their children. Ursula described how *'from the food they were eating, the clothes they were wearing, the words they were using'* that it was *'obvious'* she had

been *'replaced as a mother'* (Ursula). Five of the grandmother caregivers refused to bring the children to the prison for at least part of their mother's sentence and to a greater or lesser extent controlled the telephone access, too:

> *"I would ring up and ask to speak to the kids and she'd say, oh they're in bed early or out with mates… I could blatantly hear them in the background… but she just didn't want me to speak to them."* (Tanya).

For some of the Mothers, grandmothers restricting access and contact with their children came after periods where the Mothers had been addicted and/or living chaotically, or - in the grandmothers' opinions - had repeatedly '*let their children down':*

> "*I know I'd been a rubbish mam but how was I supposed to make it up to them or prove myself if she wouldn't let me speak to them… It honestly made me hate her. I could understand it, but I hated her. I felt like she was turning my kids against me."* (Carla)

When this occurred, some of the Mothers simply refused to allow visits, partly because they were making protective decisions about their children (O'Malley, 2018) and partly because they did not have the emotional resilience to maintain those physical links and relationships, or the '*fall out'* (Tanisha) from visits.

What was clear from this study was that relationship dynamics whilst the Mothers were incarcerated set-in motion other dynamics that persisted post-release. Ultimately, many of the difficulties and challenges faced by the Mothers (and their children and grandchildren) whilst they were separated by prison left an enduring legacy which affected post-prison relationships and family dynamics.

5.11 Rules, Regimes and Staff Relationships

Mothers in the study described being '*desperate*' (Mavis) to hold on to their maternal identity and role, whilst navigating through a carceral space entrenched in rules and regulations which served to frustrate their efforts at every turn. Mothers described how they felt that the prison environment and their own identity as a prisoner served to disempower them *as mothers* by reducing their maternal agency. Motherhood interacted with the power and control relationship of the prison. Ursula described

her perception of her lack of power as a mother, and the lack of visibility of that role, which she felt was afforded to her by prison officers:

> *"Denying your motherhood… it's a visible tangible demonstration of their power, isn't it. So prison life is all about tip toeing around the power, they hold the power and whether you get out or not, whether you get an easy job, or you don't, whether you see your kids or not… that's the reality. Whether you realise it or articulate it, that actually is the reality. You are in an abusive relationship with that power aren't you – because you don't have a voice… nobody cares. Do you think the public cares what happens to a prisoner? Nobody cares about you… You're just… you're what... you are [prison number], you are not even Ursula you're a number... certainly not a mother, that's the last thing you are to them… … That's the reality." (Ursula)*

To the prison the mothers felt they there were prisoners first, and to themselves they were mothers first. Mothers felt that the rules and regimes of the prison impacted on them more heavily as mothers, not least because their children were affected, too. Which most Mothers felt was unfair. For example, Pham described her frustration at the rules around Childcare Resettlement Leave[30]:

> *"The difficulty that has been the greatest is that the Child Resettlement rules mean that because my youngest has turned 16 I am not able to claim this right, nor I was told does it apply to grandchildren - so even though they are younger, I can't see them either." (Pham)*

Pham goes on to say, '*these are his most important years',* and *'not being there for him'* at such a time fuelled her *'guilt'* and '*failure as a mother'. S*he was frustrated that her status as a mother was ignored by the prison simply because her children were older.

> *"The enormous guilt and sorrow that being away from your child at such an important time as their GCSEs, especially when you're a person that places great emphasis on education like myself, is so hard to deal with….it's my job to take him to college, to university open days, all of that and I can't do it… I don't understand why more flexibility to allow mothers the opportunity to support their children isn't allowed… it's my punishment not his." (Pham)*

Although all prisoners are subject to the Incentive and Earned Privileges Scheme, Mothers described how this had at times affected them differently as mothers. Although the Joint Human Rights Committee Report (2019) and the female-focused Farmer Review (2019) recently advocated against

[30] Childcare Resettlement Leave (CRL) can be granted if the prisoner provides proof that he/she has sole caring responsibility for a child under the age of 16. CRL permits the primary carer to have contact with their dependants outside of the prison environment – for a day leave or overnight stay at home (Prison Service Order (PSO) 6300, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), 2012).

it, prisons have historically regarded visits and contact with children as a privilege rather than as a right. Mothers described how threats of losing visits or losing access to phone calls has been an established means of controlling prisoners' behaviour. Rita described how she had seen it happen '*many times'*, in hindsight she was aware it was wrong, but at the time she had not challenged it. Sam had two visits with her mum and her son cancelled, once because she self-harmed, and another because she *'kicked off at staff when I was moved back to basic'.* Several Mothers described similar instances, amongst the most troubling were from Mothers who had spent time in a prison MBU:

> "*I remember they used to say all the time about being on the Unit 'it's a privilege not a right to be here', man they used to make threats all the time that our babies would be sent out - we had all heard stories of mothers this happened to, and one girl I was in with said it had happened when she first was on the Unit, they sent a baby out because the mum had answered back a few times so then she was a real goody two shoes after hat cos she was scared." (Kady)*

This form of surveillance, regulation and control secured compliance in the women by promoting an atmosphere of fear. The ultimate fear being losing the care of their babies and their space on the MBU. In this context it is not surprising that the MBUs tend to have far fewer adjudications than 'normal' prison locations. Five Mothers spent time on MBUs, whilst they were able to take some positives from their experience, all would have much preferred to have been *'at home with family - anywhere but a prison with a baby'* (Kady). Kady and Carla had both found the MBU experience, and the additional surveillance of them as mothers, stressful, described by Kady as *'like a goldfish bowl'.* One Mother wrote about her experience of how the surveillance and control could manifest, describing how her refusal to '*comply with an instruction'* had led to the removal of her child:

> *"I felt they were always watching me and waiting for excuses to challenge me, I felt it was personal. They had no thought for the wellbeing of my baby or myself after she was removed. They gave my mother less than 2 hours' notice and said if she didn't come to collect her she would be handed over to social services. I could not believe it. My heart is broken and I'm angry." (Erin)*

Erin goes on to say how she felt '*frustrated, angry and powerless',* unable to do anything because of her prisoner status. She felt '*embarrassed and ashamed'* moving back to the general prison population after losing her space on the MBU.

A sense of powerlessness pervaded many of the Mothers' narratives but was particularly relevant regarding their motherhood. Mothers described feeling that their motherhood was '*at the mercy'* (Queenie) of the prison, it's regime and sometimes of individual officers. One Mother described her motherhood as being held hostage by the prison, with the prison dictating the terms of its release:

"I felt like they held my motherhood and my access to my kids as a hostage, and only if I played the game and did everything they asked did I gain access to my kids, but actually even when I did everything they asked, they still decided not to do what they said… it was all on their terms… my release from incarcerated parenting all up to them. A one-way street." (Rita)

Similarly, Adel describes her frustration at having no control over her children's lives and struggling with that, *'It's my job to be in control, to know'*. Tamika, also described her sense of powerlessness and relating it to her motherhood, stated:

"You just have everything taken away from you, you have no rights over your children, no contact with your children, nobody cares about it either. They don't look at you as if you are a Mother… they don't care." (Tamika

There exists an often contradictory relationship between punishment and care, recognising that 'care' is more easily directed towards 'victims' of crime rather than the perpetrators. This 'selective compassion' is even more complicated concerning female 'offenders' as they are often 'victims' of crime, too. Law breakers are often only considered 'reductively' and in terms of their criminal behaviour thus are perceived as 'undeserving' of care. For the Mothers in this study, this already disadvantageous position was compounded by their mother status, and they were seen as being even less 'deserving' of care because of their double or triple deviancy.

Tait (2010:440) believes that 'care is central to staff prisoner relationships' and argues that exchanges of care in prison are frequent. She suggests that the 'care' that officers extend to prisoners is often overlooked and underreported, but nevertheless is an inevitable part of working with traumatised individuals and an aspect of their work that officers find rewarding. Care is especially important concerning vulnerable and suicidal prisoners. Mothers revealed that although an officer might not recognise something as necessarily delivering 'care', it may be interpreted as such by the prisoner; *'just by asking their names, or even acknowledging I was a mum, showed me she cared… she was nice."* (Nicola). Although there was an inherent power behind the staff/prisoner relations, all of the Mothers described how treatment from prison staff (particularly prison officers) towards them *as mothers* was important. Moreover, how it impacted on their maternal experience and ultimately contribute positively and/or negatively to their maternal identity. Many of the women in the female prison estate will have issues related to trust because of past abuse by men; although the power imbalance is present in the male estate too, for women it may feel magnified, especially concerning male staff. . Mothers spoke about *'expecting'* officers to treat them negatively as prisoners but

appreciated that not all officers would be the same: '*you get bad bus drivers, you get bad prison officers*' (Queenie); but as Mary stated, *'I didn't expect them to treat me as a bad mother… who are they to judge me on that, they know nothing about me… or my life'.* Mothers spoke about the level of '*out and out judgement and disapproval'* (Rita) they had experienced from some officers concerning their motherhood, and that this had had a definite impact on their mothering self-esteem and maternal identity:

> *"The way they look at you when they see you are pregnant… the look on their faces… it's disgust, you can see it is... you know they are thinking what kind of mother will you be… I used to hide my belly as much as I could... they made me ashamed... I was already ashamed, but they made it worser." (Kady)*

> *"On D wing... the officers would say stuff yeah... they made all of us feel like we didn't even deserve to be mothers let alone treat us like mothers… we all said it, we all felt it." (Rita)*

> *"He actually said to me these exact words, 'what kind of mother are you? You must be really bad to have three kids taken off you?'.... that nearly broke me you know because he was a decent bloke... that made it worse." (Nicola)*

However, the Mothers described some incredibly powerful and positive interactions with individual officers, and Kady credited the officers in her first night centre[31] as having saved her life. She felt that had it not been for the compassion and observation afforded to her on her first days in custody, she '*would not have made it*'. Similarly, Dee, Tarian, Rita, and Sophie all described positive officer interactions in which they had found particular officers to be compassionate, kind, mindful of them as mothers and supportive and understanding about a mother's situations and circumstances:

> *"Then I went to [name of prison] and there was this fantastic Family Support worker who knew that I had got kids and knew their names. To walk into that on your first day after having - actually, I don't remember anybody ever asking about my kids - an officer or anybody, so to have that it was like a different world." (Rita)*

> *"Miss Brown said I shouldn't even be in prison; she knew a different kind of help was what I needed, and she said that my sentence was just punishing my little girl… she was really kind." (Sophie).*

[31] Most prisons will have a dedicated first night centre or induction wing where new arrivals will be placed, with a separate unit for vulnerable prisoners. In some cases, sharing a cell can offer newly arrived prisoners with additional support in their first hours in custody.

Prison staff responses to the Mothers not only impacted on their maternal selves in terms of their positive maternal identity, but also their engagement in prison life and sentence planning, as illustrated by Tanisha:

> *"Mr Green was so kind when my daughter was being bullied, he knew I wouldn't be able to concentrate in the sentence planning meeting, so he asked for it to be postponed. If it had gone ahead that day I was so distracted I know I would not have joined in or seen the point to it - in fact I think I would have withdrew from the programme… but because he moved it and helped me speak to the school and my daughter to sort it out my mind was clear when we did have the meeting. I was happy and they were happy... but without Mr Green understanding it could have gone badly wrong." (Tanisha)*

Jaspreet and Tanya particularly spoke of how 'good' officers listened to their worries about losing their maternal role and encouraged them to be open with their families and children about their fears: both Mothers did this and described how their children and families reassured them and, as a result, their communication and contact improved. Both women said this then allowed them to engage in the opportunities offered for progression in prison more fully than they had before. Two mothers described how officers asking about their children at a timely opportunity had actually *'saved'* their lives, the questions about their children had brought than '*back'* from a brink of despair.

> *'I actually think I would have done myself in that night you know .. but that officer asking about my kids and looking at their pictures, well it just reminded me I was still a mum.. I had to keep going for them' (Diane)*

Mary highlighted how conversations with one particular prison officer had prompted her to get back in touch with her children whom she had not seen for 'years' when they had been taken into care. Mary had believed her children '*were better off without her'* and had '*put them to the back of my mind'* for years, but the officer who spent time with her in what Mary described as a '*non-judgey way'*, encouraged her to see that it was '*never too late'* and to think about what '*kind of Mary'* she would want her sons to see if they did come back into her life. Mary said this motivated her to '*change'* and to access the support in prison that she had been unable to secure outside. She wanted to '*be a mother again'.*

It is not unheard of for prisoners and staff to view each other with hostility and suspicion and through stereotyped lenses of their 'side' - but what the Mothers described was more than this; it was about them *as mothers.* Motherhood was a pivotal aspect of their incarceration experience and, as

demonstrated, was often compounded by the prison space and staff interactions yet mitigated (to some extent) by the Mothers' relationships with other mothers in prison. This remained the case whether the Mothers were mothers of very young children, teenagers or adults, or were grandmothers.

Summary of mothers In- prison experiences

This study reveals how completely the Mothers absorbed traditional societal models and ideology and expectations of motherhood and mothering, as in many cases did the staff- this had an impact on how the mothers experienced prison. Many of the mothers entered prison with an already reducing maternal self-esteem and spoiling maternal identity. The spoiling continued and was confirmed to the Mothers once in prison. Being a '*prison mother'* was seen by the Mothers as the ultimate failure, failure to live up to deeply embedded ideals of what a 'good' mother should look like. The pain of separation from their children, was profound and traumatic. Mothers experienced a stripping away of their maternal identity and role, resulting in distinct and specific maternal pains of imprisonment, at times the prison failed to acknowledge the maternal role or maternal experiences. Mothers and grandmothers sought comfort and support in their relationships with each other, demonstrating their maternal skills through nurture or the replication of motherhood. Motherhood and its associations remained Mothers' and grandmothers primary focus. The Mothers felt their motherhood and maternal identity mattered most to them, but that it seemed to matter least to the prison system. Being in prison compounded Mothers' already challenging circumstances, and the physical space of prison and the dynamics within interacted with the Mothers' experiences to shape a heavily stigmatised and painful experience of motherhood/grandmotherhood. The prison environment bore some relationship to how the Mothers coped and managed their maternal-emotions, maternal-role and maternal-identity. Mothers felt surveilled and controlled not only as prisoners but as mothers, and this sometimes had an impact on their relationships with each other, and on contact and relationships with their children and families outside.

The Mothers struggled to manage their maternal emotions whilst navigating through the carceral space. Most of the Mothers felt their motherhood and grandmotherhood status was either ignored or judged. In the main they felt their needs *as mothers* were not well accounted for, and where they were met, it was because it suited the prison. As such, the Mothers embodied Sykes' (1958) 'pains of imprisonment', illustrating how the 'frustrations and deprivations' of prison impacted on their maternal-identity and role, and subsequently their interactions with their children, thus setting in motion the persistent pains that would prevail beyond the prison walls on release.

6. The Impact of Maternal Imprisonment; Experiences of Mothers Post Release

All of the mothers in the study described how, although they had been desperate for release, they had felt unprepared for it – especially in relation to their maternal role, maternal identity and maternal emotions. The mothers who were hoping to or were certain to re unite with their children were focussed on reuniting with their children and all that this entailed. The motherhood role remained their primary concern, which was sometimes in conflict with the expectations of supervision – for example reporting to the probation service on the first day of release – as opposed to going home to be with children.

> ' *I was supposed to report there (probation office) on my first day out but I needed to see my kids and feed my kids and take a present for my kids to say sorry- how could I do both I don't have money for all these taxis and bus fares? But If I didn't go that was a breach but my kids were waiting for me , I felt like I let them down all over again.. there's no understanding'*. (Shanice)

Through the themes of **'Renegotiating Motherhood', 'Trust and Surveillance',** and '**Trauma and Pain',** the persistent pains of maternal imprisonment are explored. Mothers' descriptions of their attempts to renegotiate and repair their motherhood as they re-enter the lives of their children and families revealed the considerable challenges they faced. The Mothers described how they would strive to come to terms with the collateral damage of their imprisonment in terms of enduring guilt, shame, losses, changed relationships, post-prison supervision and long-lasting trauma.

6.1 Renegotiating motherhood – everything is different.

Mothers in the study articulated their '*hope*' and '*wish*' for things to *'get back to normal'* (Margot) on release. However, the reality was often very different. Their greatest challenges lay in the re-establishing of their altered and/or broken relationships with family, especially with their children and grandchildren. Resuming their maternal role, was a 'precarious enterprise' (Brown and Bloom, 2009:313).

All of the Mothers found their release and the post-prison period challenging, some in ways they had anticipated - '*I knew it would be a while before they forgave me'* (Tanisha) - others in ways they had not expected - *'I did not expect to feel like a stranger in my own home'* (Rayna). The Mothers found that they had to renegotiate their place in their families, their relationships with their children, and their new or altered maternal identity. For those mothers who had experienced a prolonged separation

from children in their care, they found that they were renegotiating motherhood with children who were '*different*' to the children they have left behind, describing also how sometimes children struggled with the different version of their mothers. The reduction or altering of their maternal role had a profound effect on their self-concepts and self-worth of the mothers in this study.

Rita, like several Mothers, was torn between feeling '*invisible'* and wanting to retreat further into the background of her family and fighting to regain her previous role and matriarch status. Echoing many of the Mothers' experiences, Rita recognised that she had lost '*power*' as a mother. Not just over her toddler son, but all her children. Previously the lynchpin of the family, Rita went on to describe how she had to renegotiate her relationships with all of her children. She, like several of the Mothers of teenage children, stated it took her time to recognise that her children had all matured whilst she had been in prison. Her elder children had been young pre-teens and teenagers when she went inside – a period of intense change in young people's lives. They had all become more emotionally mature and more independent in her absence and Rita felt they all needed a 'period of adjustment', whilst she fought to re-centre herself in the family and come to terms with the changes in their relationship dynamics. In Rita's case, she felt her, and her family eventually found and negotiated *'a new normal'* they were all happy with, and slowly relationships between her and her children strengthened. Sadly, this was not always the case. Shanice, who had described feeling like an '*outsider' 'watching in'* whilst in prison, had not expected that feeling to continue once she was released. However, and echoing Brown and Bloom's (2009) findings, Shanice found that feeling was in fact magnified. She felt more of an outsider than ever.

> "*Sometimes I'd watch my mother with the kids and think, that should be me doing that… but at first it was like I was paralysed or something, I just used to watch and not do nothing*." (Shanice)

Similarly, Tia had been heavily addicted to heroin before prison, and by her own admission had *'never been a mother to Meg', (her daughter)*, due the chaos they lived in pre-prison. Now clean and sober, she wanted a better relationship with her daughter, but felt that the opportunity was gone:

> "*…we are not close in that way now. It feels more like we are living together as sisters or something. It doesn't feel like mother and daughter anymore. I'm on eggshells."* (Tia)

This was compounded because Tia had a younger son, whom she had felt it was not *'too late for'.* She described very different relationships with her two children. Her youngest had been so young before her sentence that he did not remember much about Tia's '*chaotic pre-prison drug-affected life'*, so Tia felt that to him she was untainted. Tia described her relationship with her son as less scarred

by guilt, so to her *'it is easier*, *more pure'*. Paradoxically, Tia describes this 'pure' relationship with her son as also a source of guilt because it triggers anger and jealousy in her daughter:

> *"He has a clean mother, he doesn't really remember me being in prison or away from him, so he doesn't know any different and we are close, really close. She never had that. I see her watching us and I know what she's thinking, like she's on the outside… I see it and I hate it because I know it's too late for us." (Tia)*

For some of the Mothers, their relationships with their children were affected long-term or permanently because the children 'chose' not to return to their mothers post-release (n=4). With the exception of Tarian who felt that in her family they all '*shared the kids anyway'*. Mothers felt to blame for this situation and saw it as rejection, further reducing their maternal self-esteem and changing their relationships with their children:

> *"Now she [grandmother] has them more than me so when we are all together it's like I have to check with her if it's ok to give them something, like she's the mum now not me, worse is the bairns look to her first to check as well. I hate it." (Tanya)*

Several Mothers described their relationships with their children as *'forever changed'*. Some Mothers with older or adult children felt their relationships with their children would never be as strong or at least the same again. Particularly if their children had matured into adulthood. Sandra lamented the changed relationships with her teenage daughters, believing it is a direct result of her imprisonment:

> "*We had made headway and put the past behind us before I was sent to prison… I thought we were really close, I worried about them every day when I was in prison… but we are now not close again. I wasn't expecting that*." (Sandra)

Sandra's situation was compounded by the fact that both of her teenage daughters became pregnant during her imprisonment, as did one of Ursula's daughters, one of Queenies' daughters, and Marjorie's son became a father whilst she was imprisoned. All of the Mothers, as grandmothers-to-be, were deeply affected by this. They all felt their maternal guilt was magnified because they were '*not there'* for such a significant event in their adult children's lives. An event which they *as 'mothers* were *supposed*' to be there for. The Mothers felt that not only did this add to their guilt and shame, but it affected their relationships with their children - either temporarily or permanently - and ultimately then affected their relationships with their grandchildren, too, adding to the layered intergenerational impact.

Some of the Mothers felt that their teenage children had '*gone off the rails'* (Karen) because of their absence. Their teenagers' behaviours interacted with the mothers' guilt, which also had an impact on their relationships and the Mothers' parenting decisions (discussed later). Dee describes how her teenage daughter now uses cannabis, but Dee felt that she *'just'* has to '*let her'*, '*because she's just like I was so what right have I got to tell her not to*?' Dee describes how she and her daughter had '*actual physical fights'* where there would be '*venomous arguments'* about Dee's '*neglect'* of her daughter, and her decision not to allow her to visit whilst she was in prison. Some Mothers took the 'protective' decision to not allow their children to visit at all. Dee said she made this decision because she herself had visited her own mother in prison and she had hated it; she remembered being '*terrified of the dogs'* and just feeling *'confused and frightened'* (Dee). The Mothers sometimes felt by refusing visits they were sacrificing their own need and desire to see their children and were *'sparing them'* the experience of prison visiting. Which Mothers felt was or would be a negative experience for them and their children- but it was a decision that had far reaching implications. Whilst none described regretting that decision, several Mothers felt that the sometimes lengthy periods of no contact had 'changed' their relationships with their children, even if only temporarily:

> *"On my first sentence, I didn't let them come, the baby was too young but my son, well I didn't want him to even know I was in prison… but that meant he was angry when I got out, …[…] so he was angry… and he acted out a lot… at me, always at me.'' (Shanice)*

Sophie stated simply, '*I didn't want her to think it* [prison] *was normal so I stopped her coming'*. Sophie goes on to say that the prolonged separation was painful, but she was reassured and empowered by the fact she had made a positive and selfless decision – ironically this made her feel '*more like a mother*'. However, it also meant that when she was released, her daughter was '*so different*'. Sophie described her daughter as 'unfamiliar' to her, this feeling endured and left an imprint:

> "…*she smelt different, her hair was long, she knew words I hadn't taught her, her... just everything… she even walked different. It's like… when I got out I felt like I didn't know her, I felt like I didn't know my own child, like I didn't know what made her tick, I didn't know what food she liked or owt like that. And that's horrible, my own child and I don't even know this stuff about her. Like now I have caught up with it, her favourite colours, her favourite books, blah de blah… but it made me feel depressed until I did… and I still don't feel I get it right no more."* (Sophie)

When asked how this made her feel as a mum, Sophie replied, *'It didn't make me feel like a mum because mums are supposed to know this stuff, aren't they'.*

Given that the maintenance of family ties and bonds is an important consideration in relation to recidivism, the implications of mothers making the painful decision not to see their children, whether they were 'protective' or not, are huge for both parties. Despite making what they felt were positive maternal choices, the Mothers acknowledged that not seeing their children affected their adjustment post-release and impacted on their relationships with their children. Karen, sentenced for a serious driving offence, had no prior contact with the criminal justice system *'or people like that'*. After one '*awful'* visit she did not want her children to experience prison again, as it was *'not something I ever thought would be or wanted to be part of their world'*. She described her children as feeling angry with her post-release, and she felt '*distanced*' from them as a result:

> *"Oh, they were all angry. My middle daughter had started her periods whilst I was inside, but she didn't tell me this when I phoned home, I only found out when I was home, and even then only because she asked me to buy sanitary products. I asked her why she hadn't told me, she said it was because she didn't want the prison guards to hear at my end or her brothers at her end, but I know having to go through that on her own… without me has changed how we are. I still don't know who bought her first sanitary towels. I worry we will never be as close as we were. Same with the other two really, they grew up so much when I was away, I was away at such important developmental phases in their lives, it's hard for me to know them, really know them… like I did before. Same for them with me, I think they feel like I've changed. I'm not the mum they knew anymore. We have all changed and because of that our relationships with each other have, too. It's sad." (Karen)*

Sophie stated that *not only* had her daughter '*grown up'* whilst she was incarcerated, but she felt that *she* had too. She felt more independent and less needy, both as a daughter and as a young mother; this caused tension in her relationship with her own mother:

> *"It caused real tension between us - me just wanting to be a mum, she was used to me asking her everything and I think she felt redundant… but I developed a much better bond with my daughter because I was actually being her mum, so in the end I think I'm a better mum to my daughter now." (Sophie)*

Several Mothers felt their relationships with their children had changed because *they* had changed. Ursula said, *'I've changed, I know I have; the kids say I'm colder now' (Ursula).* Some Mothers, particularly those whose children had been separated from each other and cared for by different family members, found their mother/child relationships had fractured. Tarian, whose eldest daughter had lived between her father and both her paternal and maternal grandmothers during her mother's sentence, continued to do the same (aged 14) when Tarian was released:

"I don't feel I know her now, not like I used to, she doesn't want to come home, I thought she'd want to be just with me, but she's got used to her freedom, I think she uses her moving about as a way to get away with stuff - how can I tell her off for being late if I don't know which house she's meant to be in, it's gone. We won't ever be the same." (Tarian)

Tia's pre-teen daughter hated visiting the prison, and so Tia would go for long periods without seeing her; she also '*wasn't great on the phone'*. Tia goes on to say:

"So for over a year [on the phone] we barely had a conversation beyond you ok? yeah, I'm ok, you ok?… it was like getting blood from a stone, but visits with her were worse, like a long-drawn-out hospital visit. She was embarrassed, I think, …that made me feel ashamed, in the end I stopped making her come – she hated it, I hated it, so what was the point. I know it was the right thing to do, but that changed us as well… I don't think we will ever again have a brilliant relationship, too much has gone on, [..]… we are not like mother and daughter now, more like sisters really…." (Tia)

Tanya's children 'chose' to stay with their grandmother when their mother was released: their roles were completely reversed, with Tanya now being the weekend parent and her mother being the children's primary carer. This had a profound effect on their relationships, and she felt *'unable'* to take back her full maternal-role or even her maternal-identity. The Mothers' changed relationships with their children impacted on their re-entry experiences and their outcomes and wellbeing. Mothers had lost confidence in their maternal-roles and felt a reduction in their maternal self-esteem, further fuelling their guilt.

The mothers described how their parenting styles were also permanently affected by their imprisonment. This in turn had implications for outcomes for their children in both the short and longer terms. The mothers described how they would either serve 'penance' with their children, *'spoiling'* them materially or a reluctance to discipline them or provide boundaries. Both of which served as a perceived means of *'making up*' to children for their imprisonment, but also borne out of a desire/need to punish themselves. The mothers described how they found disciplining their children difficult and *'hypocritical'* and because they have been publicly discredited as persons and, by default, as mothers.

"… I felt disgraced … like I didn't love him enough… like other people would think I didn't love him enough. That's probably why I spoil him. To this day I still do. I still feel like I've got making up to do, I am constantly trying to make up, constantly trying to play catch up." (Tamika)

Cynthia, who had served nine sentences, most when her son was younger, had felt she had *'much to make up'* to her son:

> *"David used to see his mum [Cynthia] drunk on a lot of occasions and then his mum goes to prison, I was so guilty and so ashamed that's why I always used to spoil him and buy him lots of things. My sister used to you say I spoilt him, but who cares, I don't, but he's my son, if I want to spoil him I will, he's been through a lot." (Cynthia)*

Similarly, Annie, described how in the early days of her release she would '*basically give her anything she wanted'*. Annie, now a few years further down the line, reflected how her need to '*make it up'* to her daughter almost drove her into a spiral of debt that could have gone disastrously wrong for her. She had missed her daughter's birthday whilst in prison. So when it came to her next birthday, Annie wanted *to 'go all out'*, spending an inordinate amount of money on an *'outrageous'* party that she could ill-afford. Annie stated the debt she got into for the party, had she not been supported by friends, would have led her to reoffending, triggered her mental-health issues and potentially further imprisonment. Tia was torn between *'just wanting her to have whatever she wanted, because of what I've put her through'*, and knowing that she 'should' discipline her.

> *"...the discipline I just found so difficult, because for her she thinks, why am I like this all of a sudden, like I say to her help me run the house or clean your room and stuff like that – all stuff I wasn't bothered about before. I see the confusion on her face and that just makes me think , oh I should do it all for her anyway – that might make up for how I was before and in prison, but then I'm not doing her any favours for the future by doing that am I? It's so hard." (Tia)*

In effect the mothers were trying to renegotiate their motherhood from a position of immediate disadvantage, spoiled motherhood.

6.2 Spoiled Motherhood; Spoiled maternal identity

The legacy of their pre-prison and in-prison experiences had left the Mothers feeling 'tainted'. In most of the Mothers' own eyes they remained *'bad'* mothers, not now because they were *in* prison but because they had *been to* prison. The repair to their maternal identity was not immediate on release if it happened at all. This internalised perception of themselves as 'bad mothers' was something the Mothers felt unable to escape from, and they were often reminded of it:

"…there will be a happy family discussion going on, you know just normal round the table chit-chat, then someone will say 'oh Mum, do you remember when such and such happened?'… then there will be the inevitable, 'oh sorry… that was when you were away'… then the room will fall momentarily silent, it will only last a few seconds… but those seconds feel like a lifetime for me. A lifetime of being a bad mother." (Ursula)

Several Mothers felt that they had permanently relinquished any previously held 'good mother' identity, in their own eyes, and in the eyes of their family and wider society.

"I'm not sure I will ever be able to think of myself as a good mother now. Going to prison changed that and even if I weren't judging myself I know others would judge me if they knew. It's not something I'm proud of, or am happy for people to know about me, put it that way. Even all these years later." (Karen)

Often there was an intersectionality to the Mothers' experiences, and many were deemed doubly/triply/quadruply deviant (in relation to class, race, gender and age). This was true throughout the CJS experiences of the mothers. For several Mothers, their gender, age, class, race and culture interacted with their motherhood and their own maternal self-assessment and others' assessment of them.

"My family obviously told me I brought shame on the family, I flip between being shunned by those who know [about prison] and lying to those who don't… obviously, I did know it would be like this. My culture is very judgemental, especially to women… It's worse because I'm a mother,… even now my mother-in-law gets digs in all the time, she told my husband I was not 'morally capable' of guiding them [the children] now and bringing them up. I lost my profession, too, and that doesn't help me feel good about myself at all… that I can't practice anymore, but it is as a mother I feel the most ashamed. For my husband it is both, but for my mother-in-law… to her I am not fit to be a mother." (Jaspreet)

Kady, a black Mother, was supervised by a black probation officer and on her release was told by her probation officer that she had '*let her race down'*; she told Kady that as '*an intelligent black mother you should have been better, you have let us all down'*. Kady described how this conversation played over in her head, interacting with her own already reducing self-esteem, specifically her maternal self-esteem. For Kady, her guilt and shame was layered:

"*I have never forgotten it. I was already questioning myself, could I do this, could I be a good role model to my daughter as a mother who'd been to prison? As a mother whose baby was born in prison. I was already questioning, man, and she went and said that… she said that*!.... *so now I have to feel guilty not only as a mum... but as a black mum too."* (Kady)

Eight years post-release, Kady had yet to tell her daughter she had been to prison. Nor that she was born in prison and had spent the first five months of her life in a prison MBU. Kady stated she had '*put off*' telling her daughter *'because I feel like… like there's something just so wicked about it'*. She was afraid of her daughter's rejection but also feared others would judge and negatively label her daughter a '*prison baby'*. Kady did not think her daughter would '*forgive'* her.

Although most of the Mothers described feeling like '*bad'* mothers, or indeed '*the worst mother in the world'*, several actively resisted the 'spoiling'. Mothers fought against being labelled, and sought to make their experience 'count', either by utilising it as a catalyst for change, also using it to assist others with similar experiences, and/or by actively challenging and disrupting 'the system' via activism, and/or by simply refusing the label.

I refused to be labelled as just a mother who's been to prison. All the way through [the system] that label is shoved onto you and all the bad that goes with it. But I am much more than this, I am not going to let what I did to myself and my family define me for the rest of my life." (Rita)

Some of the Mothers felt angry at the persisting negative emotions they felt and pushed against the negative identity and connotations they felt were imposed on them by others as well as by themselves. For example, Kady stated she was '*not ashamed to be me*'; and Emma stated:

"I know I've been to prison and that makes me a bad mother, but I'm out now so does that mean I can never be good enough? what person hasn't made mistakes? It's just that we mothers aren't allowed to make mistakes are we?" (Emma)

Similarly, Cynthia - felt strongly that her past should be allowed to remain in the past despite the guilt she described '*living with every day':*

"I know most people think I must be a rubbish mum because I went to prison, but I'm not completely. I was, but I got better, […] now I think I'm a better mum than some people I know

who haven't even broke the law… who are they to judge me? My son thinks I'm a good mum and that's all that matters to me now." (Cynthia)

Some mothers and grandmothers described how they felt they 'good' motherhood, previous good mothering and positive maternal identity was forever erased. This research revealed that the shame and guilt mothers *continued* to feel post-prison remained rooted in traditional expectations of motherhood, maternal-role and identity. Queenie, who had previously described herself as the '*runt'* concerning motherhood, repeatedly spoke of her daughters' *'shame'* at having '*an ex-prisoner, a criminal as a mother'*.

"…*it's years later now, and they are still ashamed of me, so how can I not be ashamed of me too, they don't know anyone else with a mother who's been to prison… it's a big secret, this is. No matter what, her shame [daughters} won't go so how can mine? I want to shed it, but I just can't."* (Queenie)

"*I just don't feel like a mother anymore, and if I'm not a mother I don't know what else I am except just a criminal."* (Taranpreet)

The Mothers spoiled maternal identities sometimes acted as a paralysing factor regarding reactivating their active mothering or pursuing the custody and care of their children. Mothers were so traumatised by their experiences that they were simply unable to mother their children because of an overwhelming fear of failing (again):

"*in the end I couldn't see the point in fighting her... she* [grandmother] *was a better mother to them than I could ever be, and I just didn't want to let them down again*." (Carla)

Several mothers '*accepted*' that their children were *'better off'* in the care of other relatives as a result of their negative perceptions of themselves as mothers. It is not difficult to imagine the long term psychological impact this had on children – who sometimes perceived this as a reflection or a 'failure' on their mothers part to meet their needs. Given what we know about the outcomes for 'looked after' children the emotional, educational and practical long term outcomes for the children who 'ended up' in local authority care in these circumstances are concerning- and the more frustrating because many would have been preventable. Worryingly, there appeared to be little to no support for mothers that would enable them to challenge this belief or alert them to the potential long term consequences of this course of action – for them or their children.

''They were better off without me ..or so I thought. Eventually I stopped keeping in contact.. stopped trying to get them back thinking it was best. Then years later I find out they'd had an awful time in care, ended up in YOI and then prison themselves … they did to their kids what I did to them and its all my fault. I wish someone had said that might happen… I thought it was for the best'' . Mary)

Mothers felt keenly that the reduction in their maternal self-esteem was heavily underpinned by guilt and shame and was directly related to and compounded by their fear of negative evaluation and judgement by others.

6.3 Spoiled Motherhood was Layered for Grandmothers

The Mothers had to renegotiate their motherhood from their now disadvantaged position as a 'spoiled' mother. The deep sense of shame felt by the post-imprisoned mothers was magnified in the grandmothers in the study. Grandmothers felt their shame was related to not only their maternal identity but also specifically to their grandmother identity, *'it's ridiculous really a grandmother in prison*', (Mavis). Another factor adding to the 'layers' of shame for post-prison grandmothers related to secrecy and enduring shame. For several of the grandmothers, their status as ex-prisoners was a 'family secret' that had been kept from grandchildren.

"It's the elephant in the room - my grandchildren know nothing of it, imagine them bringing it up, god forbid, oh my granny was in prison, it's not right is it, I should have known better." (Queenie)

Margaret felt she could never truly relax or be herself in front of her grandchildren, despite being forty six years post-release:

"Sometimes I feel really on edge with them [grandchildren] if I'm not in control of a conversation, just in case it goes down an avenue that will lead to prison talk… in some ways its meant I've had to keep some distance, I'm not totally relaxed with them… it's actually very stressful, you know, even now… carrying all that about... it wears you down." (Margaret)

The grandmothers '*lived in fear*' (Margaret) of their secrets coming out, the secrecy, fear of judgement and negative evaluation, and the unknown added to their shame. For Margaret this was compounded by the fact that her own daughter was now in prison, and she became the caregiver for her daughter's children. Margaret not only felt '*to blame'* for her daughter's criminality but was also fearful of her

grandchildren discovering *her* past. Fearing their blame and rejection, Margaret found her maternal identity and maternal self-esteem vulnerable and precarious (Sharpe, 2015):

> *"The thing is now I don't feel I can ever tell my grandkids about me being in prison in case they think it's normal […] I'd feel like I'd let my family down all over again if they knew… but it's just layers of deceit, isn't it? I just feel guilty all the time, it never goes[…] It's bad enough my children knowing I went to jail, but if my grandkids found out… well… it's just…, shameful isn't it ?" (Margaret)*

Despite her own children being not yet born when she was imprisoned and now being forty-six years' post-prison, Margaret still spoke of her ongoing guilt as a mother and grandmother. She revealed an additional 'secret', a baby she had given up for adoption soon after her prison sentence. She called her prison sentence '*a dirty secret'. She was so* ashamed about her ex-prisoner status that she rarely even used the word *'prison',* instead preferring to refer to it as when she was *'away'.*

> *"There are so many situations where I have to tell white lies to cover up for that period I was away. Just the other day my granddaughter asked me what I did for my 21st, well it was a kick to the stomach because I was away for my 21st. I just feel so guilty for lying but I'm too ashamed for them to know. Imagine telling them their granny was a common criminal." (Margaret)*

Several Grandmothers described how the perceptions and judgements of their adult children, especially those who were parents, now shaped their relationships, not only with them but also with their grandchildren. Queenie, previously the main childcare provider for one daughter, was told that her '*services*' were '*no longer required'* (discussed later), conversely she felt she was being used for *'unlimited childcare'* by another daughter. Queenie felt she was '*sort of being blackmailed*' to *'do whatever she needs in terms of childcare and see her on demand [..]… because I owe her'* (Queenie). Sandra described how the shame was layered regarding her grandchildren, and she did not want her grandchildren to view her in the same ways that her children had/continued to. Sandra 'accepted' that she was spoiled as a mother but did not want to be spoiled as a grandmother, too. Echoing previous research this reiterated that '*second chance grandparenting'* could be directly related to desistance.

> "*I can't undo what I did, I know me going to prison ruined their childhoods and it's almost too late for them to see me as a good mum… but for the grandkids, well maybe it can be different.*" (Sandra)

Sandra highlighted how, through her grandchildren, she was seeking to *'do a better job'* than she felt she had as a mother. She described how becoming a grandmother, despite the fact that she blamed

herself for both her teenage daughters' pregnancies ('*if I had been home it would never have happened'*), was a motivating factor in her desistance.

> *I want to do well for them… nanas are meant to be warm and kind and the 'go to' person, not in prison, not a criminal – that's not the nanna I want to be. I don't take anything anymore. I think I would have stopped anyway, outgrown it – but I'm definitely clean for them. I don't want them to have no drunk and druggie nana, imagine the shame of that" (Sandra)*

However, Sandra's newfound motivation and desire to be seen as a '*good nanna'* was a source of tension with her daughters who, although pleased their mother was doing so well, felt frustrated and angry that she '*had not done the same for them'.* This compounded Sandra's layer shame and she stated how she would *'torture'* herself with the knowledge she had '*failed'* as a mother:

> *"I know they are pleased I'm better, but I torture myself with knowing they feel shit because I didn't do this for them. Our Molly actually asked me why they weren't enough, isn't that awful that that's how she feels. But the fact is I suppose they weren't, I was too into the drugs, too selfish, in too much pain, really, to stay off them, I couldn't have done it then. But you get stronger as you get older don't you, you think more I guess. Maybe I just grew up. I'm ashamed of that old me… but I can be a good nanna, it's not too late for that." (Sandra)*

Other mothers who were also grandmothers described a 'deferred shame', whereby they had thought their relationships with their children had been repaired and to all intents and purposes the 'past' was behind them as a family. Then as the mothers own 'children' became mothers, the judgement and recrimination would begin again.

> '*'We were good you know… as good as we could be , but then when she got pregnant, when she became a mother… a much better mother than she ,she was like mum 'how could you, how could you have done that to us. I couldn't do that to mine'. But she hasn't lived my life, she can't know.. but it just sounds like excuses'* (Sandra)

For the grandmothers who has this experience this had the potential to destabilise them and to trigger old habits and old coping mechanisms. Although remining strong and successful in her post prison life, Ursula described mentally challenging post prison motherhood had remained for her – for over a decade. Ursula stated '*I don't always cope with it well man.. the continuous judgement, I can't leave it behind because now she' a mothers she can't either.. its always with us'* . It was something mothers who were not, yet grandmothers were insightful enough to '*expect'* and this worried and troubled them

Kady stated, '*when she finds out it all… that's when it will be judgement day. I'm expecting it. I'm expecting her to hate me'*. She 'shame' and guilt for the mothers didn't end – all of the mothers, even those decades post release spoke about the enduring shame and guilt hey felt as mothers- and for some this was not only directly linked to their coping, but also to their desistance.

6.4 Invisible Motherhood, Substance Misuse and Desistance

For Mothers who had previously had issues with addiction, and/or had experienced their children being permanently or temporarily removed from their care, their maternal guilt, shame and fearfulness of an uncertain future; was a trigger for a return to substance misuse as a means of blocking out or coping with their ongoing, all-encompassing maternal emotions. A return to substance misuse often made a return to law-breaking more likely. For those mothers who had had their children removed dealing with their maternal emotions, their loss and grief about their 'lost' children, was hard. It consumed the mothers and often not being able to deal with their maternal emotions left the mothers vulnerable to returning to 'old' ways of coping – which sometimes involved substance misuse, and which in turn would lead to reoffending. The loss of a child to the care of the LA has far reaching psychological effects and the Mothers in this situation struggled to deal with their emotions. Morris (2018) describes mothers who have lost a child to care as 'haunted' and highlights the lack of compassion and empathy afforded to mothers who lose their children in this way in contrast to a child dying. Nicola described herself as '*an invisible mother now'*. The mothers felt they were not supported in this and felt they had nowhere and no one to turn to. Their maternal identity still mattered to these 'invisible mums' a great deal.

> *"I might never see them again, but I have sons, I am a mother, and I will always be a mother, no one can take that from me." (Nicola)*

Nicola described feeling desperate to hold onto her mother identity despite no longer having the care of her son. Losing their children gave the *explicit* message that they could no longer be trusted to care for their children themselves, that they were deemed to be 'not good enough', especially as mothers. Yet the Mothers who had lost children to care still very much felt like mothers. Their maternal emotions remained relevant to their wellbeing, their successful re-entry and their desistance. Nicola, whose three-year-old child was taken into care during her sentence stated:

> *"Just because I don't live with my child and my child doesn't live with me, doesn't mean I'm not a mother, I still feel like a mother, I think like a mother – I worry about the world he's growing up in,*

where he is and what he's doing. I remember his birthday and think of him at school, in fact now I'm clean, even though I don't have him, I'm more of a mother than I was before, I was too chaotic to think of all that stuff then… it's sad though that he doesn't get to see this mother, I'm invisible [to him], that pain for me is my worst enemy because it makes me want to use." (Nicola)

Their children's loss was a source of great shame and embarrassment and contributed to the Mothers' enduring spoiled identity. Mothers internalised the 'blame', which had a devastating impact on their wellbeing and maternal self-esteem, already reduced by imprisonment. This proved 'overwhelming' for the Mothers. Some mothers felt 'forced' into silence about their experiences for fear of the judgement of others, and three mothers adopted the defensive mechanism of denying they had ever been mothers – which simply added to their guilt and shame.

"It's not something you can easily tell people, 'oh I was a mum, but they took him off me'… not to mention the two they took before him. It's like one of those huge birthday badges, but instead of happy birthday it says, 'bad mother'. It's too much really." (Nicola)

For several 'invisible mothers – their negative self-assessment and unsupported maternal emotions rendered them vulnerable (sometimes likely) to return to previous substance misuse – which inevitably led back to reoffending. Thus their mother status was directly related to their desistance. All of the Mothers who had children removed from their care described feeling powerless or '*at the mercy'* (Lauren) of social services/social workers. This added to their sense of invisibility and further reduced their maternal self-esteem and maternal-identity as well as their maternal-role and maternal capital. This had the potential to send the Mothers into a downward spiral (Stone, 2016:967). Mary stated that because she had lost her sons, she saw '*no point'* in either *'trying to be good and stay off the drink'*, or in fact to leave her violent partner of that time, both factors were relevant to her ongoing offending which resulted in many more prison sentences.

It was evident in the Mothers' narratives that there had been many missed opportunities to support them before, during, and after prison. Once their children had been removed from their care, none of the Mothers were offered support to assist them in understanding or dealing with the issues that had led to their child's removal or the removal itself. Therefore, the Mothers now had the culmination of previous trauma and experiences, their imprisonment and now the additional trauma of losing their child. As evidenced by this study, the lack of timely and appropriate support contributes to mothers' already challenging circumstances and to the loss of their child/ren into care and so the cycle perpetuated. Emma, who died a short time post-release (from pneumonia), had written and spoken about how, after her child was '*stolen'* from her and placed for adoption, she felt she had *'nothing*

much to live for'. She gave birth one week after getting out of prison and described how losing a second new-born daughter (her first daughter was in the custody of her father) triggered exactly the downward spiral described by Stone (2016).

> *"The memory of them coming in the hospital with the car-seat, I had thought I was taking her home, but as soon as I saw that car-seat I knew they were taking her. I remember hearing someone screaming and screaming and then I realised it was me screaming. I discharged myself from hospital and went and got off my face. I didn't know what else to do."* (Emma)

Emma served multiple sentences all centred around her substance misuse, all of which was triggered by her traumatic history and the loss of her daughters; for which she had received no support. Effectively, Emma's trauma - including her maternal trauma – was criminalised. She was not the only mother to describe this cycle.

> *"I can't turn the clock back and I know I'll feel shit about it forever, I know it makes me a bad mother, all I can do it try to be better, it shames me, it really does… it shames me… it's so difficult not to use [substances] to block out feelings like this... and that's what I always did in the past... it was a cycle: block out, use, feel worse, block out, use more." (Sandra)*

This research powerfully revealed how guilt became a life threatening emotion, (both in and after prison), and when coupled with a sense of hopelessness these emotions became even more dangerous to mothers. The Mothers negatively evaluated themselves as mothers, internalising shame and guilt concluding they were 'bad mothers', sometimes leading to further substance misuse in order to block out their feelings. In some mothers this triggered the perpetual cycle of substance misuse, maternal-guilt and shame, further substance misuse to bloc-out maternal guilt and shame - and so on (Baldwin et al, 2015), creating a *"cycle that I just couldn't escape"* (Beth). Beth, the youngest in the study, had tragically predicted in her interview that a return to drug use or suicide would be likely for her because of her struggle with guilt, shame and sadness. She was utterly traumatised by the enforced separation from her baby (who was three months old when Beth was sentenced), which, alongside her own negative self-evaluation of herself as a mother, was too much for Beth to bear:

> *"The bairn had to stop breast feeding cos I was sent down... that's sick isn't it? Her health for life affected because of me and my mistakes. I felt like a shit mother, the worst in fact… she went into care because of me, I felt like nothing when I was in prison [..]. Even now I think*

what's the point of me. She doesn't know me now… I try in the contacts[32] like, but she doesn't want me... when I come out of my contacts, all I want to do is block out the pain with drugs… that or leave this life altogether… sometimes both." (Beth)

Tragically, such was the level of Beth's trauma, pain and self-blame surrounding her separation from her baby daughter, and the subsequent painful process of gradual and surveilled reunification, Beth, as she had predicted, inflicted on herself the ultimate penance, and took her own life just before her 21st birthday.

Most if not all of the Mothers absorbed the blame, and often the responsibility, not only for their own crimes but for the circumstances around them too. The Mothers who misused substances, as a means of 'blocking out' or coping with abuse, only ever blamed themselves for their addictions. Not their abusers nor society that had failed them by its lack of resources to support them either financially, practically or emotionally. Furthermore the Mothers felt that as 'discredited' mothers there was a lack of 'trust' in them as mothers and this impacted on their relationships with their families and children, on mothers' willingness and ability to ask for help and their perception of 'support'- which many mothers saw instead as surveillance.

6.5 Trust and 'Surveillance'

Trust has important implications for the engagement of mothers with statutory services post-release. It is suggested that that when a traumatic experience occurs, trust is broken because trauma alters ones view of the world as a 'safe' place. For the now additionally traumatised Mothers, engaging with services that have the potential to 'hurt' them further was often challenging. Not least because Mothers found it difficult to trust that services were there to 'help' and support them, rather than to punish them further.

"Trust is a very difficult thing isn't it. It was broken in my personal life. I didn't come into prison as a person who trusted[…]… and when you get out, well it's even worse, trust no one! – Because the stakes are higher, you can lose your kids - at the drop of a hat. If they think you are not good enough, not proving yourself, then they are gone – you have to be a better mum than all mums, whiter than white." (Ursula)

[32] Supervised regular contacts organised by social services and usually in a contact centre, with a plan to move gradually to more frequent and unsupervised contacts as part of the process of a gradual full reunification.

The Mothers felt that their post-prison mothering was subject to increased scrutiny and judgement, describing how they felt that others' trust in them had reduced not only because of their 'ex-prisoner' status but additionally and specifically *as mothers* who were '*obviously*' now not '*good mothers*' (Tamika). This in turn was experienced by some of the Mothers as a lack of trust in them *as mothers*. In addition to probation supervision several Mothers experienced additional surveillance from social services, either because their children had been taken into care or because they were subject to reunification processes. Even for those Mothers whose children had long ago been taken into care, managing their maternal pain remained a challenging aspect of their post-prison life and was intertwined with all aspects of their post-release rehabilitation and desistance. The Mothers described the impact of feeling '*untrustworthy*' (Annie) and '*watched'* (Tanisha). As Ursula had stated, the threat and fear of losing their children was significant and most of the Mothers had anxiety about this, especially if social services were actively involved. This fear and lack of trust in professionals, particularly felt by mothers of younger children (Sharpe, 2015), was something mentioned by several Mothers in the study, verbalised by Tanya:

> *"You have to be careful about trust after prison, it is certainly something to be really careful about, you keep your guard up." (Tanya)*

Issues of trust 'went both ways', i.e. Mothers felt wary of trusting others, especially professionals, but they also felt as though professionals had an automatic mistrust of them, over and above the 'expected' mistrust directed towards ex-prisoners (Goffman, 1963). The Mothers felt it as *mothers.* Six Mothers had lost the care of their children to their LA, (Beth, Mary, Nicola, Dee, Lauren, Tanisha), either permanently or temporarily, as a result of their sentencing, but several more Mothers had Social Work involvement in their post-prison lives (mainly for pre-existing substance-misuse or MH issues).

Sophie, whose daughter had been taken into foster care, felt a palpable level of mistrust directed towards her from social services concerning her resuming the care of her daughter, despite there being no concerns about her ability to be a successful and suitable parent *prior* to her incarceration. The sole reason why Sophie's daughter was placed with foster parents was because there was no 'suitable' adult to care for her when Sophie was imprisoned. Sophie felt that, because of her status as an ex-prisoner mum, she had to mother to a higher standard than *'normal mums'* in order to prove that she was capable of having her daughter returned to her, stating, '*if they had their way they would have kept her and had her adopted'*. She felt that social services were '*waiting'* for her to fail and made her feel that she '*couldn't be trusted with my own daughter'*. Sophie goes on to say:

"I felt under surveillance… is that the word? spied on… I think if it was legal they'd have put a camera in my house to watch me when I had my home contacts." (Sophie)

Before her death, Beth had described how only seeing her baby through supervised contact visits[33] made her feel '*not a real mum'*, saying she felt like she could not be *'trusted even with my own baby'*. It is not unreasonable to assume that the culmination of these feelings, the weight of the perceptions of others and the continued surveillance of her reunification with her daughter were pressures that contributed to Beth's decision to end her life. Mothers, especially the younger Mothers, spoke of a constant feeling of *'being watched'* (Beth). Which they associated with an expectation of failure and a lack of trust. Mothers described how others' lack of trust in them made them doubt themselves, increasing their own levels of anxiety and paranoia. In some cases, these feelings were relevant to their relapse into substance misuse, (and ergo, offending to fund it).

Beth's and Sophie's experiences chime with Sharpe's research (2015:1) with young post-prison mothers whom she found had experienced judgement, '*gendered surveillance social censure and stigma,'* long after they left prison and regardless of whether they were currently engaged in criminal activity. Mothers lack of trust in professionals also contributed to the Mothers' reluctance to ask for help just as it had pre-prison.

"If I said I was finding it tough, I knew they'd assume I was back on the drink, then they'd be all over me like a rash. I would have lost my kids forever this time… so I just kept quiet and managed… it nearly killed me, but I managed." (Shanice)

Shanice goes on to describe how she struggled with her autistic son post-release. She described coping with his behaviour on her own, reluctant to ask for help for fear of unwanted attention. She had therefore not been able to access support and guidance in managing his behaviour and ensuring their safety:

My son was kicking off, I thought he was going to hit me... but I didn't want to call the police or ask for help because then they'd assume I couldn't cope and mark me as at risk of drinking again… but the last time I had no choice, he was really kicking off so I had to call them, he's so much bigger than me now, but also to protect him… the police asked if there were any other children in the house, I was terrified of saying so because I'd had to sit in my car to protect myself from him… but my daughter was upstairs in bed… she slept through it all

[33] Visits with children that are pre-booked and pre-arranged, often in a Social Services Contact Centre building, are either observed via two-way mirrors or are physically supervised by a Social or Family Worker; they are often part of a prolonged process of reunification and may progress to being unsupervised, and then overnight contacts, before full reunification.

thank goodness… but now I'm just waiting, waiting for them to come and say that that wasn't good enough, they already think I'm a shit mum because I went to prison so this will just confirm it in their eyes." (Shanice)

Shanice goes on to describe how she struggled with her autistic son post-release. She described coping with his behaviour on her own, reluctant to ask for help for fear of unwanted attention. She had therefore not been able to access support and guidance in managing his behaviour and ensuring their safety:

"My son was kicking off, I thought he was going to hit me... but I didn't want to call the police or ask for help because then they'd assume I couldn't cope and mark me as at risk of drinking again… but the last time I had no choice, he was really kicking off so I had to call them, he's so much bigger than me now, but also to protect him… the police asked if there were any other children in the house, I was terrified of saying so because I'd had to sit in my car to protect myself from him… but my daughter was upstairs in bed… she slept through it all thank goodness… but now I'm just waiting, waiting for them to come and say that that wasn't good enough, they already think I'm a shit mum because I went to prison so this will just confirm it in their eyes." (Shanice)

Several Mothers had experienced violent and toxic relationships that had at different times in their lives brought them to the attention of social services. Despite rarely being the perpetrators of domestic abuse or violence towards their children, it is often the mothers who will come under scrutiny from social services for their 'failure to protect' (Barnes, 2015). Mothers felt this scrutiny particularly keenly post-release. Several Mothers felt their previous traumatic experiences (although obviously not their 'fault'), and their imprisonment was *'held against'* them (Carla).

"They, the SS I like to call them, kept talking about all these risk factors being part of their assessment – apparently the fact I was raped and abused by a sick bastard is a risk factor for me being able to be a good enough Mother… how the fuck that can be right?… none of it was my fault what happened to me and was directly related to why I lost my way and went to prison… so instead of helping me, they punish me through my kids and tell me I can't be trusted to look after my kids… and apparently 'getting myself locked up' proved that to them!… I honestly wanted to scream...WELL FUCKING HELP ME, THEN!" (Carla)

The Mothers felt their prison sentences confirmed to social services that they were bad mothers, again making Mothers fearful of engaging with support agencies. This also often compounded their situations. Mary, who had been in a violent relationship and struggled with mental-health issues and

alcohol-misuse, lost the care of her sons after her second custodial sentence. Mary illustrates how reluctance to seek help and fear of negative intervention, and/or negative evaluation (Liss et al, 2012), had a devastating and long-lasting impact on her and her sons.

> *"They said that because I didn't 'engage with services', whatever that means, that I hadn't proved I wanted to change enough… but I was in a lose-lose situation. They had already made their minds up I was a terrible mother. If I had asked for help and told them I'd taken him back, was not coping and drinking again, well they would have taken the boys into care, so I just made the most of it while I had them… and guess what? They took them anyway." (Mary)*

Kady felt isolated and nervous after the recent birth of her second child, eight years post-release, yet was *'afraid'* to ask for support from the usual networks (e.g. health visitors, midwives, social services). She felt that, if she asked for help with her '*troubled past'* - as a mother who'd been to prison, she would be inviting unwanted attention into her life, stating, '*once they* [social workers] *get their claws into you they don't let go, they watch you like a hawk, ready to pounce and take your kids'* (Kady).

The Mothers' lack of trust in professionals and their fear of negative interventions resulted in many missed opportunities to access the support they needed. Several Mothers felt they would have benefitted from input regarding ongoing issues of domestic abuse, addiction, housing, and mental health, but did not want to draw attention to themselves for fear of being seen as failing, inadequate or neglectful mothers. Mothers who felt unable to access support were therefore vulnerable to many of the same pre-custody challenges that had led them onto an offending pathway in the first instance. Their fear of accessing support, as mothers, had the potential to affect their rehabilitation and desistance pathways. Creating an atmosphere of '*emotional safety'* (Baldwin 2015), for mothers so that they can share their concerns with professionals is vital for services engaged in work with mothers, particularly when working with criminalised mothers.

Post-release changes in family dynamics and strained relationships occurring because of the Mothers' imprisonment (see also Booth, 2020) were often also influenced by issues of trust. Queenie, who as stated earlier was now no longer *'trusted'* to take care of her grandchildren, stated:

> *"Apparently, I am no longer good enough to care for grandchildren, my daughter finds me unsuitable to care for her children now, I don't know what she thinks I'll actually do but she just sees me as a criminal now and not much else." (Queenie)*

Sandra and Tanisha's sisters questioned them and their ability to be consistent in their post-release mothering. For example, Sandra's older sister suggested that she should *'keep the younger ones, to make it easier*'. Sandra refused. This placed an additional strain on their already fragile relationship. Sandra's sister felt that Sandra's prison sentence was 'proof' that she was '*not the best mother'*. Tanisha stated her sister and mother visited much more frequently than they had prior to her arrest. Tanisha did not feel this was rooted in support but was because her sister and mother did not trust her to not start drinking again and were *'keeping an eye'* on her. Tensions between imprisoned mothers and caregivers sometimes began whilst the mothers were still incarcerated, and for many they continued or escalated post-release. Some of the issues that mothers raised were simply around different opinions in child rearing practices which may well have occurred regardless of the mother's imprisonment. For example, it is not uncommon for new mothers and grandmothers to have some tensions between them about generational changes in mothering practices. However, Mothers in this research raised several issues which could be regarded as *specific to mothers* who had previously been incarcerated.

Several Mothers, despite having legal custody of their children, felt 'prevented' from either having full access to or care of their children, either temporarily or permanently. Two Mothers had grandmother carers who 'refused' to return the children to their mothers' care, and a further three grandmothers insisted on being involved in their grandchildren's care either formally (directed by social services) or informally; other Mothers mentioned feeling 'monitored'. Thus their maternal role was significantly reduced or lost post-release, because of their imprisonment. Tia's children had been cared for by her ex-husband and the children's grandmother whilst she was imprisoned; she now had her children back in her own care, but her ex-husband was initially reluctant to return his son permanently and Tia felt he wanted to maintain *'unreasonable'* levels of access to the children to *'check'* on her (rather to just see his children). Similarly, Tamika revealed that, despite social services agreeing that her children could all be returned to her, her mother *'refuses to trust'* her to care for them. Allowing only the eldest child home and insisting the two youngest remain with her. Tamika visits her children daily and is angry and frustrated with her mother, but feels powerless to challenge her for fear of recrimination:

> "…*she says if I kick off* [about the arrangement] *she will tell social services, so I have no choice… that's the worst thing after prison, no one ever trusts you again."* (Tamika)

The Mothers felt the mistrust of others, especially other mothers was influenced by a lack of understanding of the complexity of their trauma and pathways into offending, but also in maternal

judgement. The mothers' mothers, sisters, aunties etc who were also mothers could not understand how a mother would '*put herself*' in a position where separation from children was a risk.

> ' My own mother said to me , ''how could you? as a mother how could you do that knowing you could go to jail?... why would you even risk it … I don't get it … I could never.'' ' (Carla)

This additional layer of judgment informed the lack of trust in the women as mothers, if, as mothers, they had 'risked' it once, how could they be fully trusted. Some of the Mothers, especially those who had used substances in the past, felt that some of the mistrust in them was '*understandable*' (Tia), and was rooted in their previously chaotic lifestyles. Sandra remembers her mother telling her in prison that she had been vindicated in keeping the children from her:

> *"I used to try to fight my mother and convince her I could manage the kids, even with my habit, I thought I was ok…. I thought I was that like a functioning addict… but when I went to jail my mother was like, well you are not functioning now, are you!" (Sandra)*

However, Sandra feels that her '*hard work to get clean and deal with my issues'* warranted a second chance. She felt that her mother had 'actively discouraged' her son from coming back home once she was released. He had in the end refused to come home and Sandra was forced to accept this:

> *"I guess I have to accept that whatever my view of how I lived and why is one thing, but he went through his own experience, and I understand how hard it is for him to trust me still, and actually I suppose for my mother to trust me. I know I won't relapse again, but I guess they don't, do they, maybe one day they will, this is the longest I've gone… but they need longer I guess." (Sandra)*

Mothers found it challenging to ask for or obtain support for motherhood-related issues. Finding their maternal-identity and role was all but ignored in their post-release supervision.

Leaving Mothers to cope alone increases the risk of a return to previous unhealthy coping-strategies, which may include substance misuse, to cope with maternal-emotions and the enduring stress of post-prison life. Furthermore it can lead to crippling self-doubt and recrimination in which the mothers internalise their 'shame' and 'blame' and in which successful, effective and happy motherhood becomes almost impossible, and which in turn can be accompanied with a return to offending to fund the substance misuse - which can ultimately lead to a return to prison or permanent loss of children.

6.6 Shame and Blame

For post-prison mothers, their ex-prison mother status provided the hook on which to hang their own internal blame and shame. This had implications for their coping, wellbeing, engagement in supervision and desistance. The range of outcomes Mothers accepted or wore the blame for were almost infinite. Rita, speaking about persistent thoughts of guilt and blame, simply stated:

> *"…you feel to blame for everything. Every time they do something that's out of character or they play up, you question is it all because I went to prison?" (Rita)*

Three Mothers whose teenage daughters became pregnant during their sentences felt this would not have happened had they been at home. They blamed themselves for the early pregnancies and all of the potential negative outcomes of a teenage pregnancy - *'her future is limited now'* (Diane). Ursula questioned whether her daughter having a child at such a young age would also limit her future, and she felt that her daughter's choices of partners and life-path had been negatively affected by her prison sentence: '*I feel responsible, all the time'* (Ursula).

> *"I know it was all my fault, I dunno maybe I've internalised from prison, you know, like it's your fault, you've got to do something about it… You know, actually there's a socio-political-economic context in which offending takes place but, you know, it's your fault, your responsibility, to fix it, do you know what I mean? I don't know, it's shit." (Ursula)*

Ursula's son offended whilst she was still in custody, something she insists would not have happened had she been home; revealing her deep-seated guilt about this, '*he has that label now, ex-offender, because of me. I have to find a way to make it up to him*' (Ursula). Mary blamed herself for the fact that her sons were now described as 'career criminals', which she felt was rooted in them being taken into care '*because'* of her. Mothers of teenagers felt responsible for any disputes in the family home where siblings were fighting with each other. This generated additional worry for the Mothers and was a source of discontentment when they were reuniting:

> *I'm like a sodding referee… there is so much tension and resentment in my house now… it wasn't like this before. It's like we all have our own private hurt from that time, and we focus on that instead of supporting each other like one family… we are fractured now, broken."* (Karen)

Mothers blamed themselves that some sibling groups had been 'spread' amongst relatives and so had not lived together during their mothers' incarceration. As a result, relationships between the

separated siblings had altered, causing additional stress, tension and resentments through the families. The Mothers blamed themselves for their children being bullied at school, for their changed behaviours, changed relationships, offending behaviour, disconnection with education and a myriad of other outcomes. Rayna felt that her mother's cancer had '*spread faster'* because of the stress of Rayna's prison sentence (as, indeed, some of her family believed). Maggie went as far as to blame herself for the fact her grandchild went on to develop cancer:

> "...*when Ryan got cancer, all I could think was that cancer is related to stress isn't it – the stress of me being inside, us being separated, that's what caused it – I know it. It doesn't matter what anyone says, I just know it was the trigger and I have to live with that now."* (Maggie)

This self-blame did not ease as the children grew older; many of the older Mothers blamed themselves for outcomes in their mature adult children and their children's children. Both Mary and Maggie felt that their sons had trouble bonding with their own children *because* the bond with their own mothers had been broken by imprisonment.

> *"He struggled as a parent, he couldn't show them affection, but then it's not surprising really, is it – he hadn't been mothered, not properly and not by me anyway, so how was he meant to know how to be a parent when he hadn't been parented… something else that is my fault." (Mary)*

The Mothers spoke about how there was '*no end'* (Tanisha) to their penance when it comes to their children: *'it's a life sentence for a mum'* (Ursula). Ursula goes on to say that she prays to '*be released'* from her life sentence of questioning and examining her children's outcomes and looking for positives as '*evidence*' that they were not irrevocably affected by her imprisonment.

Cynthia blamed herself for her son's anorexia: *'my son was anorexic…and I thought… I've done that to my child… my boy… because he was pining for his mother'.* Cynthia's son was an adult when he developed anorexia and she had been out of prison for 24 years, having been sentenced to custody for arson after setting fire to herself. She had a long history of horrific abuse, sexual violence, substance misuse, and mental-health issues; she had been repeatedly failed by MH services and was unsupported at the time of her 'offence'. The judge had apparently 'not wanted' to send Cynthia to prison, but 'there were no probation beds' (approved premises will not take those accused of arson) or secure hospital beds available at that time. Despite the significant and relevant external factors over which Cynthia had had little control, she maintained it was she and she alone who was to blame for her son's illness. Similarly, Beth stated:

"I did this, me, I chose to take the drugs, yes it was the only way I could cope, but I chose that path, what kind of mother does that." (Beth)

Cynthia, who was described by a Women's Centre worker as 'completely and utterly traumatised', also described how she would obsess and '*torture herself with guilt'* over an imagined life '*if only things had been different'*.

"I know I drank because of all the abuse, and that wasn't my fault, maybe if I'd had help or been believed it wouldn't have happened, maybe none of the rest would have happened, the violence, the wife beaters, all of it, my mental-health, I think I would have been a good mum. So even though I know they are all to blame, and even the social and probation in a way for not helping me, even though I know that the guilt eats me up, all I missed, I obsess over it – how can I let that go? I'll feel guilty till the day I die, and I should." (Cynthia)

The internalised shame and blame the mothers described was often unsupported. All of the mothers felt they would have benefitted from having an outlet to discuss their emotions and feelings and how to cope with them post release. Mothers felt this would have been significantly more useful to them that some of the 'pointless' aspects of supervision they felt they 'forced' to engage in. To them their motherhood mattered most – but many felt that the agencies 'supporting' them, it mattered least.

6.7 Supervision and Support

Most of the Mothers felt post prison support in general was lacking, but specifically mothers felt post prison support in terms of their motherhood, was almost non-existent. Where maternal support and attention was present it came via gendered support networks and particularly via women's centres. Mothers described leaving prison feeling 'disoriented' and degraded' (Eaton, 1993:56). 'Anxious' and 'suspicious' about the additional surveillance and judgement they expected to face via post-release supervision:

"*I didn't have high expectations of probation to be honest, I hate all that watching you stuff… all I wanted was to get my kids back*." (Carla)

The shape of post-release support had significant relevance for how well mothers re-entered into their families and society. As found in previous research, once the initial 'honeymoon' period of reunification had passed, some 'old' issues resurfaced for mothers, which had often been

compounded by incarceration. Mothers who were identified as vulnerable to this and who received support not surprisingly fared better than those who did not. Motherhood did not feature in formal supervision for most of the Mothers in this study either pre or post-release, despite motherhood being Mothers' primary focus, and biggest source of scrutiny outside of supervision. Despite *all* of the Mothers describing at least some negative impact of their incarceration on them as mothers, *most* of the Mothers stated they were *'never asked'* (Taranpreet) about their motherhood, whatever their circumstances (i.e.. reunification or permanent loss of children) in their post-release supervision.

Ursula stated that the research interview was in fact the first time she had been asked about her imprisonment and its effects on her *as a mother,* something she said she would be *'eternally grateful for'.* Ursula was conflicted in her feelings about probation 'support'.

> "…*it's incredibly difficult. They didn't ask about my kids at probation, but even if they had I would have said everything was ok, why would I be stupid enough to say if I was struggling? Probation have the potential to breach you so how am I going to say I'm struggling to somebody who's got the potential to send me back to prison, and the potential to flag me to social services as a mother not coping."* (Ursula)

Echoing Masson's findings, most of the Mothers experienced some form of 'collateral damage', such as loss of homes, loss of employment, relations or education opportunities; however, the Mothers felt most concerned at the losses or harms that directly impacted on their maternal-identity and/or role, losses in which they remained unsupported. Significantly, Mothers felt that, even if they did *ask* probation for support, 'real' support would not have been offered:

> *"But what are you actually going to do?[...] They never even came to visit my home or visit my children or visit... I never had a home visit. Nobody ever came to see me. I lied for the whole four years. I genuinely did, I lied for the whole four years. On my licence I was supposed to live elsewhere... I wasn't allowed to go back to my family home because they said Denzel [dad - pseudonym] was a risk because the offence occurred with him. And remember he lived in the house with the kids. They said I couldn't go back to* ***my*** *house with* ***my*** *kids. So they licensed me to my daughter's house, Kenise's house. I went back and lived at my house for four years and just lied. I needed to be a mother to my children, to be in our home, so I lied." (Ursula)*

Such was Ursula's need to be with her children to focus on repairing and renegotiating her maternal-identity and role she was prepared to risk being breached and returned to prison. This situation added significantly to her post-release stress but was a decision she does not regret. In fact, she wonders what her relationships might have been like if she *had* complied with her licence conditions

and concludes, '*I don't think I'd have a relationship with them, the state would have destroyed my motherhood*' (Ursula).

Like Ursula, Beth said that her motherhood simply was not discussed during her probation supervision:

> *"At the first appointment she said something like… 'oh, I know there is social services involvement with your daughter so we'll leave that to them, and we will just deal with your offending and your drugs here'... so after that we never even spoke about it, I don't think she even asked me once how it was gannin with the bairn after that… shitty really." (Beth)*

Beth went on to say that supervision for her offending and her drug use constituted simply being asked if she was offending and being asked if she was '*using'* or 'd*rinking'*, to both of which Beth would reply '*no'*, '*and basically that was it really'* (Beth).

Several Mothers, when specifically asked about the Probation Service response to their motherhood, said words to the effect of 'they don't care'. Throughcare and planning for resettlement[34] is relational to successful post-release outcomes, especially for mothers. the most effective supervision relationships were gendered and tailored, and ideally formed around supervisory or supporting relationships that began whilst the women were still in prison in preparation for release. Rayna stated that she was not prepared for her release and did not really understand what would be required of her outside. She felt that planning for release and '*getting me ready for it'*, was an element of her relatively long sentence (3½ years) that had been neglected, *'especially as a mother'*. This contributed to what for her was an *'extremely hard'* period of adjustment post-release. Several Mothers felt they were *'just let out'* (Emma), with little support in the areas they felt they needed it most, and one of those areas was their motherhood.

Significantly, some of the Mothers who had been free for longer periods had experienced the Probation Service in an era where individuals would meet their 'outside' probation officer whilst still in prison. Previously the probation officer who wrote the pre-sentence report (PSR) might be the officer who was assigned to an individual throughout prison and release. Mary highlights how important this can be; in present times more women than ever are released homeless, many of them being mothers (PRT, 2015):

[34] The term 'resettlement' is of relatively recent origin, first appearing in a Home Office consultation paper (1998) as the preferred term for what had previously been called 'throughcare' or 'aftercare' (Bateman et al, 2013:8)

"On one sentence yeah I met my probation officer a couple of months before I got out... it helped knowing who I was going to see and she made sure I had somewhere to go to when I was released, she thought I might be able to get my kids back see… that was the only time it happened though… it didn't work for me because social services wouldn't let me have them anyway, but some of the girls who are mothers if they were let out with no home, how were they supposed to get their kids back?" (Mary)

This level of throughcare has always been harder to achieve for women as they are more geographically distanced, but historically, in such instances probation areas would often fund a probation officer to travel to meet their client in prison from between six and three months before their release with the aim of establishing their needs and to form a relationship with them[35]. In more recent years throughcare, if it exists at all, has been undertaken by third sector organisations – but their funding and tenure in a prison is often precarious. However, where it has existed, the third sector workers have often provided an important link between the prison and the community supervisors. Many mothers' efforts to successfully re-enter society are challenged by practical losses such as loss of homes and loss of employment, and by ongoing difficulties in regaining them. Mothers in this study encountered these difficulties and often felt their probation supervision did little to alleviate their situation:

"I lost my house when I went in, all my stuff, kids clothes, photos, photos of me dad, everything… my whole life was in that house gone… I was broken, man, broken. What did probation say? 'Oh we can't help with housing; you need to go the council'… how was I supposed to get my kids back without a house for them to live in… but they [Probation] were literally not interested." (Carla)

Supervisory relationships are important. This study evidences the value and need of understanding and accounting for mothering status and emotions, and how doing so improved engagement:

"I had a good one yeah and I thank god for that, she helped me she really did, and it was through her help and the course I did that I got my kids back. She knew that was most important, but she helped me see I had a road to go down to get there and she helped me get there, without her I'd be back inside, she helped teach me I deserved better and that my kids needed me." (Tanisha)

Similarly, Sophie described how her officer:

[35] The author is a qualified probation officer, and this is how I was initially directed to practice – when the then 42 probation areas were merged to become the National Probation Service (2000), and the New Choreography for probation meant 'national standards', enforcement and supervision were the highest priority, and funds for travelling for the purposes of resettlement were all but removed (see also Chapter 2).

"…*just made me open my eyes and see that my bad decisions and partners were affecting my daughter and I didn't even see it, he was good yeah, he knew she* [daughter] *was most important to me and so he focused on that to help me learn."* (Sophie)

Some of the Mothers had experience of community orders as well as prison, or had served more than one sentence and so had experienced help from multiple officers:

"I had some half decent probation officers, you can tell the ones who actually care because they get to know you and want to know you… but some of the others I wouldn't piss on if they were on fire, they didn't care, they didn't understand and they didn't try to… you just didn't go to those appointments." (Mary)

Despite being described as 'complex', many Mothers felt that few of their additional 'needs' like motherhood needs were met. The Mothers described it as '*pointless*' (Emma) to discuss any of their maternal challenges or emotions with supervisors. Although it is still relatively underexplored, especially in the UK, there is an increasing awareness that desisting pathways can be '*shaped by motherhood'* (Garcia-Hallet, 2019:214). Negotiating post-prison motherhood and attempting to re-establish a maternal-role whilst trying to repair a reduced maternal-identity, presents significant challenges for mothers in their desistance journey and it required informed support. As Dee states:

"Yeah, it was a challenge to stay clean and straight, it was stressful coming back to being a full-time mum after prison and still having all the same shit to deal with as before but now worse... and fighting to get my other kids back, yeah I could have done with some help with that." (Dee)

The Mothers revealed that the relationship between motherhood and desistance can be complicated and sometimes is paradoxical. Desistance must be understood as a journey - it is not fixed. For example, Mary, Nicola and others all identified how the loss of their mother role, before and after prison, set them on a path of reoffending because they felt they '*had nothing left to lose'* (Mary). Returning to the complex and challenging circumstances in which many of them had lived pre-prison, alongside the now considerable added burden of a spoiled maternal-identity and change in maternal-role (as discussed earlier), made it challenging for the Mothers to not be drawn back into the situations that had led them to offend in the first instance.

Ten of the Mothers (Shanice, Cynthia, Dee, Mary, Emma, Sam, Jennifer, Sandra, Nicola, and Carla) explicitly stated that their status as ex-prison mothers (and all that entailed), was a factor in their return to substance misuse and subsequent repeat offending. A number of the other Mothers

admitted that they had used illegal substances, or over-relied on alcohol '*to cope'* (Beth) following their release, and also to cope with their enduring trauma:

> "*I had so many nightmares about prison and my kids… I used to dream I couldn't get to Susie* [daughter]*…[…]. I could see her but there was like… I dunno some kind of forcefield and I just couldn't get to her… I had it all the time, so I'd take my mate's sleepers and drink wine when it was bad… I still have to do it sometimes even now." (Tanya)*

Yet despite mothers being able to clearly articulate the relationship between their maternal emotions/experiences to substance misuse (and therefore offending), none of the Mothers described the link being made in supervision – or any rehabilitative or therapeutic work to account for this issue. In the case of mothers who misused substances, the *'powerful and stigmatising master narrative'* (Stone, 2016:959) of addict, challenges mothers' abilities to release themselves from their offending pasts and to move successfully into a non-offending future. For addicted mothers, the 'shame' of their perceived previously 'failed' motherhoods compounded the trauma that led to their addiction in the first instance. This contributed to mothers' abilities (or inabilities) to abstain from drugs and/or alcohol and ergo from the offending they undertook to fund their addiction (and often the addictions of their male partners). Some Mothers felt that once they had 'failed' at motherhood they *'had nothing to go straight for'*, (Mary).

However, Mary later described how her motherhood became her motivation to seek support and that it was the most important factor in her desistance, because she wanted her sons to be proud of her. Mary's motivation was set in motion by an individual officer who acknowledged her motherhood using it as a hook for Mary to harness as motivation. This again highlights the significance and importance of understanding the maternal-emotions and roles of criminalised mothers (whether they have the care of their children or not), and of the importance of good quality, compassionate, gendered and tailored supervisory relationships.

Reassuming the maternal role can have a transformative effect on mothers' desistance. Many of the Mothers sought to demonstrate desistance through the pursuit of an idealised motherhood. Several Mothers expressed that if they *'could just be a good mother'* (Tamika), they could put prison behind them, equally as important was being seen to be good mothers. When/if this was achieved, then the Mothers felt that their 'good' mother status could override their ex-prisoner status. The Mothers described how in achieving or returning to a place of perceived good or good enough motherhood would assist them in their abstinence from substance misuse (and therefore from re-offending) and from crime. Because, *as mothers,* they became reluctant to 'give up' their hard-won, newfound feelings of increased maternal self-esteem, respectability and acceptance (in their own eyes, and

those of their children and wider society) and sometimes increased/returned maternal-role. These findings echo and illustrate previous findings on desistance (Maruna and Mann, 2019) and motherhood and desistance:

"Eventually I just changed my shit. I worked hard to leave that life behind me and the longer I was just a mum, and a good mum and not using and stuff, the further I felt away from the shit mother who didn't think of her kids… well, I did but everyone said I didn't. So… I didn't want to go back, to that life, to prison, to any of it. I just wanted to be a mum to my kids, to be a good mum." (Tamika)

Conversely, if mothers did not achieve this place of 'good enough' mothering either by their own or others' evaluation, then the impact on the mothers was, as Beth's death tragically illustrates, devastating. However, even once the Mothers had moved on, and were successfully moving forwards, living a life uncomplicated by offending or substance misuse, it is important to note that, their positive or affirming maternal identity still often felt precarious. Tamika illustrates, despite where she felt she was now (in a positive place), '*it will never take a lot to put me back there through… I can't hide what I was'.* Tamika states that her *'shameful'* past still haunts her and, despite the fact that most people in her '*new life'* do not know that she has been in prison, she still feels ashamed of '*the kind of mother I used to be'*. Fearing the judgement of her children most of all - *'more than anything, I don't want them to be ashamed of their mam'.* The Mothers demonstrated that, although they might be seen as 'reformed' characters and may be now externally judged as 'good' mothers, internally they retained an enduring maternal shame which was often rooted in their permanently spoiled maternal-identity.

The Mothers universally felt that what would have assisted them in their post-prison journeys and would continue to assist them long past their release - was the feeling that someone 'cared' about their journeys ***as mothers***. They felt that by their motherhood being ignored during their imprisonment and supervision not only were they often left struggling and floundering, but that their motherhood, their maternal roles and their maternal identity '*didn't matter*' (Rayna). Given that it was often the most important aspect of their identity to them, this gave Mothers the message that they themselves did not matter. Not addressing the in-prison and post prison needs of mothers had left the mothers vulnerable to the effects of deep rooted and ongoing trauma.

6.8 Trauma and Pain – 'it's like PTSD'

There has been an increasing awareness of the need for a trauma-informed approach (TIA) in criminology and criminal justice processes. Most studies examining the relationship between prison

and trauma focus on the trauma that the prisoner brings *into* the prison. It is accepted wisdom that both male and female (especially female), prisoners have experienced multiple traumatic events prior to coming to prison. However, significantly less is known about the association between incarceration and subsequent trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)[36]. Most of the Mothers had traumatic histories, and many are victims of crime as well as being criminalised. Most of the Mothers had previously been victims of violence and/or sexual abuse and were already dealing with the traumatic aftereffects as victims of such crimes. Nonetheless, most of the Mothers were clear that their imprisonment was an *additional* traumatic experience for them, notwithstanding any PTE's, the prison experience itself was traumatic. For the Mothers, the trauma of continued separation from their children (or in some cases the loss of their children), and their subsequent experience of mothering from prison with all that that entailed, left them deeply and profoundly traumatised, and was often compounded by their ongoing post-release challenges. Most of the Mothers described having ongoing nightmares and obsessive thoughts, sometimes decades post-release, where they would be unable to *'get to'* (Tamika) their children, separated by some sort of physical barrier (Maggie). Mary described a '*growling bear'* separating her from her children; Sandra described a wall in front of her children and every time she reached the top the wall would *'grow'.* The Mothers described what are known and accepted as signs and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) such as detachment, intrusive thoughts, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and flashbacks[37].

> *"It wasn't like life was rosy before prison, but I thought it would be all alright once I was out and back with them, it didn't occur to me I'd spend hours of days just re-living being apart from them. I'll be sitting watching TV then all of a sudden I'll be thinking about when she was leaving after visiting, or when they said to take me down in court and I knew I wouldn't see them that night. It just haunts me, and the weird thing is in some ways it stops me enjoying being with them now… because I can't stop thinking about not being able to see them… crazy." (Shanice)*

The Mothers described how they would *'re-live', or 'play over and over'* (Tanisha) in their minds, various traumatic aspects of their sentence or arrest, i.e. the process of imprisonment. Maggie

[36] PTSD is an anxiety disorder characterised by a traumatic stressor leaving one to continuously have negative thoughts about the experience. Symptoms often appear within three months after a traumatic event but may be delayed by months or even years (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The severity, proximity, and duration of a person's exposure to the traumatic event are the best predictors for determining who is most likely to develop PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). PTSD was first acknowledged as a mental illness in 1980, when it was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition (DSM-III). The DSM is a handbook written by the American Psychiatric Association and used by mental-health professionals to diagnosis mental illnesses
http://ilfvcc.org/assets/pdf/ResearchReports/PTSD_Female_Prisoners_Report_1110.pdf

[37] Post-Traumatic Stress. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/symptoms/

described her anxiety, emotions and feelings to her counsellor, who subsequently diagnosed her as living with PTSD. Mary's experience was not unique, suggesting that parallels could be drawn of her PTSD diagnosis with most of the Mothers in the study, despite the fact that, prior to custody, many had been living in what could be classed as traumatic situations:

> *"I get what I can only call flashbacks of that awful visit… of my children leaving and of the first steps I took into the prison yard… just seeing the prison in front of me. I get nightmares and I feel anxious all the time… I wasn't like that before, it's like… it's like PTSD… that's the only way I can describe it." (Karen)*

However, even when Mothers did not explicitly mention PTSD, or themselves label their experiences as 'traumatic', it was painfully clear that they were speaking about trauma triggered by their maternal prison experience:

> *"The effects of that place haunt me, the physical scars on my arms only remind me of the pain and heartache I felt when I was in there. Just not being with my kids, man… but worse for me are the mental scars that no one sees, everyone thinks I'm over it… no one knows, but I'm wrecked really. I still have nightmares from that place you know[…]…nothing will take that away." (Dee)*

. Mothers described experiences that included witnessing a suicide attempt, the aftermath of suicide, witnessing mothers' '*last'* visits in the visiting hall before children were placed for adoption, witnessing a cell birth. Strikingly, many of the PTEs described were intertwined with their and others' mothering emotions and experiences. Ursula described '*walking in on this… I dunno 60 year old officer fondling some young girl'*. Ursula goes on to say how '*traumatised'* she was not only by witnessing this happening at all, but by the fact that she '*walked away',* going on to say that:

> *"I should have said something, shouldn't I, because it's abuse. Like that's abusive, she's vulnerable and he shouldn't be doing that, but he holds the power." (Ursula)*

What was equally traumatising to Ursula was that, in being aware of the power that officers, and the prison had over her, she '*knew'* that if she spoke up she was likely to be moved to another prison, and she was fearful then that she would not then be able to see her children. Ursula felt traumatised by the choice she made to put her own mothering needs before '*an abused girl who could have been my daughter'* (Ursula). The impact of this event, and Ursula's response to it, was obviously a source of significant pain and trauma to Ursula. To deal with her prison trauma, Ursula felt she had to learn to *'contain it'*, something she and her children felt had left her *'cold'.* She added*:*

"You have to prevent yourself from being emotional about anything just to survive, don't you. You desensitise yourself to the pain, you squash the emotions, learn to depress the emotions, to keep control of them, to push them away from you. So I think I was quite numb… still am… like my children say I'm cold now... yeah they think I'm really cold. But sometimes that's because when I'm faced with emotional demands, emotional memories, I retract into quite… like an analytical mode… like I don't engage with emotional stuff very well even now… it's how you cope with the trauma." (Ursula)

Ursula described how she tries to avoid thinking about the period of separation from her children because it is *'just too hard'.* Carla described how she felt she '*deserved*' to live with her trauma and that she had the '*impression'* that most of the CJS practitioners she had come across felt she should, too. She was told she was '*responsible for your own pain'*. The post-release Mothers felt that the trauma of being separated from their children, and the memory of being separated, was their most significant, persistent, long-lasting pain of imprisonment. It was this enduring memory that traumatised them most, triggering their PTSD symptoms. For some Mothers, it was the actual moment of separation, or the realisation that it was coming that was worse, for others it was the prolonged separation; for others all of it. Rita, who had known she would be going to prison in advance of her sentencing, stated:

"*During the day… I mean on a conscious level I can't actually remember physically saying goodbye to my children… it's like I can't let myself remember… but at night I have nightmares and it all comes back… it was horrendous, absolutely horrendous."* (Rita)

Maggie, who also knew before court that she was '*most likely'* to get a custodial sentence, remembers saying goodbye to her children:

I hadn't seen my son cry for years and years… he was a man really, but to me he's my boy. He was broken… he literally just sobbed in my arms... I wish I could forget it I really do… but it's burned on to my brain like… what do you call it?... a branding that's it... it's branded. And my daughter, well I thought she'd be the most upset, but she just was so brave and just said 'mum I'll look after them'… well that finished me off… it was the worst day of my life… the worst moment of my life." (Maggie)

Highlighting a lack of compassion and thought sometimes demonstrated in police arrests, where the needs of the service are placed above the needs of mothers and children; Tia experienced a particularly traumatic arrest in front of her nine-year-old daughter at the school gates. Tia, at five years post-release, considered herself to be *'mostly ok',* yet described the persistent invasive and traumatic memory of her arrest:

"I got arrested outside her school, she was in primary school and I was picking her up from school. The police were watching me and had been for three week, so they could have pulled me over at any time, but they didn't, they waited until I was getting her from school. There was a riot van outside, everyone's parents picking up their kids, and they put me in the van in handcuffs. I was shouting saying, 'no, no my daughter is coming out of school, I live ten miles away'... and when she came out I had to shout at the woman parked next to me, I shouted at Meg [daughter] first, but she put her hands in front of her face and she just turned round so as not to look at me. How can I talk to her if she won't look at me, she obviously doesn't want to see,… or to see me like this…[sobs]… so I'm shouting at this woman to take her to my mum's. This lady just wrapped her in her arms and Meg started sobbing. I was shouting, please take her to my mum's, please. I didn't know what else to do. I was in handcuffs. The lady took her to my mothers." (Tia)

Tia was charged with resisting arrest because she tried to finish shouting to someone to look after her daughter before she was forced into the police van. Tia described how this memory would occur as a 'flashback', at 'random' moments, knocking her off guard and taking her back to the trauma. This would trigger guilt, irrationality, over-protectiveness towards her daughter, anxiety and worry. It was the main reason why Tia had considered taking anti-depressants, which in the end she decided against as she had previously been drug-dependant. She therefore continued to struggle on unmedicated to manage the ongoing trauma of this memory. For the Mothers, their enduring trauma was more than a result of their sense of powerlessness, or their lack of control, or the lack of agency or the reduction in their maternal-role and maternal self-esteem whilst incarcerated - it was all of that. The Mothers' narratives were very clear: the biggest source of their trauma and persistent pain was the memories and actual agony of being physically apart from their children and the enduring consequences of that for all of them. Several mothers (n=17) described experiencing nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty coping and an almost obsessive 'reliving' of parts or all of their imprisonment experience and the imprisonment process, some decades post-release:

"I just ached for my children; I can't begin to describe the trauma of what it felt like to just not be physically with them… it occupied my every thought… I thought when I got out at least that ache would go, and I know this won't make any sense… but now I have an empty ache… that sounds stupid doesn't it... but like the hurt has left a hole and it won't go. I still think about being in prison every day." (Jaspreet)

Beth, who was still breastfeeding her three-month-old baby, spoke of how her baby had to be wrenched from her arms by social workers; she remembers giving her 'one last feed before they took her', adding:

"I was feeding her, and she was looking up at me with these totally innocent eyes… she had no idea what was coming and honestly my tears were just dripping all over her face, but she had no idea… no idea... just innocent. I was broken… I still am, I think about that all the time." (Beth)

Two other mothers, Dee and Shanice, spoke of how they tried to flee to stop their children being taken into care. Shanice, who was arrested at home, remembers the police coming and knocking at the door, and she ran out of her back door to a neighbour to hand over her baby daughter so that she would not be taken into care. Similarly, Dee, who recalls how, as soon as she realised that the magistrate hearing her case was about to sentence her to immediate custody, she absconded from court to take her children to her sister's so they would not be taken into care, 'all I could think about was getting there and getting them to my sister's… it was mad, but I had to' (Dee). Dee described how this memory of her running would often trouble her dreams, where she would just be running and running but never getting anywhere and she relates this to trying to get to her children, 'it's a memory and a living nightmare at the same time' (Dee). It was very clear that both Dee and Shanice continued to be traumatised by memories of their imprisonment and the imprisonment processes, and for some Mothers (n=9) it was these traumatic memories that trapped them in the cycles of substance misuse and reimprisonment.

"…honestly, I was mentally scarred by having Dwayne in prison… I used to obsess over it. It was stupid but I couldn't put it behind me… so I drank to cope but that just made things worser and I ended up back in again… its crazy, I know… it doesn't make sense, but it was all part of the same thing." (Tanisha)

Kady described how she often has nightmares from aspects of her imprisonment and feels that her anger issues are a symptom of her not '*being able to process the memories of that place'.* She describes how she was '*made'* to return to '*education'* in the prison when her baby was very young:

"They made me leave her at six weeks… six weeks, man!... and go to education, I had to listen to her screaming and not be able to go to her, how fucked up is that? I can feel myself getting angry thinking about it all now, it doesn't need to be like that. I mean why was it essential I go to a classroom and colour in! That's I was doing you know..." (Kady)

Kady '*accepts responsibility'* for her offence and the consequences but feels that the '*system*' further harmed her and her daughter; she states that if she had been a drug user she knows she would have used drugs to cope with the trauma of her experiences; instead, she drank, not to excess but '*to cope'* with her emotions. Several Mothers who were now free from substance misuse described

how the hardest thing for them now was having to deal with their emotions as a result of past trauma, not only the original trauma that had triggered their substance misuse but also the trauma from the process of their imprisonment and its legacy. Dee recalls:

> "*the hardest thing I have ever gone through is getting clean... and that's because clean I have memories not seeing my kids… it hurts, man… it's trauma, isn't it… every time a feeling or a memory would come up my head would be saying, 'just use something'… I wasn't consciously thinking I was using drugs to bury my pain… but I was... it would be like, here's a feeling - my head would start going off… whoa fuck this and use… now I have to stay with the pain. And fucking hell, it cripples me, especially as a mum it makes you more ashamed, not ashamed, I dunno scarred maybe?... but I won't let it consume me… I have therapy now."* (Dee)

Many, if not most, of the Mothers spoke of how they would be '*dragged back'* (Margaret) to prison every day in their thoughts:

> *"Literally every day when my daughter goes to school I see the panic in her face in case I'm not here when she gets in… every day I'm reminded of what it was like being without her." (Margot)*

Some of the Mothers, especially those whose children were younger when they were separated, felt their trauma was triggered and retriggered by their children's ongoing trauma from their separation.

> "….*yes she hates being away from me… she cries if I leave her and I know that's because of what happened* [prison]*... seeing her traumatised reminds me so much of how traumatised I felt in prison being away from her… we need to get past it, we both do… but it still just feels so raw."* (Lauren)

Despite the fact that most of the Mothers spoke about their experiences as *'traumatic'*, not all of them recognised their subsequent feelings or emotions as 'trauma': some described it as an experience they simply had to survive. Mothers described enduring states of feeling '*overwhelmed'* (Carla), *'emotionally unstable'* (Jaspreet), and *'exposed'* (Mavis). Many of the Mothers described feelings of disorientation and panic once released.

> *"I have good days and bad days, the weekend was bad, I just couldn't control my emotions, I just wanted to cry and cry. I can't explain it to anyone, and I know no one understands, they just think, I'm out now, I should put it behind me and move on, but I can't… it's not behind me, it's with me every day… the memory of leaving them outside, their faces, I can't bear it." (Jaspreet)*

Sometimes years after release, several Mothers recalled or described just '*bursting into tears'* (Tanya), most often triggered by a reminder of their time in prison *as mothers*, or when recalling the separation from their children; but sometimes '*for no apparent reason, whilst feeling a constant knot in my stomach on some days, like I'm worried about something, but I don't know what'* (Lauren).

As a further indicator of their ongoing trauma and adding to the challenge for the mothers was the fear that they could be recalled, returned to prison – which would mean separation from their children. Some of the Mothers tortured themselves with this fearful anticipation, so much so that it interfered in their daily life. Rayna described how once released she struggled to sleep at night, stating she had a constant feeling of foreboding, a fear that 'someone' was going to come and return her to prison and thus separate her again from her children. Her experience was something several Mothers described and was felt particularly keenly whilst still on licence. For several of the older mothers, this haunting feeling of threatened separation was something that persisted throughout mothering and into grandmothering. Cynthia tried to avoid being separated from her son at all costs, to avoid it triggering painful memories; *'being apart from my son even now kills me, it kills me… and he's 32'.* Maggie described how her ongoing fear of separation not only applied to her children, but also to her grandchildren to the point where she was unable to book holidays for longer than a week as she could not 'bear' to be away from them.

> *I couldn't shake the fear that something awful would happen to them if I didn't see them for more than a week, I know it was irrational but I kind of thought they would go off me if I didn't see them… Like they would forget to love me or something. Ridiculous I know, I haven't admitted that before." (Maggie)*

The Mothers described how they would avoid certain people and situations where these feelings seemed to be triggered: for some of the Mothers their anxiety seemed most triggered when they felt they were being watched or observed by people who '*just wouldn't get it'* (Lauren). Rayna spoke of a similar fear, which although she said she recognised was '*irrational*', it nonetheless stopped her living a '*normal'* life:

> *"I hated going out in my community, not only because of the shame but because I thought someone would take them from me, what is the word - abduct them, crazy crazy crazy." (Rayna)*

Maggie described how she is traumatised not only by the prison experience and the separation itself, but by '*missed memories'* in her children's and grandchildren's lives. Maggie's' grandson was diagnosed with cancer Maggie was refused ROTL to attend his hospital appointments to help support her daughter. Maggie became visibly upset at the memory of this:

> *"Sometimes I just torture myself with the 'what ifs'… what if he'd died when I was still inside… then that makes me think what if my kids had got run over… or my husband died, and they had no one... I drive myself mad with what ifs." (Maggie)*

Many of the Mothers *obsessed* over what *could* have happened whilst they were in prison. Margaret had been pregnant during her prison sentence - she described how she was so traumatised by her prison experience that she had felt totally unable to bond with her baby during her pregnancy, feeling so ashamed she had been in prison that she felt like an *'unfit mother'.* As a result, she made the decision to place her child for adoption, which now haunted her. Margaret describes feeling so traumatised by the separation and the memory of her child being taken that, when she did go on to have more children, she found it difficult to '*let myself love them'*. She felt that only now as a grandmother was she able to find that maternal love, and to love '*in a motherly way*'.

> *"…all the time, what if I'd just had him, kept him I mean, or what if I'd not gone to prison, it's all… what ifs and ands and pots and pans my mother used to say, it's all what ifs, but I do think if I had kept him I would have been closer to my others [other children] but I guess we'll never know." (Margaret)*

Margaret's narrative powerfully further highlights the long lasting implications and consequences of maternal imprisonment, the fact they can endure for life and intergenerationally.

Queenie, despite admitting that her relationship with one of her daughters had always been '*difficult*', wondered whether it would be different if she had not gone to prison: *'maybe if I hadn't been to prison we would be closer'*. Margot, whose 14-year-old daughter had been badly bullied during her mother's imprisonment, stated:

> "*if I hadn't have gone to prison maybe she wouldn't have been bullied at all, but she certainly might have been more able to stand up for herself if she knew I was at home and life was normal."*
> (Margot)

The ‘ifs and maybes’ were an ongoing source of pain for the Mothers torturing them as they navigated the post-release landscape, often being the trigger for the Mothers to *‘want to get out of my own head’* (Karen), and *‘do’* something to reframe their experiences.

6.9 Moving Forwards – Wounded healer

An important part of working with criminalised, traumatised and stigmatised women is fostering a sense of empowerment and power. Striking in the narratives of the Mothers to observe the frequency with which they sought to make their trauma and experiences *‘count for something’* (Tarian). Mothers felt they could manage and transform their own traumas by supporting other women going through similar experiences within the criminal justice system, hoping their own experiences could inform the comfort and support of others – sometimes in ways they had not had themselves*. ‘I know ive got something positive to offer women like me, I know what we need because I didn’t have it ’* (Lauren). The concept of the ‘wounded healer’ is born from an archetype that suggests that healing power is amassed and emerges from a healer’s own woundedness (Zerubavel and Wright, 2012:482). The desire to ‘help others’ was frequently expressed by several Mothers (n=12). They felt uniquely placed to offer support and would often seek out opportunities to do so whilst in prison. Moreover, several (n=7) had or have formally pursued this on release (Ursula, Dee, Rita, Queenie, Mary, Tia, Jaspreet, Maggie), with more (n=6) stating that they intended to pursue their goal in the future (Lauren, Kady, Tarian, Karen, Sandra, Shanice).

One reason given for this by the post-release Mothers was that they felt ‘comfortable’ with other criminalised Mothers. Goffman (1963) suggests that groups of ‘tainted individuals’ (Chapter 2) such as ex-prisoners, become ‘stigmatised’, and those who have not experienced imprisonment are the ‘normals’. The Mothers described how this phenomena translated to motherhood too. The post-prison mothers felt like ‘stigmatised mothers, especially when they were in the company of the ‘normal’ mothers, i.e. the ones who had not been to prison. Such a division can result in feelings of inferiority, generated by perception of the superiority of ‘normals’ and for the Mothers this resulted in the avoidance of certain social situations, such as the school gates (Tia), playgroup (Sophie), or a wedding (Queenie). They feared being rejected, ostracised and vilified not ‘*just’* as ex-prisoners but especially as ex-prisoners who were also mothers.

Some Mothers coped with the pain of actual or feared rejection of them as ‘good mothers’ by trying to dismiss it: ‘*it’s just life, isn’t it’*(Diane); some developed what Goffman (1963:29) called a ‘hostile bravado’, summed up succinctly by Cynthia: ‘*fuck them all, what do I care’,* which similarly Sam

called her *'fuck it approach'.* Several Mothers described feeling a sense of '*difference*' between themselves and mothers who had not experienced incarceration, and that was something was long-lasting and that *'hurt'* (Taranpreet). Consequently, several mothers arranged their lives so as to minimise painful situations and contacts in which their past might be exposed or judged, but described the managing of the underpinning shame and guilt as '*exhausting'* (Karen):

> *"I was high alert all the time [when out], I can't keep weight on me anymore and I'm sure it is nervous energy. I just feel so ashamed of being a mum who has been to prison, but honestly living with it is literally exhausting." (Karen)*

The mothers described how even when they were not *actually* being stigmatised, they nonetheless felt stigmatised. It is perhaps obvious that individuals seek to be in the company of 'sympathetic others', the first set of whom are those who share the same stigma, i.e. in this instance criminalised mothers. Thus not only is pursuing 'work' and company with those who share one's experiences therapeutic, it can be a significant source of identity repair and empowerment. Several Mothers reshaped their own trauma and tried to 'manage' it by supporting and helping others in similar circumstances, which can be an important part of trauma recovery; ; '*if I can say it's happened for a reason it is easier to accept.*' (Diane). Several Mothers began taking on 'healing' roles during their incarceration, seeking out roles like 'prison listener with the intention of taking the role further in the future'[38] .

> *"I'm a prison listener now and I love it. It takes your mind off your own problems when you are helping others, doesn't it. It stops me thinking about the kids so much, especially at night and hopefully I can use these skills to get a job in woman's centre or something when I get out ." (Sandy)*

The grandmothers had spoken of 'mothering' the younger women in prison and how they had found this therapeutic and reparative. This gave the older mothers and grandmothers opportunities to 'mother' but was also a means of managing their own pain and trauma as criminalised and imprisoned mothers. It gave them a purpose and again for some Mothers planted seeds of hope about their future. Mary now volunteers in a rape crisis centre.

> "*You know what?... mothering them little ones… I loved it; I knew they needed it yeah… but you know what it helped my pain as well. I was distracted from it… it made it easier for me to cope… and that was where I got the idea I should do it when I got out. I made a promise to myself to help other*

[38] The Listener scheme is a form of peer support; prisoners work together as a team. Local Samaritans' branches, select and train prisoners to become Listeners and provide ongoing training and back-up.

girls like me. I thought if I could help one girl not to go to prison and suffer like this, then my life will have meant something… you know what I mean?" (Mary)

An important part of the process of renegotiating a positive maternal-identity, for some of the Mothers involved trying to assimilate their experience and turn their imprisonment into a positive by focusing on supporting others and assisting others to believe in the possibility of a 'better' future. Emma had befriended two young women who had left prison and been placed near her supported accommodation, and she took great pleasure in supporting them. She had just formally registered as a volunteer when she died.

"It sounds stupid I know but being there for them young lasses like, well it kept me feeling like a mam, like I could still do good, you know what I mean? Still be like a mam. I just used to sit and listen to them and they knew I had gone through the same. One girl had her baby taken by social services like me and I knew what she was going through. She used to say that she did, I mean that I knew how she felt but that none of the others did - and I'm thinking speaking to someone who did know helped her, but really it did help me, too, because I had to try to believe what I was telling her, that it would get better, that we could have more kids and be better, that we could get it right. I was giving me hope as much as I was her." (Emma)

"I volunteer here [Women's Centre] with the young mums because it makes me feel worthwhile again. At first I can see them thinking, 'what would she know?', but when I tell them I went to prison too then they listen, they know I get them, and they get me." (Maggie)

Similarly, Queenie, who had described feeling 'just an ongoing pain' about being a mother and grandmother who had been to prison, also wanted to '*turn my pain into good'*, both through her church work and also through a business she set up to work with ex-prison mothers:

"*I'm not going to lie, working with other prison mums is the only place I don't feel judged – escaping from the judgement of my kids and my church… I can still do the good my church expects of me but I do it where I'm not reminded all the time what a bad person I am, especially what a bad mother I am because I went to prison."* (Queenie)

Rita, who initially had wanted to do something specifically for mothers in and after prison, set up a community space for women to meet, either just to visit or as a place where they can learn skills to assist them in earning money by selling items they can make at the centre:

"I wanted to do something for all mothers who were struggling, initially yeah it was only going to be for mums who'd been to prison only but then I thought, why should I carry on that finger pointing - that's what we are trying to escape, that's the same shaming. So yes the centre helps mums who have been to prison but also mums who haven't, and they all work side by side and no-one knows who's been where unless they choose to tell each other… in my view that's what a women's centre should be, for ***all*** *women." (Rita)*

Rita, like several of the post-prison Mothers, stated definitively that it was her motherhood that provided her with the motivation to '*move forward and succeed'.* Becoming a successful entrepreneur was an important aspect to Rita's identity repair and maternal healing - she knows her children '*feel proud'* of her and she feels like her '*new identity'* 'compensates' for the fact that she went to prison as a mother; although profoundly affected by the separation from her children, Rita feels that '*helping others has helped me to move forward with less shame'* (Rita).

What was apparent and significant amongst the Mothers in relation to their maternal trauma and pain was that it was, and continued to be, ignored in the post- release support agency responses. This represented a continuation and replication of a failure to meet the needs of mothers more broadly in social policy and practice.

Summary of The Effects of Post release Maternal Imprisonment

This research demonstrated how the now traumatised post-release Mothers struggled to repair and renegotiate their maternal identity, maternal role, maternal self-esteem and maternal capital. All of which had been reduced by their imprisonment, sometimes permanently. The Mothers continued to be measured (and measured themselves), against not only the expectations of society as law-abiding citizens but also specifically against a motherhood ideal (formally and informally). The chapter evidenced the distinct and specific ways in which the 'accepted wisdom' of the spoiled identity and pains of imprisonment notions endured and were magnified for the post-prison Mothers and grandmothers, with effects being felt for decades and often intergenerationally.

This chapter identified how notions of control, trust and surveillance interacted with the post-prison maternal experience to reveal the pervading gaze of the state on Mothers. The Mothers experiences were additionally frustrated by lasting changes in relationships and relationship dynamics with children and caregivers, which again were influenced by mistrust. Continued missed opportunities to offer support, understanding, care and compassion related to their motherhood impacted on Mothers wellbeing and desistance. The institutional and structural inequalities, discrimination and under-resourcing of gendered support that contributed to the Mothers criminalisation continued to

have an impact on the Mother access to appropriate support. Support, which if offered and available might have prevented further criminalisation and reimprisonment and a minimised the subsequent enduring harms described.

Although most Mothers shared the same challenging histories, they also shared a strength and resilience that had enabled them to survive not only their multiple realities but also a system that, by and large, does not understand or meet their needs, but the personal cost to Mothers and their children has nonetheless been significant. In recognising this, several of the women voiced a desire to work with women in the CJS or the third sector, either on a paid or voluntary basis, which in line with matricentric and feminist principles of agency and empowerment, should be supported and encouraged.

7. Summarised Responses to the Aims of the Study

Revisiting the aims of the study, which were.

> **To critically explore the in-prison and post-prison experiences of mothers, particularly in relation to maternal-identity, and the mothering role.**
> **To consider the relevance of motherhood and maternal experiences, in relation to sentence planning and post-release supervision.**
> **To develop an understanding of the enduring impact of maternal imprisonment.**
> **To formulate recommendations to inform and shape policy and practice in relation to mothers in and after prison.**

Maternal identity

The Mothers demonstrated the significance of life and motherhood experiences pre-imprisonment, revealing that for many of the Mothers, the 'spoiling' of their maternal identity began before prison, was confirmed in prison and endured long after prison. In addition to the direct *process of imprisonment*, it was also experiences pre-criminalisation and beyond release, which caused harm and impact to maternal identity, maternal emotions and maternal role.

The Mothers detailed how their challenging pre-prison circumstances interacted with their motherhood, revealing how their absorption of traditional motherhood ideology influenced their maternal self-esteem, maternal identity and role. The study provided new and nuanced understanding about the specific relevance of being poorly mothered as children and how this then informed or shaped the Mothers own adult experiences and views on 'good and bad' motherhood. Which in turn informed their own maternal identity. Mothers absorbed the expectations and ideology around motherhood and mothering, rendering them subject to internal and external blame, liability and judgement, especially in relation to outcomes for their children.

The Mothers revealed how their motherhood provided an additional layer of complexity to the intersectionality's of race, class and culture affecting criminalised women. Mothering through poverty and trauma before prison, often unsupported, is where the tarnishing of the Mothers maternal identity began. Most of the Mothers felt they were already failing to 'live up to' widely accepted standardised norms of motherhood, sometimes worrying even before prison that they were not 'good enough' mothers This endured through and after prison and had an impact on how mothers experienced the whole CJS (and how they were treated). The Mothers felt they were judged more harshly by society, by the courts and agents of the state. They also judged themselves more harshly *as mothers*. In addition to feeling angry and frustrated that they were judged as bad mothers, often for things that were outside their control, Mothers internalised the blame and shame for their circumstances and criminalisation. The Mothers 'issues' became individualised, rather than looking more broadly at the role played by successive governments or policies and practices concerning the lack of supportive polices for women. Mothers were perceived as *solely* responsible for their criminalisation and imprisonment because of their own actions and 'choices'. This affected the Mothers maternal identity and self-esteem consequently impacting Mothers' engagement with rehabilitative support, their relationships and sometimes, desistance.

Present in all of the Mothers narratives of their CJS experience, and from a range of sources; was moral condemnation not only as criminals, but specifically as *criminal mothers*. The Mothers powerfully described the difference it made to them when someone in authority demonstrated 'care', 'kindness', understanding or compassion concerning their maternal identity and role. Several mothers described how simply being asked about their children or their motherhood being acknowledged 'saved' them, for some it literally was a matter of life and death.

It was challenging to separate maternal identity and role for the Mothers, as where one was reduced the other was impacted. Mothers practical and physical mothering practices were limited by incarceration, further diminishing their maternal identity and maternal self-esteem. Once imprisoned,

the Mothers described how they felt less like mothers, in that their motherhood was removed from their identity or subsumed by their prisoner identity. More than that, it was the pain of not 'being', of not doing, pain of losing a sense of who they were. Of losing what they described as the most important part of themselves, i.e. their motherhood and/or grandmotherhood. This was accelerated by the structure, organisation and regimes within the prison. Which impacted on Mothers ability and willingness to engage in rehabilitation as well as their wellbeing and relationships with children and caregivers. Mothers sought comfort in their relationships with each other and with older mothers and grandmothers, where the prison regime permitted. This helped Mothers retain a sense of maternal identity and had a positive impact on the Mothers and grandmothers wellbeing. Mothers in open prisons were more able to support each other and were often united in their motherhood. However, in closed-prisons Mothers were less able to engage in this support, which had a detrimental impact on their mental wellbeing and maternal identity.

The effects of mothers spoiled identity lasted long after prison, with Mothers describing how their reduced maternal self-esteem persisted post-release, in some cases, for decades. The Mothers also described an internal shame, over and above their ex-prisoner status. The ongoing pains and shame of imprisonment related specifically to their mother status. Mothers described feeling 'tainted', forever labelled and perceived as 'bad mothers' because they had been imprisoned *as mothers.* Feeling worthless or hopeless left many of the Mothers vulnerable to self-harm and/or suicide. Several Mothers described how losing their maternal identity made them feel like 'nothing'. During incarceration and afterwards, their spoiled maternal identity made some Mothers question whether they ought to remain in their children's lives at all (some didn't). Others withdrew from their children's lives and refused or reduced visits/contact, sometimes for their own wellbeing, but usually because they perceived their children as 'better off' without them. Thus, the impact of maternal imprisonment on maternal identity had enduring, often lifelong and sometimes intergenerational impact.

Maternal role

As previously described, many of the Mothers became criminalised in the midst of multiple challenges to their mothering role. This included past and current trauma, addiction, mental health issues, domestic abuse and substance misuse. Yet most of the Mothers were involved in the care of their children before prison and were steadfast in their efforts to continue to mother to the best of their ability. For some of the Mothers their maternal role was a source of agency and power, for some their only source, meaning it was all the more valuable to them. Not all of the Mothers managed to retain a full maternal role pre or post-prison. Several Mothers shared their mothering role with

additional caregivers, however, maintaining their maternal-identity and hopes of an improved future maternal role was often their primary concern.

The study confirmed that motherhood intersected powerfully with the Mothers prison experience, which added to the Mothers' 'pains of imprisonment'. As soon as Mothers entered the prison space they experienced a stripping away of their maternal agency, maternal-identity and especially their maternal-role. Mothers' efforts to continue to mother from a distance were frustrated and disrupted by the carceral space and the rules and regulations therein. Many of the challenges mothers in prison faced reflected the focus of the penal system and prison estate on male prisoners. Prison officer training is centred around the male estate, and officers do not currently receive more than a couple of training sessions specifically devoted to working with women prisoners. Only because of this current research have some received specific training for working with mothers at all (provided by the author). Thus, the Mothers felt their motherhood and maternal role was either essentially ignored by CJS staff, or was a source of judgment, mistrust, surveillance and control, which impacted on Mothers engagement and maternal self-esteem.

The Mothers ability to maintain a healthy maternal identity and an affirming maternal self-esteem and active mothering role, were affected, both positively and negatively by the prison space, rules, regimes and relationships. Maternal emotion and active mothering were of central importance to mothers during their incarceration and beyond, whether or not Mothers had the care of their children or were expecting to on release. This study's remit was to recognise the experiences of *all* mothers, crucially to include grandmothers and mothers of adult children. Grandmothers described feeling discounted in institutional considerations, even those that recognised the maternal role (such as 'family visits and ROTL). Grandchildren and older adult children were rendered secondary and/or invisible to their younger counterparts, making it challenging for grandmothers to retain an active grandmothering role. The research revealed that for grandmothers their pains of maternal imprisonment were also persistent post-release. Furthermore, these pains were layered and often experienced via their adult children as well as their grandchildren. Failure to account for the needs of grandmother prisoners and post-prison grandmothers was not only neglectful and unjust but resulted in missed opportunities to support families to heal and to reduce the likelihood of intergenerational offending and enduring trauma.

The legacy of maternal imprisonment and the impact on maternal role was significant. Some Mothers lost their maternal role altogether, for others it was reduced. Mothers whose children were in the care of the local authority were consumed with thoughts either of fighting for their return or trying to accept their maternal loss. The mothers were not supported with these needs and emotions, which had an impact on their maternal wellbeing, engagement and sometimes their desistance. For some

Mothers, their maternal role was diminished because caregivers were reluctant to return their children to them or heavily scrutinised the mothers in their mothering. Mothers continued to be subject to the formal gaze of the state (Rose, 1999) as well as the informal gaze of family, and crucially, none of the mothers experienced any post-release support focused on rebuilding family relationships.

The Mothers described how their internalised shame and blame left them feeling like they were in penance and needing to compensate in their post-release mothering. Some were overzealous in disciplining their children, where others relaxed rules as a means to seek forgiveness and favour from their children. Thus, for many, maternal imprisonment not only interrupted and disrupted mothering and maternal role, it changed it completely. The disregard of Mothers' maternal role from custodians and supervisors means that opportunities are being missed not only for families to be supported in these changes, but also to try to ensure that any changes that do occur return positive outcomes.

Paradoxically, despite the aforementioned widespread 'knowledge' and acceptance of the importance of motherhood, and the role of motherhood in terms of 'producing' well-adjusted, socially acceptable children and adults, mothers and motherhood are essentially ignored and/or neglected in the process and experience of imprisonment. Given all that we 'know' about mothers, motherhood and the mother/child relationship, it is illogical to think that forcibly separating mothers from their children - restricting contact and reducing the mother's ability to mother her child - will *not* have a traumatic effect on both mothers *and* their children. This significant harm and long-lasting trauma may be an unintended outcome of maternal imprisonment but nonetheless constitutes additional and disproportionate punishment.

Enduring harm

As the previous two sections have identified the criminalised Mothers in this study most often felt reduced, tainted, judged and traumatised as a result of their criminalisation and imprisonment. The enduring harm of maternal imprisonment was powerfully described by the Mothers, and all aspects of their post-prison lives were affected. In addition to the collateral damage often experienced by women leaving prison (Masson, 2019, Minson, 2020), the Mothers described lasting effects of shame and guilt regarding their imprisonment, meaning they were not now and perhaps never would be again, perceived as, or feel like 'good mothers'.

Mother's experiences prior to prison reflected a state which had abdicated responsibility for the Mothers as children and continued its failure into their adulthood. This was manifest in missed opportunities that could potentially have prevented Mother's criminalisation, and the consequential enduring harm. Yet, it was the Mothers themselves and arguably, their children, who were held to account and who suffered the consequences of this lack of support. Painfully illustrated by Cynthia, who after repeatedly asking for help and none being forthcoming, set herself on fire in a blatant cry for help. She was subsequently imprisoned for arson when the Judge found 'there was nowhere else' to send her. Cynthia and her child live with the lifelong consequences and enduring harm of her offending and imprisonment. Cynthia took responsibility for her 'crimes' and paid the price, yet for the services who failed her, there was no accountability. Similarly, Mary, who felt so worthless as a mother, and was completely unsupported in that role, made the decision to completely remove herself from her children's lives. Tragically her children then grew up in care, later to become 'career criminals'. As a result were absent from their own children's lives. This powerfully reveals the intergenerational impact of maternal imprisonment and highlights the importance of early and consistent support and interventions for mothers and their children.

Mothers were often unprepared for the challenges they would continue to face post-release. Many had simply assumed that things would go back to 'normal'. Yet, the Mothers narratives revealed significant challenges in renegotiating their place in their family and their maternal role. Or adjusting to life without their children. Mothers were unprepared for the roller coaster of emotions and turbulent times they faced with their children, grandchildren and wider families post-release. Or how long the difficulties would last. Additionally, Mothers described experiences of trauma – an issue previously under researched. Which endured and was attributed to the memory of the separation from their children. Indeed, some Mothers were formally diagnosed with PTSD directly stemming from their maternal harm as a result of imprisonment. Others exhibited most of the symptoms of PTSD, but simply learned to 'live with it'. Those who remained in their children's lives described how they felt 'tainted', 'watched', 'judged' and 'permanently changed' by their imprisonment. For Grandmothers, the effects were often magnified, producing what Grandmothers described as 'layers of shame'. This reflected the 'institutional thoughtlessness' (Crawley 2005) concerning motherhood that occurred at all stages of the CJS. This must be addressed if we are to mitigate the enduring harms described by the Mothers and Grandmothers.

In-part due to earlier failures to support women and mothers, and whilst recognising prison as an institution of patriarchally influenced pain (Moore and Scraton 2014); it cannot be ignored that the Mothers sometimes experienced prison a place of safety and refuge (O'Malley 2018). A place where some Mothers were finally able to access support related to substance misuse, domestic abuse,

mental health issues. Nonetheless, it must also be acknowledged that with regard to the Mothers in this study who did mention there had been some safety, solace and support for them in prison, *all* felt that the support *should* have been available to them in the community. Importantly, that if it had been, they would in all likelihood have not 'ended up' in prison at all.

Relevance of Motherhood Regarding Sentence Planning, and Supervision

The research findings directly contrast Loper (2006; 93) who suggests it is '*no more difficult to be a mother in prison than it is to be a non-mother',* instead aligning with numerous previous studies (Enos, 2001; Lockwood, 2014; O'Malley, 2018, Masson, 2019; Easterling et al., 2019; Minson 2020; Booth, 2020,). This research showed the distinct and specific maternal pains, frustrations and deprivation of maternal imprisonment (Sykes, 1958). Furthermore, it revealed tensions between what mothers said they needed in terms of in-prison and post-release support, and what they experienced. The Mothers narratives described how current approaches and support provisions failed to take account of the persisting trauma caused by criminalisation, maternal interruption and separation. The damage to maternal identity and mothering-role was not often regarded as something that fell under the remit of custodians or supervisors and as such it was often ignored. Mothers revealed that trying to repair and renegotiate their identity and role in and after-prison was often of central importance to them. Or as O'Reilly (2016) put it their 'motherhood matters'. Whether they had their children in their care when sentenced or not. Or whether they were to be reunited with children post-release, the Mothers preoccupied with all matters maternal whilst trying to navigate their challenging maternal circumstances pre-prison, through prison and post-release.

However, Mothers reported their maternal matters and emotions, though of primary importance to them, were not viewed as important *enough* by the Courts, Prison or Probation services (other than as an additional means of judgement, control and punishment). Which the mothers perceived as a lack of 'care'. The Mothers described how this lack of 'care' and failure to recognise the challenges they faced *as mothers* made it very difficult, if not impossible for Mothers to focus on rehabilitation or supervision, which ultimately had implications for their wellbeing and desistance.

Care focused approaches in CJS are of significant importance (Dominey and Gelsthorpe, 2020:40), both morally (Canton and Dominey, 2017) and because it fundamentally underpins good practice and effective outcomes, fostering a trusting relationship. The lack of 'care' experienced by the Mothers contributed to them feeling that the only role of their custodians or supervisors was to control and subject them to punitive surveillance (Foucault, 1977), particularly in relation to their motherhood

(Rose, 1999; Opsal, 2009,). With a few individual exceptions, the Mothers felt that 'what was really going on' in their lives was regarded as not important, or not within the role of the supervisory relationship. Instead, they felt 'watched' and 'surveilled'. Mothers found the additional surveillance challenging *as mothers* and most Mothers described an 'abject terror' of recall and a further period of separation from their children. This had implications for the Mothers in terms of asking for and receiving adequate and appropriate support. Significantly, where Mothers were supervised via a Women's Centre, they described receiving a gendered form of supervision in which their emotional and maternal needs were understood and responded to. Indicating that this is the most effective means of supervising women.

Several mothers had been supervised by probation multiple times over quite a long time span and noted the shift in the type of supervision they received. Nicola felt that probation officers no longer seemed to 'care' as part of their role. In the UK following a politically led tide of change, there has been a shift over the last 30 years which has seen probation or parole moving further away from welfare-focused values and ideology (Canton, 2015). Subsequently, in the New labour 'tough on crime' era following the implementation of the National Standards and the 'New Choreography'[39] in the work of probation, the importance and flexibility of the one-to-one 'supervisory relationship' came secondary to the rigid enforcement and supervisory directives that some of the Mothers encountered. Such philosophical shifts have had far-reaching implications for supervisors and custodians and how they undertake their role. This study has demonstrated the detrimental impact of the political shifts in relation to the quality of supervision and custodial care for mothers. Primarily, this is because without wider aspects of 'welfare' being deemed of importance, supervision for post-release women became all about avoiding re-offending, managing the threat of being returned to prison and managing the increased surveillance of their lives (Opsal, 2009).

Dominey and Gelsthorpe, (2020) argue that the absence of individual care in probation practice, and arguably also throughout the whole CJS, is what leads inevitably to shifting priorities that are influenced by political imperatives. This is reflected in deficient funding streams, ultimately potentially leading to the poor or ineffective practice that some of the Mothers experienced. However, and importantly, rather than it being the fault of individual officers or agents of the state, the matricentric-feminist lens supports the view that this points to institutional failure at the highest levels. Failure to provide adequate funding and resources that would facilitate staff in meeting the needs of women in the criminal justice system has consequences. The Mothers demonstrated how this structural lack

[39] National Probation Service (2001), A New Choreography: An Integrated Strategy for The National Probation Service for England & Wales, London: NPS archived. Home Office.

of care, alongside services not being adequately funded, made it challenging for their post-release needs to be successfully met.

Several studies, while not explicitly exploring the experiences of post-prison mothers, have identified a relationship between motherhood and desistance. Motherhood sometimes serves 'as a prosocial bond' that may assist women in their desistance journeys. It is argued of course that, given mothers do of course enter prison, then it is not motherhood per se that will influence women to desist from offending; however, they argue, that at some point a mother may become ready to adopt '*a pro social identity by reclaiming their role as a mother*'. Nonetheless it is suggested that security and stable family relationships alongside, an individual perception of themselves as 'changed' and hopefulness and an affirming self-esteem are important factors in the desistance journey. For post-release mothers, as this thesis has evidenced, motherhood was an important part of self-esteem and self-worth for mothers, often the most important part, and as such, it was relevant to their desistance.

It has previously been highlighted the importance that post-release mothers attached to their love for their children and saw this as a significant factor in their desistance[40]. However, they also found that, mothers facing multiple disadvantage and continued substance misuse sometimes re-offended to simply survive. Similarly, previous research (see Masson, 2019) and Brown and Bloom, 2009), has found that being a mother *was* a motivating factor for desistance, but for some, the realities of continued poverty, addiction, lack of housing, financial and therapeutic instability disrupted mothers attempts to desist from offending. Which was also evidenced in this research. This study found that for some post-release mothers, the guilt and shame they felt as criminal mothers, intertwined with the loss of children or disrupted mothering, became overwhelming. The additional trauma caused by imprisonment and the separation from, or removal of their children, led some Mothers to feel their only coping strategy was a return to substance misuse. Which often meant a return to criminal activity as a consequence. In the case of Beth, the lack of support, or a reluctance/inability to ask for mothering related support led to tragic consequences. This clearly indicates a need for motherhood to be factored into supervision and sentence planning. Furthermore, to acknowledge that engaging criminalised Mothers in supportive relationships requires understanding, compassion and resources.

Mothers described finding it challenging to access or ask for support because of the fear of inviting additional unwanted surveillance and attention, which ultimately could potentially result in recall and/or the loss of their children. For some, this had devastating, enduring and intergenerational consequences (e.g. Mary). It is important to note, some Mothers did ask for help, especially whilst

[40] See also the recent work of Natalie Rutter and Una Barr (2021) https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02645505211010336

in prison but were disappointed when the support accessed did not continue post-release. Which is previously identified as a key factor in post-prison relapse and recall. This study echoes those findings and highlights the significance of and need for effective matricentric throughcare and post-prison support. Clearly, it is essential that resettlement work starts within and continues through the prison gates and must involve supporting mothers and families using a matricentric-feminist approach. To meet Mother's needs more effectively in the challenging period of post-prison re-integration and resettlement would involve women's centres. Failure to do so will impact mother's ability to engage in rehabilitative supervision, which ultimately will further impact Mothers desistance, their children and wider society. This study has demonstrated the 'ripple effect' of imprisoning mothers, as an enduring and long-term harm, with family and community wide impacts.

Nevertheless, this research has highlighted the need for further in-depth research concerning the relationship between motherhood and desistance. This study provided evidence to support the view that there is merit in 'factoring in' motherhood and maternal emotion when engaged in the rehabilitation and/or supervision of criminalised mothers. The Mothers demonstrated Canton's (2015) argument that that emotions have a role to play concerning the individual desistance of offenders, in this instance particularly maternal emotion. The study also demonstrated how the emotional literacy of criminal justice professionals played a key role in the purposeful and effective support of Mothers. By understanding the emotions associated with motherhood and maternal imprisonment, some custodians and supervisors contributed significantly to the effective rehabilitation of post-prison mothers. Where this was not present, Mothers trauma and support needs were unmet, which in some instances resulted in a return to substance misuse and/or offending. Facilitating the resources, time and space for mothers to explore the impact of their sentence in terms of their trauma and their resilience, would enable supervisors to better support mothers through their reintegration. It is particularly important to recognise, as evidenced in this study, how the impact of imprisonment for mothers can leave a specific and distinct trauma footprint, one which has an impact on their rehabilitation.

8. Impact of the Research

The (published) research evidence from this study has been accepted within the academic community, in policy development, and in practice. Based on the findings of this study I was invited to provide evidence, orally and in writing, to the female focussed Farmer Review (2019), and Joint Human Rights Inquiry into Maternal Imprisonment and the Rights of the Child (2019. Furthermore my research provided evidence which fed into the Female Offender Strategy (2018). Lord Farmer

wrote of my research (see original thesis appendix for full letter), '*her research made a significant contribution to my findings and was influential in developing the final recommendations of the Farmer Review for Women'.*

The research findings have led to the development of a new programme for mothers in prison. The programme was piloted by myself and a co-facilitator from a partner organisation PACT, with whom the programme is now licenced and accredited (with the Skills for Justice) [41]. The programme was due to roll out across the female estate just as COVID19 hit but will resume once restrictions are lifted. The mothers who completed the programme pilot evaluated it extremely positively. One mother stated that during her time on the course '*it was the longest I have ever gone in prison without self-harming, and that's cos I had here to come to and be a mum*' (Sam). A community version of the programme is under development between myself and PACT and other 3rd Sector organisations. These programmes seek to contribute to mitigating the harm (both in the short and longer term), to maternal-identity, maternal-role and relationships for imprisoned and post-prison mothers. They support mothers in examining and managing their maternal emotions and relationships, enabling mothers to safely explore their maternal emotions and responsibilities, and to prepare for release.

Additionally, the research evidence has led to the author providing guidance, now held on the National Probation Service Intranet[42] available to all supervising officers. Plans are underway to expand this current provision further. The research has led to me delivering training nationally to Social Workers, Probation Officers, Prison Officers and other CJS professionals in relation to working positively with mothers in the CJS. Plans are underway to develop and deliver further training to HMPS Prison Officers and the hope is for this to be embedded into general prison officer training, also for the first time. I have already delivered bespoke training on working with mothers to prison officers who are employed via the 'Unlocked Graduates[43]' scheme (for the last two annual cohorts), and the input has now been added to the training programme for future cohorts. Additionally, I am working closely with Sodexo, who accommodate 25% of the female prison population at HMP Bronzefield and HMP Peterborough to assist in the development of their gendered provisions, specifically in relation to developing supportive programmes and resources for mothers in prison, and for those working with mothers in prison. I will also be providing training to Sodexo officers

[41] The author has worked with the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) to use this doctoral evidence to design and deliver the 'Mothers Inside Out' (MIO) programme. The programme pilot was successfully completed in August 2018, and the full programme is in process of being rolled out across the female estate and is now licenced and accredited by Skills for Justice. A post-release community supervision version is under development and will be piloted in London and in Plymouth in partnership with the Devon and Cornwall Criminal Justice Alliance, (DCCJA) and will be added to the probations Officers 'toolkit' for working with women nationally.

[42] See appendix 21

[43] 'Unlocked Graduates scheme was established in 2016 with the explicit aim of attracting high-calibre graduate talent to work in the UK prison service and provides training for officers who will likely be fast tracked to management positions https://unlockedgrads.org.uk/why/who-we-are/

related to working with mothers in prison which will eventually lead to a train the trainer package. Meaning that as a direct result of this study, eventually a quarter of the staff workforce working with mothers in the female prison estate will have access to resources to support mothers in prison and will receive training in working with incarcerated mothers. As the training will be a rolling programme this number will gradually increase. I am also now working with probation and third sector partners to develop additional training and resources for criminalised mothers and staff who work with such mothers in the community.

9. Conclusion

This research has shown that there is a need for a genuine commitment to critically examine and challenge the failings in policies, institutions and structures. Which currently fail women by individually problematising women and which 'intervene harmfully in women's lives' (Clarke and Chadwick 2018: 64). The 'hidden role' and, arguably hidden harms of institutions, like education, the welfare system, police, courts, social services, and prisons, must be examined and challenged. This is vital in order to understand how such institutions influence and shape women's lives by exacerbating and reproducing marginalisation and discrimination (*ibid*), making criminalisation more likely. As this research has shown, it was rarely simply a matter of 'women making better choices', which is an oft cited judicial response to female criminality. There have to be real possibilities of other 'choices' to make.

The Mothers described what amounted to an 'institutional thoughtlessness' (Crawley, 2005), regarding their status and role as criminalised, imprisoned and post-release mothers. This thoughtlessness impacted Mothers in many ways and at every stage of the CJS. The theoretical approach facilitated an understanding of how and why once criminalised the Mothers absorbed societies' perception of them as troubled and troublesome. Finding the blame for their imprisonment solely within themselves. However, this self-blame and subsequent self-imposed penance often obscured the root causes of the Mothers criminality and subsequently left them vulnerable to a broad failure to recognise their pathways into crime and out of crime. Compounded by a lack of informed support. This kind of 'individualist thinking' is influenced by criminal justice policy makers and sentencers, which give strong messages to criminalised women that their circumstances are solely of their own making; it perpetuates the belief that women need only make better 'choices' to 'turn their lives around' (Clarke and Chadwick, 2018:208). The reality is that the responsibility for the outcomes of criminalised women is, arguably, at the very least, shared amongst the resources who failed them and at a higher lever the policies and practice that underpin and facilitate that failure.

Furthermore, it had enduring consequences for the mothers in terms of long-lasting trauma, relationships and outcomes. The challenges to maternal-role and identity from prison as described by the Mothers continued post-release. Mothers felt unsupported, surveilled and mistrusted. Mothers' preoccupation with their re-entry and maternal re-negotiations made it challenging to engage in rehabilitation work or rehabilitative relationships. The failure of custodians and supervisors to take into account their maternal identity and role was a significant factor in Mothers' inability or reluctance to fully engage.

This study offers new insight, understanding and recommendations on how best to work with mothers affected by the CJS and offers a greater understanding of why this is important. Furthermore, how developing a criminological understanding of enduring impact of maternal imprisonment is crucial to the development of compassionate and appropriate support for mothers before, during and after prison.

This study provided further proof if it were needed, of the different ways in which women experience prison to men. This is especially true of mothers, and therefore, without change, women will continue to be damaged by prison, mothers will continue to be separated from their children, and many are destined to remain trapped in the cycles of guilt, trauma and harm. Furthermore, children will continue to be deeply affected by not only the harms caused to their mothers, but also by their own enduring harm, representing the layered *persistent* pains of maternal imprisonment. For criminalised women and mothers it is essential to accept the matricentric-feminist position that without social justice there cannot be effective or morally acceptable criminal justice. Furthermore, as in this study, the pursuit of change must actively facilitate and prioritise the voices of those who have experienced injustice and incarceration in order for '*individuals to speak truth to power'* (Scraton 2007 cited in Clarke and Chadwick 2018: 65).

It is fitting that this thesis is concluded by one of the Mothers. Dee provides a timely reminder of the strength and resilience of criminalised women and the need for us all to do better:

It was awful, it was shit, it hurt, and I'm scarred, my life was chaotic and complicated before prison. My life as a mother in prison was broken. I've experienced more abuse in my life than most people do in a lifetime. I was an addict; I suffer from nightmares and trauma and depression. All of that is true, but don't just call me complex, don't just call me vulnerable. I'm strong but I want to be stronger. I'm free but I want to be freer. Ive moved on but I want to go further. I want society and services to support me not just label me, I want people to help me create chances for others not just give one to me, I don't want to be held back I want to be driven forwards. (Dee).

10. Additional Recommendations for Research and the Academic Community

An important aspect of this research was to employ matricentric and feminist principles in the design and production of the thesis. There was significant value in applying an appreciative approach to understand motherhood and to centre the voices of the Mothers. Thereby, recognising the mothers for their resilience and strength as well as the reality and trauma of their experiences. Specific recommendations from this research approach are that:

1. This study uncovered several findings worthy of further study, including the experiences of BAME mothers in the CJS. An examination of the intersectionality of motherhood and race would be an important contribution to the overall understanding of maternal imprisonment. This study revealed there is a relationship between motherhood and desistance – but it is a complicated one and again is an area worthy of further study. Investigation concerning motherhood and desistance, particularly combined with maternal experiences of supervision and intersectionality would contribute significantly to making the case for alternatives to custody for the majority mothers who commit crime.

2. In the field of maternal/parental imprisonment there are significant gaps in knowledge and data. There needs to be an updated research study of the Caddle and Crisp (1997) study and more- to accurately reflect the circumstances surrounding parental imprisonment and what happens to the children left behind – this is especially true in the instance of maternal imprisonment

3. Motherhood and feminist researchers must work to enhance and improve their 'complicated relationship' with an acknowledgement from mainstream feminism that feminism, ergo feminist criminology, cannot claim to give an adequate account of women's lives and criminalisation or to represent women's needs and interests if mothering, and all its associations and contexts are ignored or unaccounted for.

4. There needs to be more research and understanding on how best to support mothers who are permanently separated from their children during the CJS or processes of imprisonment. Currently Mothers in these circumstances are neglected in terms of responding to their needs or understanding the impact of their separation and the long terms consequences of that separation- (and how this relates to offending/desistance). Presently permanently separated mothers are 'invisible' in the system *as mothers*.

5. There needs to be additional research and understanding about the experiences of older and adult children of imprisonment parents. Examining the complexities of this situation would inform support and enable services to identify how best to support the complex relationship dynamics in these circumstances- importantly during and after imprisonment.

6. Embracing O'Reilly's (2006, 2016) ideals of empowered motherhood into criminology, thereby creating a matricentric-feminist criminology, has facilitated the voices of criminalised mothers being heard, and must continue to do so. This would ensure criminalised mothers views and experiences are used to directly inform policy and practice. Motherhood could then contribute to both rehabilitation and desistance by becoming a site of reflection, agency and change in a more constructive and productive way than it has previously been viewed. This would be best achieved by the acceptance and inclusion of matricentric-feminist criminology and MF scholars by wider academic communities in motherhood and criminological schools of thought.

7. This research provides an opportunity for a call to the research community to truly think about what constitutes feminist research – there are too many examples of 'feminist' studies which do not fully reflect the principles of this approach in the research design, product or dissemination of findings. Feminist epistemology and methodology provide a blueprint for how feminist research, in terms of reflexivity, ethics, methods, tools and analysis should proceed. As stated by Harding (2019) 'the connections between epistemology, methodology and methods are an important aspect of what makes research feminist' (2019:2). It is argued that further consideration should be given to ethical implications and participant wellbeing, not only at the ethical approval stage, and that a 'rolling reflexivity' be applied to the life of any feminist study (Quinlan, Baldwin and Booth, forthcoming).

11. List of Publications from the Study *(For Full Reference List See original study)*

(please email for copies of publications below lbaldwin@dmu.ac.uk)

Baldwin, L. (2021) Presence, Voice and Reflexivity in Feminist and Creative Research: A Personal and Professional Reflection. In Masson, I, Baldwin, L and Booth, N., (Eds) (Forthcoming 2021), *Critical Reflections from The Women, Families, Crime and Justice Research Network,* Bristol, Policy Press (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin, L. (forthcoming 2021) Criminal Mothers: The Persisting Pains of Maternal Imprisonment. In *Criminal Women: Gender Matters*, Co-Authored by The Criminal Women Voice, Justice and Recognition Network (CWVJR), Bristol University Press

Baldwin, L. (2021) Grandmothering in The Context of Criminal Justice; Grandmothers in prison and grandmothers as carers when a parent is in prison. In Weaving Creative and Scholarly perspectives in Honour of our Women elders. Demeter press. Canada. (peer reviewed)

Baldwin, L. (2020*)* A Life Sentence: The Long-Term Impact of Maternal Imprisonment. In K. Lockwood (Ed) *Mothering and Imprisonment*. Emerald Publishing**.** (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin, L. (2019) Motherhood Judged, Social Exclusion Mothers and Prison. In C. Byvelds And H. Jackson (Eds). *Motherhood and Social Exclusion*, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Baldwin, L. (2018) Motherhood Disrupted: Reflections of Post-Prison Mothers. In Maternal Geographies (Sped) *Emotion Space and Society*. Elsevier, 26, pp.49- (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin, L. (2018) Submission of Written Evidence to Human Rights Committee Inquiry On '*The Right to Family Life: Children Whose Mothers Are in Prison*'. Available from: http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/human-rights-committee/the-right-to-family-life-children-whose-mothers-are-in-prison/written/91676.html

Baldwin, L**.** (2018) Submission of Written Evidence to Lord Farmer's Review, *The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and Other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, Available at *Https://Assets.Publishing.Service.Gov.Uk/Government/Uploads/System/Uploads/Attachment_Data/File/809467/Farmer-Review-Women.PD*

Baldwin, L. (2017) Tainted Love: The Impact of Prison on Maternal Identity. *Prison Service Journal*, 223, pp. 28-34. (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin L. (2015) Auth/Ed. *Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings*. Hampshire, Waterside Press. (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin, L. (2015) Mothering from Prison: Understanding Mothers and Grandmothers, A Prison Perspective. In *Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings.* Hampshire, *Waterside Press.* (Peer Reviewed)

Joint Publications

O'Malley, S. and Baldwin**, L.** (2019) Mothering Interrupted: Mother-Child Separation Via Incarceration in England and Ireland. In C. Beyer and A. Robertson (Eds) *Mothers Without Their Children*. Demeter Press. Canada. (Peer Reviewed)

O'Malley, S**. Baldwin, L**. Abbott, L. (Forthcoming) Starting Life in Prison: Reflections of The UK and Irish Contexts of Pregnant and New Mothers in Prison, Through a Children's Rights Lens. In F. Donson and A. Parks, *Presenting A Children's Rights Approach to Parental Imprisonment.* Palgrave. (Peer Reviewed)

Baldwin, L. Quinlan, C . (2018) Within These Walls; Reflections of Women in and after prison; An insight into the experience of women imprisoned in Britain and Ireland. Prison Service Journal. 240:21-27.

See also the closely related study

Baldwin, L and Epstein, R. (2017) Short but Not Sweet; A study of the impact of short custodial sentences on mothers and their children. Available at: https://www.nicco.org.uk/userfiles/downloads/5bc45012612b4-short-but-not-sweet.pdf

Appendix 1: Tables 1 and 2: Interviewed Mums in the Study/Letter writing mums – please see original thesis for more detailed information about the mothers.

Table 1: Interviewed Mums in the Study

*Children's' ages in the table are age at point of mothers most recent sentence, not their ages at interview

GC = grandchild, SP= single-parent, LA = local authority care, GM = grandmother, GP = grandparents, MBU= mother and baby unit.

Name	Age	Ethnicity	No. of Children	Children's Age	Cared for Children Pre-custody	Cared for children During custody	Cared for Children Post Custody	Time served if known	Time Post most recent Release	Multiple sentences
1. Annie	33	White British	1	12	Shared with ex husband	Ex husband	Shared care – more with mum	4 Months	4 years	1st offence
2. Beth	19	White British	1	3 months	Yes SP	LA care	LA care	4 months	12 months	Previous offences but 1st custodial
3. Carla	45	White British	2	4 & 6	Self and grandmother SP	GM	GM	Multiple sentences	6 years	Yes prior to last offence not 1st custodial
4. Dee	29	Mixed Race British	4	15,14,11, & 2	Mixed LA care, self, family SP	Mixed LA care and self	LA care and family (family 1st them handed over to LA care)	Multiple lengths from 2 weeks to 10 months	5 years	Multiple offences 10th custodial
5. Kady	28	Black British	1	Baby born in prison	N/A	Self on MBU	Self SP	11 months	11 years	2nd offence but 1st custodial
6. Karen	44	White British	3	17, 12, 11	Self and husband	husband	Self and husband	12 months	10 years	No 1st and only offence
7.Lauren	26	White British	1	2	Yes SP	LA care	LA 1st Self and GM eventually	18 months	4 years	Not 1st offence but 1st custodial
8.Maggi Mum & GM	55	White British	4 (+2GC)	21, 27, 25,24,	X2 GC in her care and one adult child at home	GC Shared through family – young adult child stayed at home	GC family and self, adult child left home by time sentenced	6 months	9 years	No 1st and only offence

9.Margot	32	White Irish	1	14	Self	GM	self	18 months	2 years	No – 2nd offence 1st prison sentence previous remand
10. Mary Mum & GM	65	White Irish	2	7 & 9	Self SP	LA care	LA care	Multipl sentenc	38 years	Yes Multiple sentences
11. Mavis Mum & GM	60	White British	2 (+2 GC)	30, 35	Adults although previously cared for GC	N/A	No longer 'allowed' to care for GC	8 months	6 years	1st sentence 1st offence
12. Nicola	41	White British	1	3	Self and family SP	LA care	LA care	3 years	11 years	Several offences 2nd custodial
13. Queenie Mum & GM	64	Black British	3 (+2 GC)	29, 34, 39	N/A although was GC carer	Family	No longer GC carer	2 years	10 years	Several offences prison
14. Rita	35	White British	4	16,12,11 & 18 months	Self and husband	Husband	Self and husband (now single parent through)	10 months	4 years	1st and only offence
15. Sandra Mum & GM	46	White Irish	4 (+2 GC)	16, 18, 12, 13	Self (SP)	GM	GM and self	Multipl sentenc	12 month	Multiple offences – 2nd custodial
16. Shanice	30	Black British	2	2, 11	Self SP	GM	GM and self	2 years	5 years	Three custodial sentences multiple offences
17. Sophie	21	White British	1	1 year	Self SP	GM	Self & GM	12 months	6 years	1st and only offence
18. Tarian	29	Mixed Race Welsh	5 (one deceased)	14, 12, 7 & baby born in prison	Self/partner GP's	Partner/ family	Self & GP's (partner now deceased)	2 years	5 years	1st custodial but previous offences
19. Tanisha	31	White British	3	12,4, 6, (1st child born in prison)	Family/LA / partner at differing points	Family & LA	LA then self and partner	12 months	7 years	2nd custodial
20. Tanya	27	Mixed Race British	2	6,7	Self/ GM	GM	GM mainly self PT	14 months	2 years	Multiple, 2nd sentence
21. **Tamika**	26	Black British	3	12, 4, 2	Self	GM	Self and GM	6months	5 years	no

22. Tia	26	White Welsh	2	12,4	Self & Husband	Husband and GM	Initially GM & self now self (SP)	18 months	5 years	1st offence 1st sentence
23. Ursula Mum & GM	48	White British	5 (+2GC)	Two under 10 and three teenagers (plus x2 GC born during sentence)	Self and husband	husband	Self & husband although now SP	4 years served	10 years	Not 1st offence but 1st sentence
24. Margaret Mum & GM	66	White British	2 +2GC GC in her care 8, 9	Her own children were not born when sentenced	Cares for daughters' children whilst imprisoned	N/A	Shares care of GC with mum	4months	46 years	Only sentence
25. Cynthia	50	White British	1	30	Lived with mum until last sentence	N/A	Lives alone	Multiple sentences	4 years	Multiple sentences and remands
26. Marjorie Mum & GM	61	White British	1 and 1 GC	18	Young adult but lived with mum	Self mum's house	self	1 year	11 years	1st offence 1st sentence
27. Rayna	36	Romanian	2	6 & 8	Her and husband	Husband	Mum (SP now)	3 ½ years	2 years	1st offence 1st sentence
28. Jaspreet	36	British Asian	Twin boys (both with special needs	18 months (functioning younger)	Her and husband – mother-in-law as childcare	Father mother-in-law	Self and husband	4 months	12 mont	1st offence
29. Tahira	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Tahira Withdrew- see Chapter 5 of Theis for her withdrawal statement*

Table 2: Letter writing mothers

Letter Writing Mothers'

**Details of offences, length of sentence and numbers of children not asked for, criteria only they are mothers of any age, with children in their care or not.*

Alexandra	**Natacha**	**Jennifer**	**Erin**
Danielle	**Helen**	**Sam**	**Sandy**
Adel	**Pham**	**Emma**	**Melanie**
Taranpreet	**Rosie**	**Dianne**	

Confirmed/known additional details collated from 25 letters (some mothers wrote more than once)

- The mothers had at least 27 children between them
- Six mothers were serving sentences of less than 6 months, two disclosed their sentences were for less than three months; two disclosed that they had sentences of over four years but did not specify how long. One was a life sentenced prisoner
- Ages of their disclosed children ranged from a few months to aged 45.
- Sentence length disclosed – 10 weeks to life , (some were within weeks of release)
- Three were foreign national mothers and were facing deportation (two successfully appealed)
- Offences disclosed were murder, fraud, theft, recall, debt/no payment of fines
- All were involved in or had sole care of their children prior to imprisonment

Appendix 2: Data on the circumstances of mothers

Figure 5: Care of children prior to custodial sentence

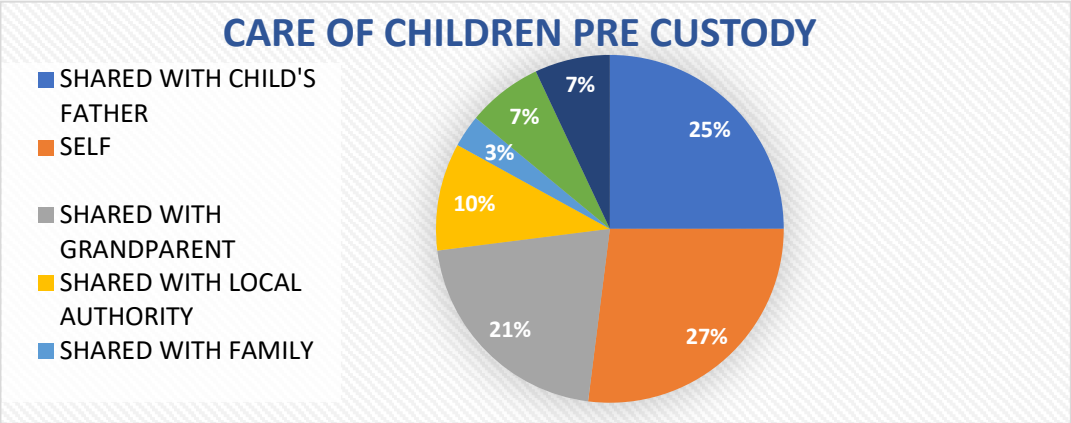
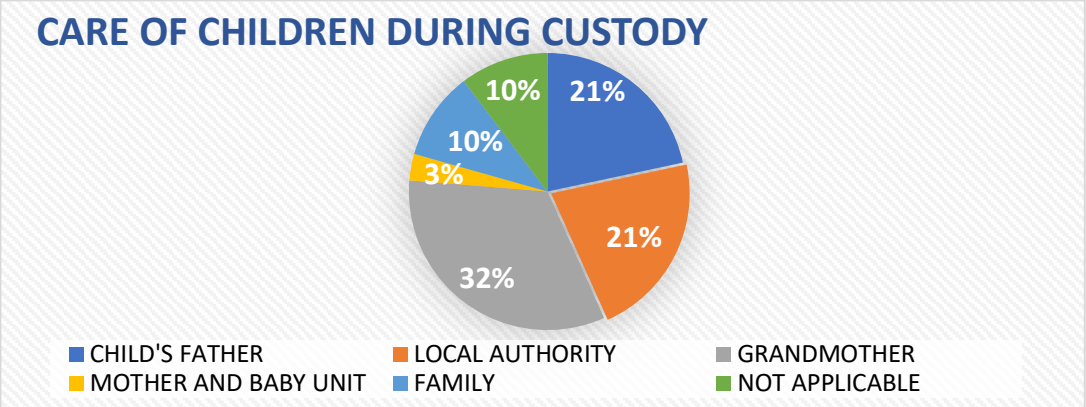


Figure 6: Care of children during custodial sentence



*not applicable = adult children (17 +)

Figure 7: Care of children post custodial custody

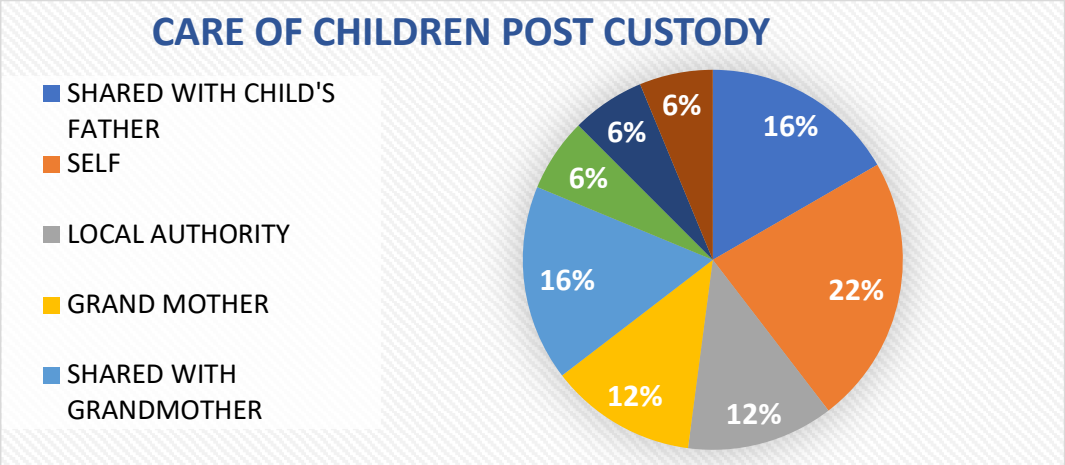


Figure 8: Ethnicity of mothers

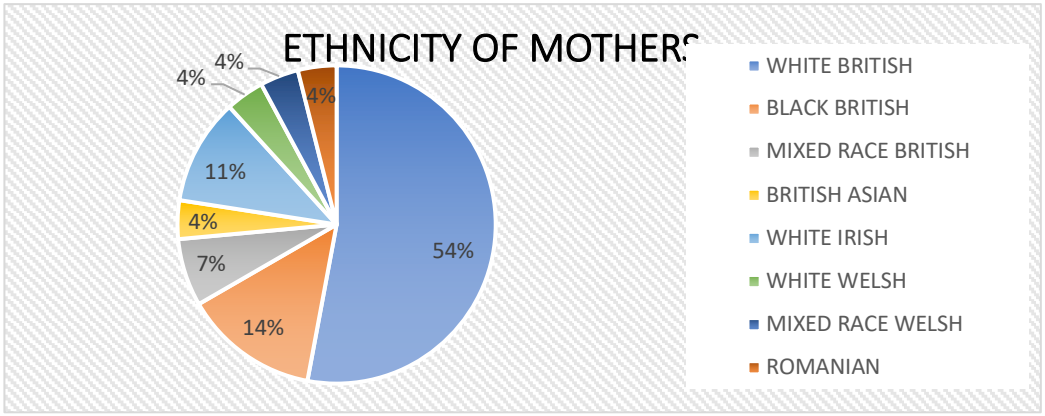


Figure 9: Time since release from the last sentence

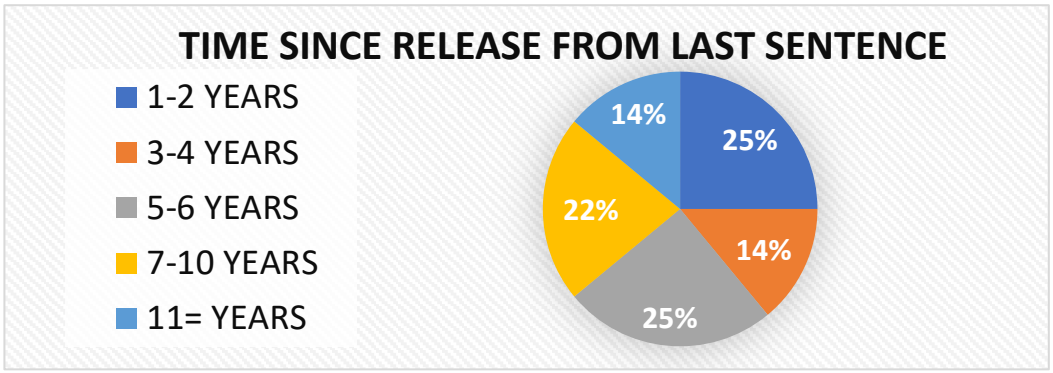
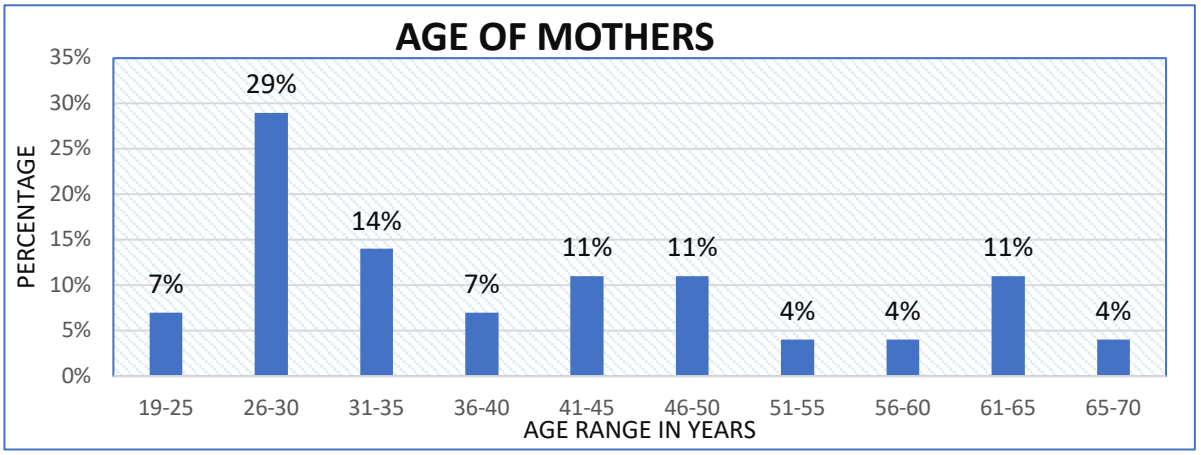


Figure 10: Age of mothers



The youngest mother interviewed was nineteen, the oldest was sixty-six years old.

Figure 11: Time served (not sentenced)

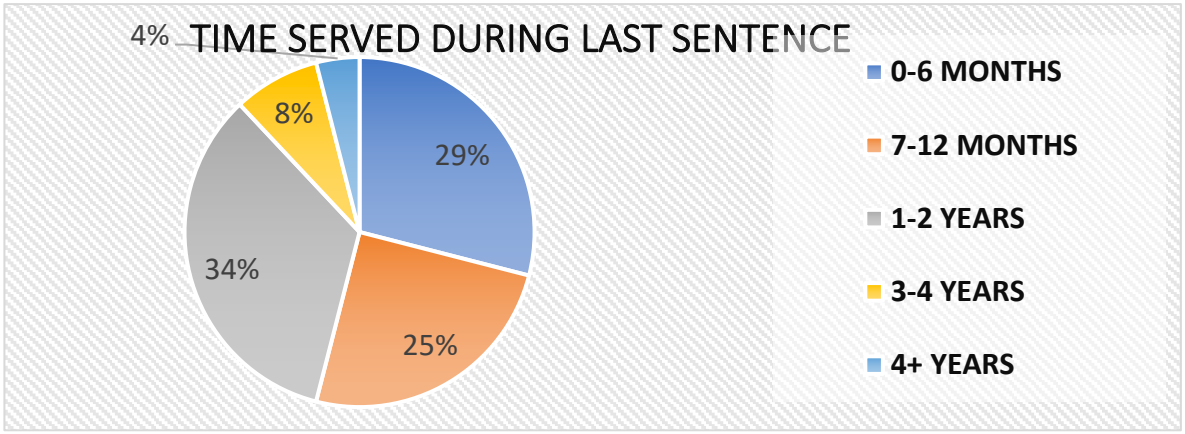
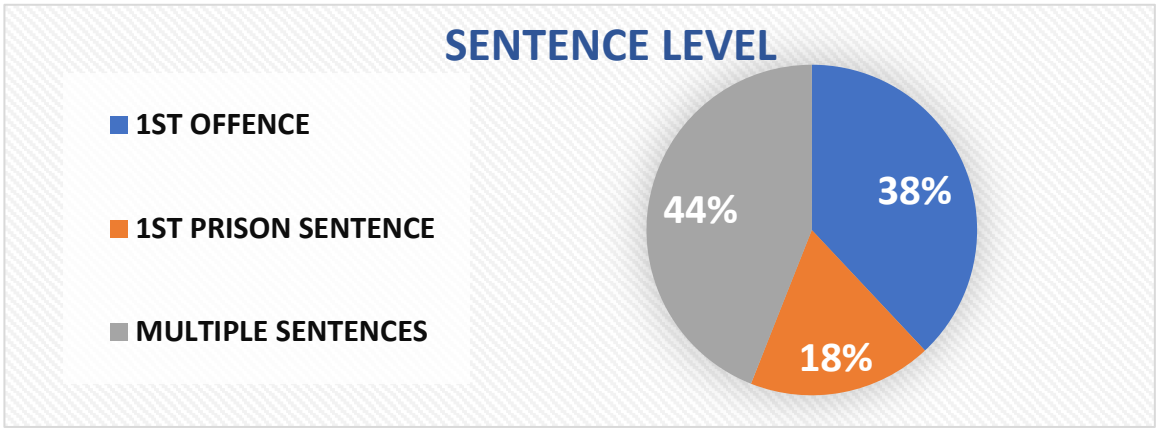
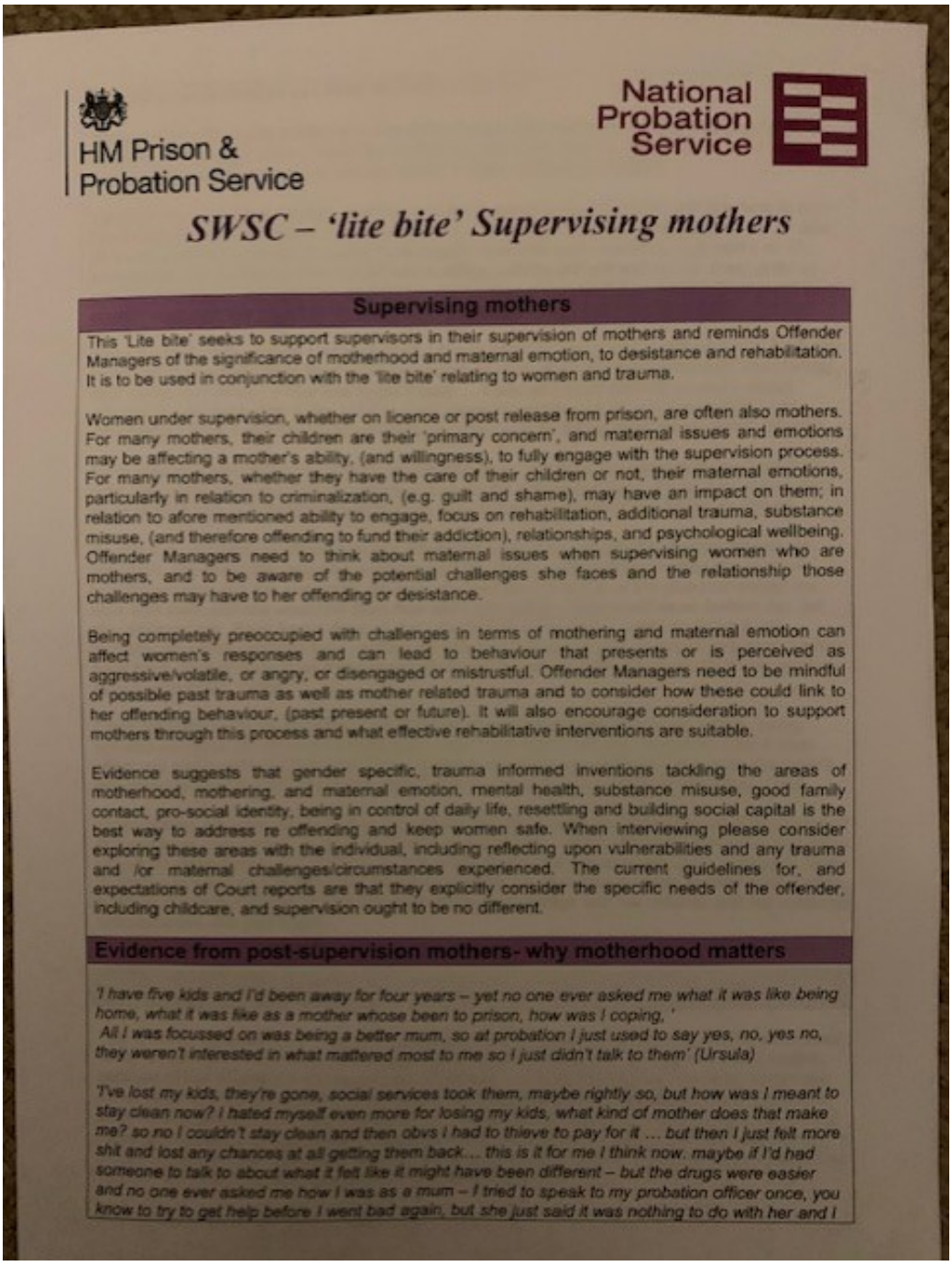


Figure 12: Sentence level of Interviewed mothers



Appendix 3 - Front Page of Guidance for Supervisors written by the author, based on this research and hosted on the National Probation Service intranet

(Please email for full version lbaldwin@dmu.ac.uk)



HM Prison & Probation Service

National Probation Service

SWSC – 'lite bite' Supervising mothers

Supervising mothers

This 'Lite bite' seeks to support supervisors in their supervision of mothers and reminds Offender Managers of the significance of motherhood and maternal emotion, to desistance and rehabilitation. It is to be used in conjunction with the 'lite bite' relating to women and trauma.

Women under supervision, whether on licence or post release from prison, are often also mothers. For many mothers, their children are their 'primary concern', and maternal issues and emotions may be affecting a mother's ability, (and willingness), to fully engage with the supervision process. For many mothers, whether they have the care of their children or not, their maternal emotions, particularly in relation to criminalization, (e.g. guilt and shame), may have an impact on them; in relation to afore mentioned ability to engage, focus on rehabilitation, additional trauma, substance misuse, (and therefore offending to fund their addiction), relationships, and psychological wellbeing. Offender Managers need to think about maternal issues when supervising women who are mothers, and to be aware of the potential challenges she faces and the relationship those challenges may have to her offending or desistance.

Being completely preoccupied with challenges in terms of mothering and maternal emotion can affect women's responses and can lead to behaviour that presents or is perceived as aggressive/volatile, or angry, or disengaged or mistrustful. Offender Managers need to be mindful of possible past trauma as well as mother related trauma and to consider how these could link to her offending behaviour, (past present or future). It will also encourage consideration to support mothers through this process and what effective rehabilitative interventions are suitable.

Evidence suggests that gender specific, trauma informed inventions tackling the areas of motherhood, mothering, and maternal emotion, mental health, substance misuse, good family contact, pro-social identity, being in control of daily life, resettling and building social capital is the best way to address re offending and keep women safe. When interviewing please consider exploring these areas with the individual, including reflecting upon vulnerabilities and any trauma and /or maternal challenges/circumstances experienced. The current guidelines for, and expectations of Court reports are that they explicitly consider the specific needs of the offender, including childcare, and supervision ought to be no different.

Evidence from post-supervision mothers- why motherhood matters

'I have five kids and I'd been away for four years – yet no one ever asked me what it was like being home, what it was like as a mother whose been to prison, how was I coping, '
All I was focussed on was being a better mum, so at probation I just used to say yes, no, yes no, they weren't interested in what mattered most to me so I just didn't talk to them' (Ursula)

'I've lost my kids, they're gone, social services took them, maybe rightly so, but how was I meant to stay clean now? I hated myself even more for losing my kids, what kind of mother does that make me? so no I couldn't stay clean and then obvs I had to thieve to pay for it … but then I just felt more shit and lost any chances at all getting them back… this is it for me I think now. maybe if I'd had someone to talk to about what it felt like it might have been different – but the drugs were easier and no one ever asked me how I was as a mum – I tried to speak to my probation officer once, you know to try to get help before I went bad again, but she just said it was nothing to do with her and I

Appendix 4. Methodology and Ethical Approval

As a member of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) I remain bound by the ethical code of conduct for social work. Ethical approval was given by the university Faculty Research and Ethics committee (FREC) (12/1/2016) and followed long-held ethical guidelines of research (Belmont, 1979). Furthermore the research was supported by' Women's Breakout' (now merged with Clinks) and 'Women in Prison'.

Utilising a feminist methodology and research design, research consultation groups were undertaken with women in prison and in the community, which then informed the design and decision making of the study. Participants were recruited initially through women's centre visits, posters and advertisements in WiP magazine and Inside Times, and thereafter by snowball sampling. Data was collected via one to one interviews with women post release from prison, all of whom were at least 12 months post release and no longer under the supervision of the probation service. Letters were received from women in and after prison, a total of 43 mothers took part in the study. All are anonymised. The data was then analysed thematically. Full methodological discussion can be found in the original thesis. https://dora.dmu.ac.uk/handle/2086/20813

Bibliography

(for full reference list see original thesis)

Abbott, L. (2015) A Pregnant Pause: Expecting in the Prison Estate, in L. Baldwin (auth/ed.) *Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice,* Sheffield on Lodden**:** Waterside Press.

Abbott, L. (2018) *The incarcerated pregnancy: an ethnographic study of perinatal women in English prisons*. Doctoral thesis, University of Herts.

Abbott, L., Scott, T., Thomas, H. and Weston, K. (2020) Pregnancy and Childbirth in English Prisons: institutional Ignominy and the Pains of Imprisonment. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 42(3), pp.660-675.

Abrams, L. S. and Curran, L. (2011) Maternal Identity Construction Among Low-income Mothers with Symptoms of Postpartum Depression. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(3), pp. 373-385.

Aiello, B. and McQueeny, K. (2016) How Can You Live Without Your Kids? Distancing from and Embracing the Stigma of 'incarcerated Mother.' *Journal of Prison Education and Re-entry*, 3(1), pp.32-49.

Ainsworth, M.D. (1962) the Effects of Maternal Deprivation: A Review - Findings and Controversy in the Context of Research Strategy, in *Deprivation of Maternal Care: A Reassessment of Effects*. Public Health Papers, 14, Geneva: World Health Organisation

Arditti, J.A. (2018) Parental incarceration and Family inequality in the United States. in R.Condry and P. Schaarf-Smith (Eds.) Prison, Punishment and the Family: towards a New Sociology of Punishment, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 41-57

Arditti, J. and Few, A. (2006) Maternal Distress and Women's Re-entry into Family and Community Life. *Family Process*, 47(3), pp. 303-21.

Arendell, T. (2000) Conceiving and investigating Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), pp. 1192–1207.

Bachman, R., Kerrison, E.M., Paternoster, R., Smith, L. and O'Connell, D., (2016) The Complex Relationship Between Motherhood and Desistance. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 26(3), pp. 212-231.

Baldwin, L. (Auth/Ed) (2015*) Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings.* Sheffield on Lodden: Waterside Press.

Baldwin, L. (2017) Tainted Love: The Impact of Prison on Maternal Identity*. Prison Service Journal*. September, 233, pp. 28-34.

Baldwin, L. (2018) Motherhood Disrupted: Reflections of Post-Prison Mothers in Maternal Geographies (Sp Ed) *Maternal Geographies (Guest Editor: Catherine Robinson), Emotion Space and Society*, 26, pp. 49-56.

Baldwin, L. (2019) Excluded from Good Motherhood: Reflections of Mothers After Prison. in C. Byvelds and H. Jackson (Eds.) *Motherhood and Social Exclusion*, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Baldwin, L., O'Malley, S. and Galway, K. (2015) Mothers Addicted: Working with Complexity, in L. Baldwin (Ed.) *Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings*. Sheffield on Lodden: Waterside Press.

Baldwin, L. and Epstein, R. (2017) *Short but Not Sweet: A Study of the Impact of Short Sentences on Mothers and their Children*. Oakdale Trust, Leicester: De Montfort University.

Baldwin, L. and Quinlan, C. (2018) Within these Walls: Reflections of Women in and After Prison - An insight into the Experience of Women Imprisoned in Britain and Ireland. *Prison Service Journal,* 240.

Baldwin, L. and O'Malley, S. (2019) Mothering interrupted: Mother Child Separation via Imprisonment in England and Ireland. in F. Donson and A. Parks (Eds) *Presenting A Children's Rights Approach to Parental Imprisonment*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baldwin, L. and Abbott, L. (2020) Why Do We Still Imprison Pregnant Women? *Russell Webster Blog* – See Https://Www.Russellwebster.Com/Pregnant-Prisoners/

Baldwin, M. (Ed.). (2000) *the Use of Self in therapy* (2nd Ed.). New York, NY: Hawthorne.

Barnes, C. (2015) Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't: Frontline Social Worker Perspective. in L. Baldwin (Auth/Ed) (2015*) Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings.* Sheffield on Lodden: Waterside Press.

Barnes, L. and Cunningham-Stringer, E. (2014) Is Motherhood Important? Imprisoned Women's Maternal Experiences Before and During Confinement and their Post-Release Expectations. *Feminist Criminology,* 991, pp. 3-23.

Baunach, P. J. (1985) *Mothers in Prison,* New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Books.

Bassin, D., Honey, M., and Kaplan, M. M. (1994) *Representations of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Beresford, S. (2018) 'What About Me?' the Impact on Children When Mothers are involved in the Criminal Justice System. Prison Reform Trust. Available At; http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/portals/0/documents/what%20about%20me.pdf

Bloom, B. (1992) Women offenders: Issues, Concerns and Strategies, Paper Presented to the *Western Society of Criminology*, San Diego CA, February.

Booth, N. (2017) *Maternal Imprisonment: A Family Sentence*, Bristol: The Policy Press and Social Policy Association.

Booth, N. (2017) *Prison and the Family: An Exploration of Maternal Imprisonment from A Family-Centred Perspective* (Doctoral thesis) University of Bath, Department of Social and Policy Sciences.

Booth, N. (2018) Maintaining Family Ties: The Disparities Between Policy and Practice Following Maternal Imprisonment in England and Wales. *Contemporary Research and Analysis on the Children of Prisoners: Invisible Children*, pp.155-171.

Booth, N. (2020) *Maternal Imprisonment and Family Life: From the Caregiver's Perspective*. Policy Press.

Bosworth, M. (1996) Resistance and Compliance in Women's Prisons: towards A Critique of Legitimacy. *Critical Criminology,* 7, pp. 5 –19.

Bowlby, J. (1969) *Attachment. Attachment and Loss: Vol. 1. Loss.* New York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1988) *A Secure Base*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Bradley, A. (2017) *Trauma-informed Practice: Exploring the Role of Adverse Life Experiences on the Behaviour of offenders and the Effectiveness of Associated Criminal Justice Strategies* (Doctoral Dissertation, Northumbria University).

Bradley, A., Day, K., Mahon, R. Exploring Shame Love and Healing Within Women's' Rehabilitation: An Analysis of Trauma Specific Intervention. In Masson, I, Baldwin, L. Booth, N. (eds) (Forthcoming 2021), *Critical Reflections from The Women, Families, Crime and Justice Research Network,* Bristol, Policy Press (Peer Reviewed)

Bradley, R. and Davino, K. (2002) Women's Perception of the Prison Environment: When 'Prison Is the Safest Place I've Ever Been'. *Psychology of Women Quarterly.* 26(4), pp. 351-359.

Brown, M. and Bloom, B. (2009) Re-Entry and Renegotiating Motherhood: Maternal Identity and Success on Parole. *Crime and Delinquency*, 55, pp. 313–36.

Buncy, S. and Ahmed, I. (2019) *Sisters in Desistance: Community-Based Solutions for Muslim Women Post-Prison*, Http://Www.Khidmat.org.Uk/Wp-Content/Uploads/2019/07/Sisters-in-Desistance-Final-.Pdf

Caddle, D. and Crisp, D. (1997) Imprisoned Women and Mothers. *Home Office Research Study Number 162,* London: Home Office.

Canton, R. (2015) Crime Punishment and the Moral Emotions: Righteous Minds and their Attitudes towards Punishment. *Punishment and Society*, 17(1) pp.54-72.

Canton, R. and Dominey, J. (2020) Punishment and Care Reappraised. in: L. Gelsthorpe, P. Mody and B. Sloan (Eds.) *Spaces of Care*, Oxford: Hart.

Carlen, P. (1983) *Women's Imprisonment: A Study in Social Control*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Carlen, P. (Ed.) (1985) *Criminal Women*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carlen, P. (1998) *Sledgehammer: Women's Imprisonment at the Millennium*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carlen, P. (2002) *Women and Punishment: The Struggle for Justice.* Cullompton: Willan.

Carlen, P. and Worrall, A. (2004) *Analysing Women's Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Carlton, B. and Seagrove, M. (Eds) (2013) *Women Exiting Prison: Critical Essays on Gender, Post-Release Support and Survival*. Oxon: Routledge

Casey-Acedevedo, K., Bakken, T. and Karle, A. (2003) Children Visiting Mothers in Prison: The Effects on Mothers' Behaviour and Disciplinary Maladjustment. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 37(3), pp.418-430.

Chesney-Lind, M., and Pasko, L. (2004) *The Female offender: Girls, Women, and Crime*. London: Sage.

Chesney-Lind, M. and Eliason, M. (2006) From invisible to incorrigible: The Demonization of Marginalized Women and Girls, *Crime, Media, Culture*, 2(1), pp. 29–47.

Chesney-Lind, M. and Pasko, L. (Eds.) (2013) *Girls, Women, and Crime: Selected Readings,* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, inc.

Clarke, B. and Chadwick, K. (2018) From Troubled Women to Failing institutions: The Necessary Narrative Shift for the Decarceration of Women Post Corston. In Moore, L, Scraton, P. and Wahidin, A. (2018) *Women's Imprisonment and the Case for Abolition: Critical Reflections of Corston Ten Years on*. London, Routledge

Codd, H. (2008) *in the Shadow of Prison. Families, Imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. Devon and Portland: Willan Publishing.

Codd, H. (2013) *in the Shadow of Prison: Families, Imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. Willan.

Collins, P.H. (1994) *Motherwork. Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*. New York: Routledge.

Collins, P.H. (2005) Black Women and Motherhood. in *Motherhood and Space* (pp. 149-159). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Collins, C. (2020) Is Maternal Guilt A Cross-National Experience? *Qualitative Sociology*, pp.1-29.

Comfort, M. (2008) *Doing Time together.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper, L. and Rogers, C. (2015) Mothering and 'insider' Dilemmas: Feminist Sociologists in the Research Process. *Sociological Research online,*

Corston, J. (2007) *the Corston Report: A Report By Baroness Jean Corston of A Review of Women With Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System.* London: Home Office.

Corston, J. (2011) *Women in the Penal System: Second Report on Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System.* London: Howard League for Penal Reform.

Couvrette, A., Brochu, S., and Plourde, C. (2016). the "Deviant Good Mother". *Journal of Drug Issues*, 46(4), pp. 292-307.

Covington, S. (2007) Working with Substance Abusing Mothers: A Trauma-informed, Gender-Responsive Approach. *the Source*, 16(1), pp.1-11.

Covington, S. and Bloom, E. (2003) Gendered Justice: Women in the Criminal Justice System in E. Bloom *Gendered Justice: Addressing Female offenders*. Carolina Academic Press.

Crewe, B. (2011) Soft Power in Prison: Implications for Staff–Prisoner Relationships, Liberty and Legitimacy. *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 455–468

Crewe, B., Hulley, S. and Wright, S. (2017). The Gendered Pains of Life Imprisonment. *British Journal of Criminology*, 57(6), pp.1359-1378.
Devlin, A. (1998) *Invisible Women.* Winchester: Waterside Press

Dhami, M.K., Ayton, P. and Loewenstein, G. (2007) Adaptation to Imprisonment: indigenous or Imported? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(8), pp.1085-1100.

Di Quinzio, P. (1999) *The Impossibility of Motherhood: Feminism, individualism, and the Problem of Mothering*, London: Routledge.

Dolan, R. (2016) Pregnant Women, Mothers, Mother and Baby Units and Mental Health in Prison. *Psypag Quarterly*, 100, pp. 32-35.

Dominey, J. and Gelsthorpe, L. (2020) Resettlement and the Case for Women. *Probation Journal*, 67(4), pp. 393-409.

Doucet, A. (1998) Interpreting Mother-Work: Linking Ontology, Theory, Methodology and Personal Biography. *Canadian Woman Studies* (18), pp. 52-58.

Doucet, A. and Mauthner N. (2006) Feminist Methodologies and Epistemologies. In C. D. Bryant and D. L. Peck (Eds.) *Handbook of 21st Century Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, pp. 26-32

Easterling, B.A., Feldmeyer, B. and Presser, L. (2019) Narrating Mother Identities from Prison. *Feminist Criminology*, 14(5), pp.519-539.

Eaton, M. (1993) *Women After Prison.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Edwards, S. (1984) *Women on Trial: A Study of the Female Suspect, Defendant, and offender in the Criminal Law and Criminal Justice System*. Manchester, NH: Manchester University Press.

Ellison, L. and Munro, V. E. (2017) Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process, *the International Journal of Evidence and Proof*, 21(3), pp. 183–208.

Enos, S. (2001) *Mothering From the inside: Parenting in A Women's Prison.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Farmer, P. (2017) *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoner's Family Ties to Reduce Reoffending and Prevent intergenerational Crime*. London: Ministry of Justice.

Farmer, M. (2019) The Importance of Strengthening Female offenders' Family and Other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce intergenerational Crime. *Ministry of Justice: London, UK*.

Flynn, C. (2014) Getting there and Being there, Visits to Prisons in Victoria- the Experiences and Women Prisoners and their Children. *Probation Journal.* 61(2), pp. 176-191.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books.

Freud, S., 1941. Splitting of the ego in the defensive process (1938). *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

Frost, N. and Holt, A. (2014) Mother, Researcher, Feminist, Woman: Reflections on "Maternal Status" As A Researcher Identity. *Qualitative Research Journal*. 14(2), pp. 90-102

Garcia-Hallett J. (2019) Maternal Identities and Narratives of Motherhood: A Qualitative Exploration of Women's Pathways into and Out of offending,
Feminist Criminology, 14(2), pp. 214–240

Gelsthorpe, L (2004) Back to Basics in Crime Control: Weaving in Women, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. 7(2), pp. 76-103

Gelsthorpe, L. (2007) Sentencing and Gender. In R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter (Eds) *What Works with Female offenders*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Gelsthorpe, L. and Morris, A. (2002) Women's Imprisonment in England and Wales: A Penal Paradox. *Criminal Justice*, 2(3), pp. 277-301.

Gelsthorpe, L. and Morris, A. (1990) *Feminist Perspectives in Criminology*, New York: Open University Press.

Genders, E. and Player, E. (1990) Women Lifers: Assessing the Experience. *the Prison Journal*, 70(1), pp.46-57.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1961) *Asylums*. London: Penguin.

Goffman, E. (1961) *On the Characteristics of Total Institutions*. Paper Presented at the Symposium on Preventive and Social Psychiatry.

Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. London: Prentice Hall.

Goffman, E. (1977) The Arrangement Between the Sexes, *Theory and Society*, 4(3), pp. 301-331.

Gomm, R. (2013) What Will 'Count' and Be Transformed for Women in the Criminal Justice System? *British Journal of Community Justice*, 11(2-3), pp. 153-157

Gunn, A. and Samuels, G. (2020) Promoting Recovery Identities Among Mothers with Histories of Addiction: Strategies of Family Engagement. *Family Process*, 59, pp. 94-110.

Hackett, L. (2015) Working with Women and Mothers Experiencing Mental Distress – Creating A Safe Place for Constructive Conversations. In L. Baldwin (Auth/Ed) (2015*) Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings.* Sheffield on Lodden: Waterside Press.

Hairston, C. F. (1991) Family Ties During Imprisonment: Important to Whom and For What', *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 18, pp. 87–104.

Hairston, C. F. (2003). Prisoners and their Families: Parenting Issues During incarceration. In J. Travis, and M. Waul (Eds.), *Prisoners once Removed: The Impact of incarceration and Re-entry on Children, Families, and Communities.* Washington, DC: The Urban institute Press, (pp. 259–282).

Hayes, M.O. (2009) The Lived Experience of Mothering After Prison. *Journal of Forensic Nursing*, 5(4), pp. 228-236.

Hedderman, C. and Hough, M. (1994) *Does the Criminal Justice System Treat Men and Women Differently?* London: Home Office

Hedderman, C. and Jolliffe, D. (2015) The Impact of Prison for Women on the Edge: Paying the Price for Wrong Decisions. *Victims and offenders,* 10(2): 24.

Heidensohn, F. (1996) *Women and Crime*. London: Macmillan International.

Jewkes, Y., Jordan, M., Wright, S. and Bendelow, G. (2019) Designing 'Healthy' Prisons for Women: incorporating Trauma-informed Care and Practice (TICP) into Prison Planning and Design. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(20), 3818.

Jewkes, Y. and Laws, B. (2020) Liminality Revisited: Mapping the Emotional Adaptations of Women in Carceral Space. *Punishment and Society*, pp. 1-19.

Johnston, H. (2019). Imprisoned mothers in Victorian England, 1853–1900: Motherhood, identity and the convict prison. Criminology & Criminal Justice, 19(2), 215–231.

Jolliffe, D. and Hedderman, C. (2015) investigating the Impact of Custody on Reoffending Using Propensity Score Matching. *Crime and Delinquency*; 61(8), pp. 1051-1077.

Jordan, S. (2013). *Missing Voices: Why Women Engage with, or withdraw from, Community Sentences*. London: Griffins Society.

Kaplan, E.A. (1992) *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama*. Oxford: Routledge.

Kerrison, E.M. and Bachman, R. (2016) Second-Chance Grandparenting: How A New and Renewed Identity Impacts the Desistance Process. *Across the Spectrum of Women and Crime: Theories, offending, and the Criminal Justice System*, pp.225-242.

Kincaid, S., Roberts, M. and Kane, E. (2019) *Children of Prisoners: Fixing A Broken System*. Crest Advisory

Leverentz, A. (2014) *The Ex-Prisoners Dilemma, How Women Negotiate Competing Narratives of Re-Entry and Desistance*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Leverentz, A. (2013). People, Places, and Things: How Female Ex-Prisoners Negotiate their Neighborhood Context. In M. Chesney-Lind and L. Pasko (Eds.), *Girls, Women, and Crime: Selected Readings* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, pp. 229-250.

Liss, M., Schiffrin, H. and Rizzo, K. (2012) Maternal Guilt and Shame: The Role of Self-Discrepancy and Fear of Negative Evaluation. *Psychological Science*, 5, https://scholar.umw.edu/psychological_science/5

Lockwood, K. (2013) *Mothering From the inside: Narratives of Motherhood and Imprisonment.* Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.

Lockwood, K. (2017) Listening to Mum: Narratives of Mothers in Prison. in J. Woodiwiss, K. Smith, K. and K. Lockwood (Eds), *Feminist Narrative Research: Opportunities and Challenges.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lockwood, K. (2018) Disrupted Mothering: Narratives of Mothers in Prison. in: T. Taylor and K. Bloch (Eds), *Marginalised Mothers, Mothering from the Margins*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

Lockwood, K.A. (2020) The Ties That Bind: Stories of Women in Prison Who Are Mothers to Older Adult Children. in: *Mothering From the Inside: Research on Motherhood and Imprisonment*, Emerald Publishing, pp. 105-125.

Loper, A.B. (2006) How Do Mothers in Prison Differ from Non-Mothers? *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 15, 82.

Loper, A. B. and Tuerk, E. H. (2006). Parenting Programs for incarcerated Parents: Current Research and Future Directions, *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 17(4), pp. 407–427.

Maruna, S. and Mann, R. (2019) Reconciling 'Desistance' and 'What Works'. *HM Inspectorate of Probation Academic insights* 2019: 1.

Masson, I. (2019*) Incarcerating Motherhood: The Enduring Harms of First Short Periods of Imprisonment on Mothers.* Oxon: Routledge.

McIvor, G., Trotter, C. and Sheehan, R. (2009) Women, Resettlement and Desistance. *Probation Journal*, *56*(4), 347-361.

Mead, M. (1935) Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies. In M. Kimmel (Ed.) *The Gendered Reader.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Merriam, S. B. (1988) *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Middleton, A. (2006) Mothering Under Duress Examining the inclusiveness of Feminist Mothering Theory, *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering,* 8(1, 2), pp. 72-82.

Miller, T. (2008) *Making Sense of Motherhood: A Narrative Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ministry of Justice (2018) *Female Offender Strategy*, London: Ministry of Justice.

Minnaker, J. and Hogeveen, B. (Eds) (2015) *Criminalized Mothers, Criminalized Mothering.* Ontario, Canada: Demeter Press

Minson, S. (2014) *Mitigating Motherhood: A Study of the Impact on Sentencing Decisions in England and Wales*. Howard League for Penal Reform.

Minson, S. (2018) The Sins and Traumas of Fathers and Mothers should not be Visited on their Children: The Rights of Children when a Primary Carer is Sentenced to Imprisonment in the

Criminal Courts, in R. Condry, and P.S. Smith (Ed.), *Prisons, Punishment and the Family: towards a New Sociology of Punishment?* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Minson, S. (2019). Direct Harms and Social Consequences: An Analysis of the Impact of Maternal Imprisonment on Dependent Children in England and Wales. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 19(5), pp.519-536.

Minson, S. (2020). *Maternal Sentencing and the Rights of the Child*. Springer Nature.

Minson, S., Nadin, R. and Earle, J. (2015) *Sentencing of Mothers: Improving the Sentencing Process and Outcomes for Women with Dependent Children*, Discussion Paper Prison Reform Trust.

Mireault, G.C., Thomas, T. and Brown, B.A. (2002) Maternal Identity Among Motherless Mothers and Psychological Symptoms in their Firstborn Children, *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 11(3), pp. 287–297

Moore, L. and Scraton, P. (2014) *the incarceration of Women; Punishing Bodies, Breaking Spirits.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moore, L. and Wahidin, A (2018) the Post Corston Women's Penal Crisis in England and Wales. in L Moore, P. Scraton and A. Wahidin (Eds) (2018) *Women's Imprisonment and the Case for Abolition: Critical Reflections on Corston Ten Years on.* London: Routledge.

Moore, L., Scraton, P., and Wahidin, A. (2018) *Women's Imprisonment and the Case for Abolition: Critical Reflections on Corston Ten Years on.* London: Routledge.

Moran, D., (2013) Between Outside and inside? Prison Visiting Rooms as Liminal Carceral Spaces. *Geojournal*, *78*(2), pp. 339-351.

Morris, A. (1987) *Women, Crime and Criminal Justice.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Morriss, L. (2018) Haunted Futures: The Stigma of Being A Mother Living Apart From Her Child(ren) As A Result of State-ordered Court Removal. *The Sociological Review*, *66* (4), 816-831.

Motz, A., Dennis, M. and Aiyegbusi, A. (2020) *Invisible Trauma: Women, Difference and the Criminal Justice System*. London: Routledge.

Murray, J. (2007) the Cycle of Punishment: Social Exclusion of Prisoners and their Children, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 7(1), pp. 55-81.

Murray, J. and Farrington, D. (2005) Parental Imprisonment: Effects on Boys' Antisocial Behaviour and Delinquency Through the Life-Course, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46(12), pp. 1269-1278

Oakley, A. (1981) *From Here to Maternity: Becoming a Mother.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms? In: H. Roberts (Ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 30–61.

Oakley, A. (1993) Essays on Women, Medicine and Health**,** Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Oakley, A. (2016) Interviewing Women Again: Power, Time and the Gift. *Sociology* 2016, 50 (1), pp. 195-213.

O'Malley, S. (2018) *Motherhood, Mothering and the Irish Prison System*. National University of Ireland, Galway.

O'Malley, S. and Devaney, C. (2016): Maintaining the Mother–Child Relationship Within the Irish Prison System: The Practitioner Perspective, *Child Care in Practice,* 22(1), pp. 20-34

O'Malley, S. and Devaney, C. (2016) Supporting incarcerated Mothers in Ireland with their Familial Relationships: A Case For the Revival of the Social Work Role. *Probation Journal*, 63(3), pp. 293-309

O'Neill, J. (2015) *Time After Time: A Study of Women's Transition from Custody*, Research Paper, 2015/04, the Griffins Society.

Opsal, T. D. (2009) Women on Parole: Understanding the Impact of Surveillance, *Women and Criminal Justice*,19(4), pp. 306- 328.

Opsal, T. D. (2011) Women Disrupting A Marginalized Identity: Subverting the Parolee Identity Through Narrative. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography,* 40(2), pp. 135–167.

O'Reilly, A. (2004) introduction. in A. O'Reilly, *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's of Woman Born*. Albany: State University of New York Press

O'Reilly, A. (2006) *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering*. Canada: Demeter Press.
O'Reilly, A. (2016) *Matricentric Feminism, theory, Activism and Practice. Ontario:* Demeter Press.

Padel, U. and Stevenson, P. (1988) *Insiders: Women's Experiences of Prison*, London: Virago.

Parker, R. (1995) *Mother Love/Mother Hate: The Power of Maternal Ambivalence*. Basic books.

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (2019) *Inquiry Report Published on Children Whose Mothers Are in Prison.*

Powell, C., Marzano, L., and Ciclitira, K. (2016) Mother–infant Separations in Prison. A Systematic Attachment-Focused Policy Review, *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology,* pp.1-16.

Prison Reform Trust (PRT), - Bromley Briefings (2019) Prison Fact File Winter Edition. http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Publications/Factfile
Quinlan, C. (2011) *Inside Ireland's Women's' Prisons Past and Present*. Dublin. Ireland Academic Press.

Raikes, B. (2016) Unsung Heroines: Celebrating the Care Provided by Grandmothers for Children with Parents in Prison. *Probation Journal*, 63(3), pp.320-330.

Raikes, B. and Lockwood, K. (2011) Mothering from the inside: A Small-Scale Evaluation of Acorn House, An Overnight Child Contact Facility at HMP Askham Grange. *Prison Service Journal*, 3(194), pp:19-26.

Reid, M. (1983) Review Article: A Feminist Sociological Imagination. Reading Ann Oakley. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, *5*, pp.83-94.

Reimer, V. and Sahagaian, S. (2015) *The Mother-Blame Game*. Ontario, Canada: Demeter Press.

Rees, A., Staples, E. and Maxwell, N. (2017) *Evaluation of Visiting Mum Scheme: Final Report,* Cardiff: CASCADE

Richie, B.E. (2001) Challenges Incarcerated Women Face as they Return to their Communities: Findings from Life History interviews. *Crime and Delinquency*, 47(3), pp.368-389.

Riessman, C. K. (1993) Qualitative Research Methods, Vol. 30. *Narrative Analysis.* Sage Publications, inc.

Rittenour, C. and Colaner, C. (2012). Finding Female Fulfilment: intersecting Role-Based and Morality-Based Identities of Motherhood, Feminism, and Generativity as Predictors of Women's Self Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction. *Sex Roles*, 67.

Roberts, D.E. (1993) Motherhood and Crime. *Iowa Law Review, 79*, p.95.

Rose, N. (1989,1999) *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. London, Free Association Books.

Rotkirch, A. (2009) Maternal Guilt. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 8, 90–106.

ROWE, A. (2011) Narratives of Self and Identity in Women's Prisons: Stigma and the Struggle for Self-Definition in Penal Regimes*. Punishment and Society*, 13, pp. 571-591.

Rubin R. (1984) *Maternal Identity and Maternal Experience*. New York: Springer.

Sharpe, G. (2015) Precarious Identities: 'Young' Motherhood, Desistance and Stigma. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 5(4), pp. 407-422.

Sheehan, R. (2014) Women Exiting Prison: Supporting Successful Reintegration in A Changing Penal Climate. *British Journal of Community Justice*, 12(2), pp.57-66.

Sheehan, R. and Flynn, C. (2007) Women Prisoners and their Children. in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter (Eds) *What Works with Women offenders?* Devon: Willan Publishing.

Sikand, M. (2017). *Lost Spaces: Is the Current Provision for Women Prisoners to Gain A Place in A Prison Mother and Baby Unit Fair and Accessible?* the Griffins Society, University of Cambridge institute of Criminology.

Sikes, P. (2006) Defining the Field of Qualitative inquiry, *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 29(2), pp. 251 – 257.

Silverman, D. (2010) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, 3rd Edition. Sage Publications, London

Silverman, D. (2013) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, 4th Edition. London: Sage Publications

Slaughter, A.M. (2015) *Why Women Still Can't Have It All* (pp. 84-102). Oneworld.

Smart. C (1976) *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique. London.* Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Smart, C. (1996) Deconstructing Motherhood. *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood*, pp.37-57.

Snider, L. (2003) Constituting the Punishable Woman: Atavistic Man incarcerates Postmodern Woman. *British Journal of Criminology*. 43, pp. 354-378

Soffer, M. and Ajzenstadt, M. (2010) The Multidimensionality of “Pains of Imprisonment” Among Incarcerated Women in Israel, *Women and Health*, 50(6), pp.491-505.

Sparks, R. (1994) Can Prisons be Legitimate? Penal Politics, Privatization, and the Timeliness of an Old Ide. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *34*, pp.14-28.

Stewart. P. (2015) A Psychodynamic Understanding of Mothers and Babies in Prison, in L. Baldwin Auth/Ed (2015) *Mothering Justice: Working with Mothers in Criminal and Social Justice Settings*. Sheffield on Lodden: Waterside Press.

Stone, R. (2016) Desistance and Identity Repair: Redemption Narratives as Resistance to Stigma. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(5), pp. 956-975.

Strozier, A.L., Armstrong, M., Skuza, S., Cecil, D. and Mchale, J. (2011). Co-Parenting in Kinship Families with Incarcerated Mothers: A Qualitative Study. *Families in Society*, 92(1), pp.55-61.

Sutherland, J. (2010) Mothering, Guilt and Shame. *Sociology Compass*, 4(5), pp. 310-321.

Swigart, J. (1991) *the Myth of the Perfect Mother: Parenting Without Guilt.* Chicago: Contemporary Books.

Sykes, G. M. (1958 /2007) *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum-Security Prison*. Princeton University Press.

Wahidin, A. (2004) *Older Women in the Criminal Justice System: Running Out of Time,* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Walker, T and Towl, G. (2016) *Preventing Self-injury and Suicide in Women's Prisons*, Hampshire: Waterside Press.
Walker, S. and Worrall, A. (2000) Life as A Woman: The Gendered Pains of indeterminate Imprisonment, *Prison Service Journal,* 132.

Walklate, S. (2001) *Gender, Crime and Criminal Justice*. Devon. Willan

Warr, J. (2016) The Deprivation of Certitude, Legitimacy and Hope: Foreign National Prisoners and the Pains of Imprisonment. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 16(3), pp. 301-318.

West, C. (1996) Goffman in Feminist Perspective. *Sociological Perspectives,* 39(3), pp. 353-369.

Wells, J. (2019) This Video Call May Be Monitored and Recorded: Video Visitation as A Form of Surveillance Technology and Its Effect on incarcerated Motherhood. *Screen Bodies*, 4 (2), pp.76-92.

Weitzman, N., Birns, B., and Friend, R. (1985) Traditional and Non-traditional Mothers' Communication With their Daughters and Sons. *Child Development,* 56, pp. 894-898

Winnicott, D.W. (1987). *Babies and their Mothers*. Da Capo Press, incorporated
(a collection of Winnicott's essays and presentations between 1957-1970 are presented posthumously).

Wolf, N. (2003) Misconceptions: Truth, Lies and the Journey to Motherhood. New York. Doubleday Press.

WOMEN IN PRISON (WIP) (2017). *Corston + 10: The Corston Report 10 Years on. How Far Have We Come on the Road to Reform for Women Affected by the Criminal Justice System?* Women in Prison and Barrow Cadbury Trust

Worrall, A. (1990) *Offending Women*, London: Routledge.
Wright, S. (2017) Narratives of Punishment and Frustrated Desistance in the Lives of Repeatedly Criminalised Women. In *New Perspectives on Desistance,* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 11-35.

Zedner, L. (2010). Pre-Crime and Pre-Punishment: A Health Warning: Lucia Zedner Calls for Restraint. *Criminal Justice Matters*, *81*(1), pp.24-25.