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## ***Breaking Barriers*** **A free service to support children of offenders**

***Do you have a child in your school  
who would benefit from our support?***

My name is Claire Dixon. I am a Senior Practitioner with Ormiston Families.

We have been funded to provide free, dedicated 1:1 support to children and young people (5-16 years) who are affected by having a close family member in prison.

We would like to work with you to identify children and young people who would benefit from the support which our *Breaking Barriers* service can offer. The children and young people may typically be experiencing:

- **Anxiety:** limited understanding or false perceptions of prison and prison life, difficulty sleeping, concentrating or socialising.
- **Changes in behaviour:** poor behaviour in school or home, low school attendance, risk of exclusion, bullying.
- **Social exclusion:** loss of friends and family; change of school and community.

By providing a safe space to talk, play and express themselves, we enable them to explore their feelings. We help them to break down some of the barriers that may prevent them from engaging with school or family, and from maintaining positive ties (as appropriate) with their imprisoned family member.

**If you know of a child or young person who you think may benefit from *Breaking Barriers*, please do get in touch:**

[claire.dixon@ormistonfamilies.org.uk](mailto:claire.dixon@ormistonfamilies.org.uk) Tel: 07787 404 385

We can initially talk through the referral to make sure that *Breaking Barriers* is the right service for the child, before I contact the parent and arrange to meet with the child (usually in school) for a series of weekly 45-minute sessions over 6 - 8 weeks.

I have included a leaflet with a little more information about *Breaking Barriers*, as well as about Ormiston Families itself.

I would be very happy to hear from you - either about a particular child, or just to let you know more about the service.

*Claire*

Claire Dixon - Senior Practitioner, *Breaking Barriers* Norfolk

# THE UNITE PROGRAMME

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Offenders' families matter

"It has given my son a way to talk about his worries and anxieties regarding his father since he's not been around. He's been able to have questions answered in a way that is not scary and is easy for him to understand. He is more settled at school and at home."

## Parent, Breaking Barriers

If you require further information please contact:

Ormiston Families  
Unit 17, The Drift  
Nacton Road  
Ipswich  
IP3 9QR

[www.ormistonfamilies.org.uk](http://www.ormistonfamilies.org.uk)

Ormiston Families has over 35 services across the East of England, delivering a range of projects to children and families who are most in need.

Registered Charity Number: 1015716 England Company Number: 2769307



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The East of England's leading family charity

# ORMISTON FAMILIES

Offenders' families matter

UNITES



## Breaking Barriers

Supporting children and young people affected by family imprisonment

The East of England's leading family charity | [www.ormistonfamilies.org.uk](http://www.ormistonfamilies.org.uk)

**Breaking Barriers is a free service which provides one-to-one support for children and young people affected by the imprisonment of a close family member.**

For many children and young people, having a family member sent to prison is an extremely traumatic experience.

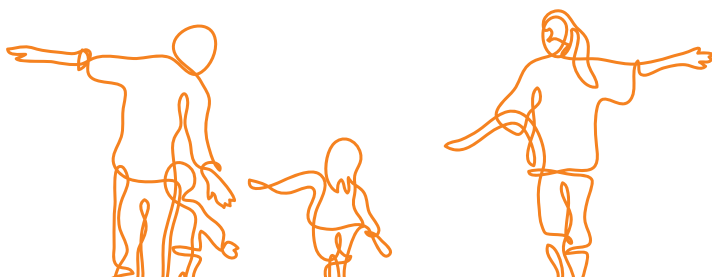
The impact is far reaching and may include:

- Feelings of separation, loss or anger
- A change in the dynamic in the family home
- Loss of friends or familiar surroundings
- Fear and anxiety
- Self-esteem issues for the child or family as a whole
- Isolation
- Stigma and shame

All of these can lead to deterioration in a child's mental and physical health.

## How does Breaking Barriers help?

Through tailored one-to-one support, drawing on a range of techniques and resources, Breaking Barriers offers children and young people dedicated time and space to explore and express their feelings, in order to reduce anxiety, maintain emotional wellbeing and, importantly, help to keep the child engaged with school and prevent further problems.



## A child or young person might be thinking...

- What if my friends find out?
- I have to be brave but it's really hard
- I'm too scared to sleep
- I find it difficult to concentrate at school
- I don't know who I can trust



## How can a child or young person access Breaking Barriers' support?

We take referrals from schools and other professionals who support children and young people, as well as from families themselves.

Once referred, our practitioner will make contact with the parent or carer and child or young person for an initial assessment. If it is agreed that Breaking Barriers could benefit the child or young person, we will set up a series of six weekly sessions by arrangement with the family and school.

After six weeks, we will review progress. If appropriate, we may be able to offer further sessions or refer the child or young person to further specialist support or to our volunteer mentoring programme.

At the end of the Breaking Barriers support, we will review and assess outcomes with the child, parent or carer and the school and draw up a closing report.