



CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Support for children with a dad who has been arrested, has a court appearance, is serving a community sentence, is in prison, or is being released from prison

Introduction

If your dad is arrested, or goes to court, or goes to prison, it can be really hard. It is helpful to remember that what has happened is **not your fault** and also that **you are not alone** – this happens to lots of children and young people each year. Here are some of the things children in this situation feel:

- “Everything has changed, and I miss the way it was.” (sadness);
- “I really miss my dad.” (grief);
- “I don’t want to be apart from my dad.” (anxiety);
- “I just don’t understand what’s happening.” (panic);
- “I can’t get the images of dad being arrested out of my head.”; “I hate going to the prison.” (trauma);
- “Where will I live? How will mum cope?” (worry);
- “I can’t speak to anyone about what’s happened because they might judge me.” (shame);
- “Why did my dad do that? Why was he taken away like that?”; “I don’t want anything to do with him.” (anger);
- “What if my friends find out? What will they think?” (embarrassment);
- “I’m too scared to talk about dad or ask any questions about what happened.” (fear);
- “Why am I not being told the truth about what’s happening?” (confusion);
- “Everyone at school has seen what happened online so I can’t go out any more.” (social isolation);
- “It’s actually a bit easier at home now that dad’s away. There are fewer arguments.”; “At least I know where he is now.” (relief);
- “Is this my fault?” (guilt);
- “I feel I’ve got to keep this a secret but I don’t want to.” (burdened); and
- “It’s just all too much, especially because I’m helping look after my younger sister.” (overwhelmed).



You might feel a mix of some, or all, of these emotions (and maybe other feelings too), and you may feel them all at the same time.

You may have heard people saying things about your dad or your family. Talking about how you feel can help.

You might feel differently to other people in your family: that is ok, as everyone is different. There is no right or wrong way to feel when something like this happens.

"Support has helped me to know that my dad is not a bad person. That people make mistakes. I felt sad and angry but I have learnt that these were normal feelings."

Sam (12)

This Child Impact Assessment is about making sure children and young people get the help they need when their dad is arrested, or appearing in court, or serving a community sentence, or sent to prison, or released from prison.

By filling in this form, you will be helping the people whose job it is to help children in your situation do it better. Most importantly, you will have an opportunity to talk about your feelings, ask any questions, raise any worries you have, and get the help and support you feel you need at the time that you need it. This is something that you can come back to again and again, as your thoughts and feelings may change over time. You may prefer to draw a picture to describe how you feel, rather than use words – the important thing is that this is about you and what's right for you!



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PART 1 - About me

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Name | | Address | |
| Name I like to be known as | | | |
| Date of birth | | Gender | |
| Name of school / nursery | | Brothers or sisters (or other children I live with) | |
| Name(s) of adult(s) I live with | | Contact details of adult(s) I live with | |
| Name of person helping me to fill in this form | | | |

More about me

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Things about me you need to know | |
| I am happiest when... | I really like... |
| Someone who knows me really well is... | When I am older, I would like to... |

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PART 2 - About me and my dad

It will help the person who is supporting you if you can say a bit about your dad and what he means to you.

Different people have different kinds of relationships with their dad. You can use this section to describe (in words or pictures) who your dad is for you and what your dad means to you.

For example, you might feel close to your dad, or not. You might have spent a lot of time with him, or he may not have been around much in your life. You may get on well with your dad, or he might not be easy to get along with. You may have mixed feelings about your dad - where you like some things about him but not others. You may have heard other people talking about your dad or be worried about what people think about your dad - it can be helpful to talk about this. Whatever the relationship is with your dad, it is yours, and it is up to you how you want to describe it - there is no right or wrong way!

You can use these starter sentences to help you if you like:

My dad is...

What I like about my dad is...

What I find hard about my dad is...

What I've heard other people say about my dad is...



PART 3 - About what has happened

a) "My dad was arrested."

How do you feel about your dad's arrest?

What questions do you have about your dad's arrest?

How are you doing? (You may find it easier to answer this on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you are coping really well and 1 means you are finding things really difficult.)

Is there anyone who could help you right now? What could they do?

Is there anything you would like dad to know right now?

Is there anything you would like mum, or the person looking after you, to know?

Is there anything else you would like to talk about? (This can be anything that is on your mind and might not be to do with dad.)



PART 3 - About what has happened

b) "My dad is going to court."

How do you feel about your dad going to court?

What questions do you have about what happens at court?

How are you doing? (You may find it easier to answer this on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you are coping really well and 1 means you are finding things really difficult.)

Is there anything you would like the people at court to know about you and your family?
(This may not change what decisions are made, but it can help people to understand how the decisions they make will affect you and your family.)

Is there anyone who could help you right now? What could they do?

Is there anything you would like dad to know right now?

Is there anything you would like mum, or the person looking after you, to know?

Is there anything else you would like to talk about? (This can be anything that is on your mind and might not be to do with dad.)



PART 3 - About what has happened

c) "My dad is doing a community sentence."

How do you feel about your dad doing a community sentence?

What questions do you have about your dad's community sentence? (*You might hear words like 'tag' or 'curfew.'*)

How are you doing? (*You may find it easier to answer this on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you are coping really well and 1 means you are finding things really difficult.*)

Is there anyone who could help you right now? What could they do?

Is there anything you would like dad to know right now?

Is there anything you would like mum, or the person looking after you, to know?

Is there anything else you would like to talk about? (*This can be anything that is on your mind and might not be to do with dad.*)



PART 3 - About what has happened

d) "My dad is in prison."

How do you feel about your dad being in prison?

What questions do you have about your dad being in prison and his time there?

How are you doing? (You may find it easier to answer this on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you are coping really well and 1 means you are finding things really difficult.)

Is there anyone who could help you right now? What could they do?

Is there anything you would like dad to know right now?

Is there anything you would like mum, or the person looking after you, to know?

Is there anything else you would like to talk about? (This can be anything that is on your mind and might not be to do with dad.)



PART 3 - About what has happened

e) "My dad is being released from prison."

How do you feel about dad being released?

What questions do you have about your dad being released?

How are you doing? (You may find it easier to answer this on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you are coping really well and 1 means you are finding things really difficult.)

Is there anyone who could help you right now? What could they do?

Is there anything you would like dad to know right now?

Is there anything you would like mum, or the person looking after you, to know?

Is there anything else you would like to talk about? (This can be anything that is on your mind and might not be to do with dad.)



PART 3 - About what has happened

Sometimes it is easier to draw how we feel than to say it. This is a place for you to draw a picture about what has happened to you, how you are feeling or how you are doing (only if you would like to). You may want to draw more than one picture or return to the picture later and change it if that helps. You may prefer to write a story or a poem - anything that helps you express how you are feeling!



PART 4 - Agreed actions

This is a place for you and the person helping you fill in this form to write down things that you would like to happen each time you chat. For example, you might be talking about dad's arrest and decide that it would be helpful for someone at school to know what happened so that they can support you. So you might write:

| What needs to be done: | Who will do this and by when: | Date action completed: |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Tell Mrs Jones about dad being arrested</i> | <i>I want to tell her with mum there too. I want Mrs Jones to know by next Friday.</i> | <i>(Write the date when it gets done here)</i> |

If you have any questions about any of the actions, or you change your mind, you can speak to the person filling in this form with you.

What needs to be done: **Who will do this and by when:** **Date action completed:**

PART 5 - Useful information and resources



There are some resources to help children who have been affected by having a family member arrested, appearing in court, going to prison, serving a community sentence, or being released from prison but they are not always easy to find. The person filling in this form with you has a list of resources and organisations that may be of help.

A group of children from [Time-Matters UK](#) got together to create [Safe Together](#), a self-help booklet which was written by children with a parent in prison to help other children going through that experience. It has lots of practical suggestions for how to cope when a family member is in prison.

Acknowledgments

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**"Sentencers should know about the children.
You get victim impact statements. What about a
child impact statement in the child's own words
or even with pictures?"**

(A parent who's been in prison)

