

## Part A - General Information

### Organisation/Individual Name

Children Heard and Seen

### Organisation Type/Structure

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

### Theme/Nature of Project

Children, Youth Development and Families

### Charity Registration Number (if applicable)

1157879

### Project Name (if same as Organisation Name, please leave this blank)

Operation Paramount

### Name of Lead Contact

Felix Tasker

### Email

[felix@childrenheardandseen.co.uk](mailto:felix@childrenheardandseen.co.uk)

### Phone / Mobile

07557 339258

### Website

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/>

### Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

Twitter: @ChildrenHandS

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/children-heard-and-seen>

## Part B - Project Proposal

### Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

Our mission is to establish and roll out a system of identification and support for children with a parent in prison across the UK. This vulnerable group will be supported right from the point of their parent's sentencing, to break the cycle of offending and improve individual outcomes.

### Situation (250 words)

Parental imprisonment has been recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) with affected children at a much greater risk of experiencing mental health problems, often manifesting as depression, anxiety, insomnia, and/or eating disorders. Negative school experiences such as bullying, persistent truancy, and a failure to achieve in educational settings are also common with those impacted by parental imprisonment, alongside an increased likelihood of committing criminal offences.

Whilst families of victims of crime rightly receive support in the aftermath of an offence, the offender's children, who are also completely innocent, are left isolated and without support, facing additional stigma and shame from their community. Children have experienced vigilante attacks that have seen them have to flee their homes, with some even having to change their names.

Crest Advisory estimate there are 312,000 children impacted by parental imprisonment each year, however this is just an estimate.

Previously there has been no statutory system to identify the children impacted by parental imprisonment. This means that we do not know who or where they are, and in some cases children are left living completely alone after their primary carer is sent to prison.

Receiving appropriate support during the initial period of separation is crucial, giving the children left behind the tools they need to cope with the experience of parental imprisonment. 88% of families we work with said

they would have found it easier explaining the imprisonment to the children had they been receiving our support at the time.

### **Complication (250 words)**

Research shows that 65% of boys with a parent in prison go on to offend. However, this is not a predetermined outcome. Through offering trauma-informed support, tailored to the needs and circumstances of each child, we can break this cycle of offending and achieve better outcomes for families. This not only benefits the children and their families we support, but also reduces crime and creates a positive ripple effect that can be felt by society as a whole. Of the 863 children we have supported since inception, only four have gone on to commit an offence, a reduction to just 0.5%.

Although parental imprisonment is regarded as an ACE, it does not fall under the remit of any statutory body, such as the Department of Education or the Department of Justice. These vulnerable children are currently falling through the cracks of existing support services.

Although 69% of the children we support do not visit their parent in prison at all, any other support available to children impacted by parental imprisonment is only based in the prison itself. This means that this vulnerable group are left isolated and alone, without access to any other support.

Children Heard and Seen (CHAS) are the only charity in England supporting children with a parent in prison in their own communities.

### **Solution (250 words)**

In November 2021, we set up an innovative project in partnership with the Thames Valley Police to use data from the Prisons Service database to identify children of a parent sent to prison. This project is unique in that for the first time, the Police will have access to Ministry of Justice data that allows them to identify dependents of individuals who are sent to prison, and then allow CHAS to offer our specialised package of support.

No two experiences of parental imprisonment are the same, and our approach to supporting families reflects this. We offer a variety of differing support to families, including:

CRIB sheets - display age-appropriate guidance to families on how and when to tell the child depending on the nature and length of the offence.

Specialist 1:1 Interventions - Provide children and young people with a safe space to explore their feelings about the parent in prison utilising our workbook that was designed with children and young people.

Group Work - Provides the opportunity for children and young people to meet others who also have a parent in prison.

From November 2021 - February 2023, 450 children impacted by parental imprisonment across the Thames Valley region have been identified.

We now have the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of early interventions, so that it is replicated in and funded by VRUs across the United Kingdom. This would represent early steps towards a much-needed national framework of identification and support for children with a parent in prison.

### **Part C - Wider Support**

#### **How would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)**

This support would inspire key policy-makers to hear our message that by intervening early with appropriate interventions, we can create long-term, sustainable change for children impacted by parental imprisonment. This would help achieve our aim of all children with a parent in prison being able to access support and fulfil their potential. As a grass-roots charity, this funding would enable us to build a solid evidence base of good practice of support for children with a parent in prison, that could be replicated across the country.

We would campaign for a statutory mechanism to identify and support children with a parent in prison. We would like this to be through the school's admissions process, enabling children to be eligible for Pupil Premium (similar to children under the Child in Need plan). This would give schools the autonomy to tailor the appropriate support for their pupils with a parent in prison. This could be through a whole-school approach, such as training and guidance for teaching staff, or more individual, targeted counselling and specialist 1:1 support.

### **Part D - Financial Justification**

#### **In general terms, please explain how the winning funds would be used to carry out your project. (50 words max)**

This funding will be spent on the salary of a trained practitioner to support children and their families with a parent in prison living in the Thames Valley area. This would include 1:1 and group sessions for children to process their complex emotions associated with having a parent in prison.

## Part E - Supporting Information

**Governing Documents:** Where relevant, please upload any recent charity accounts and governing documents as attachments.

- [CHAS-accounts-2022.pdf](#)

**Team:** We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)

Sarah Burrows founded Children Heard and Seen in 2014. She is a registered social worker who has worked with children and families for over thirty years within a variety of settings. Through this work, she recognised that an overwhelming majority of young people entering the criminal justice system had a parent in prison already, and that that no services were in place to offer dedicated support these vulnerable young people.

### YouTube Video

<https://vimeo.com/801555521>

**Additional References:** You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with any relevant supporting material or visuals, as further reference

<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2021-11-05/pilot-scheme-changing-lives-of-children-with-parents-in-prison>

<https://www.tvru.co.uk/project/paramount/>

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CHAS-Impact-Report-2022-3.pdf>