

Anything more than a kiss!!

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- POPS: who we are and what we do
- Provide direct support, with a variety of issues, to over 150,000 families per year.
- Very few, if any raise issues regarding difficulties maintaining sexual relationships, however nearly ALL talk about the difficulties in supporting a partner from an emotional, intimacy perspective.

- Many families/partners raise the total inadequacy of the current visitation process in trying to maintain family and relationship ties.
- Crowded, noisy visits halls: void of any comfort; separated by low level tables: watched constantly by staff; in the gaze of other visitors: NOT conducive to engaging in any meaningful conversation about anything other than the weather.

- POPS asked the families we work with to comment on conjugal visits
 - Would they use them
 - Do they see them as a valid part of rehabilitation and maintaining family ties.
- **Survey monkey:** 40 responses
- **Small focus group:** 6 family members

- **88%** respondents were female
- **65%** currently visiting partner in prison
- **95%** visiting male prisoner

Kiss,
cuddles, sex

An expression of
love between
two adults

Being able to
say private and
personal things
to each other

Anything
more than a
kiss

Sharing special
moments one to
one, as you would
at home.

A connection
between two
people

Time alone, to
talk and to
touch

Not just a sexual act: I would just love to lay down in his arms in private

Cuddles and deep meaningful talks that may lead to other things if the mood is right

Very close personal relationship

Intimacy is what the heart feels and at the centre of that heart is communication

Sharing of emotional feelings from hand holding to full sexual activity

Communication and being able to communicate as you would at home

- **88%** of respondent said they miss intimate times with their partner...

...but they wouldn't want their intimate moments being watched by everybody else who is either on a visit or staff.

How can current visiting arrangements help?

Privacy: a place to relax, hold hands, cuddle act out the normal intimate behaviours that are different for different people

They cant!!

Just by being able to sit next to him rather than across the table!!

A visits area that you can be more "normal" ie: make a brew, sit on a couch like you do at home.

More physical contact on visits, they take all this security stuff too far. Why cant I sit next to him, kiss him and just be close to him on a visit?

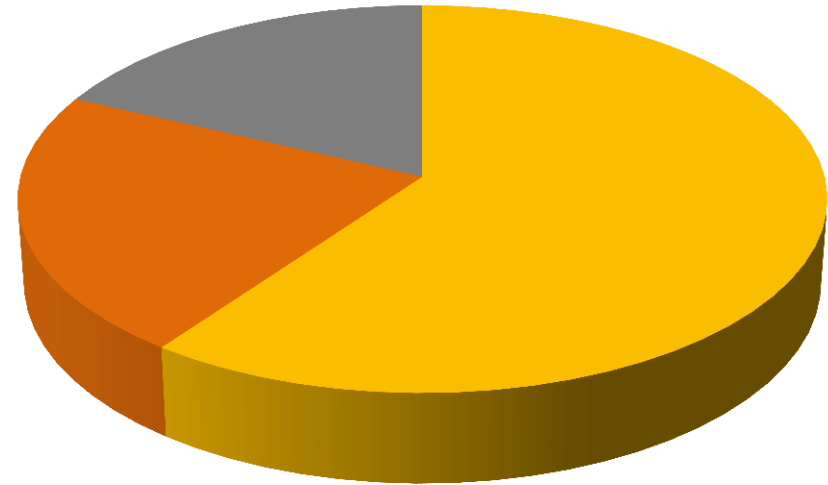


Would you use a “conjugal visit”?

- **YES** but not necessarily for sex
- **YES** for cuddles and light intimacy
- **NO** I wouldn't use the facility, I wouldn't trust the staff
- **YES** I am desperately to be held and to feel like a woman again
- **YES** with the right environment and an overnight stay..I wouldn't consider it for a two hour visit

- **YES** just to talk about the issues we may have, to feel close to him again, not about sex but if that happens then it happens
- **YES** if what happens in private remains just that...private
- Very hard to answer, depends on the mood of both participants, and how private it was.

Should conjugal visits be available for all the prison population?

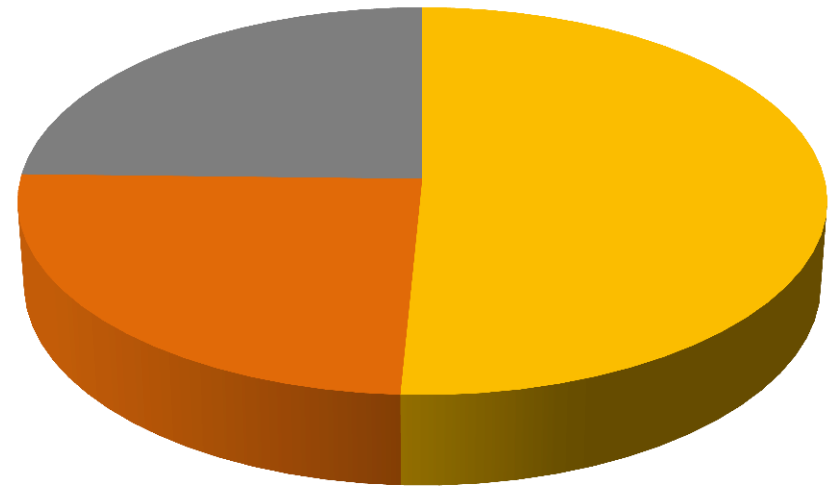


■ No ■ Yes ■ Unsure

- Non sexual crimes
- Enhanced prisoners
- Lifers/long sentences
- 8yrs and over
- Any consenting adult
- No sex offenders
- Have to prove the relationship is a longstanding one
- It would be difficult to administer for everybody so certain criteria needs to be put in place:
- Longer term prisoners and their intimate relationships spring to mind as a good point to start (maybe pilot)
- Assessment by need, good behaviour, part of a relationship course?

How long should a conjugal visit last

- I would have ticked for a longer time but I am not sure how this would work in the prison
- Short visit too “clinical” – 24 hours including a “bedtime”



■ 3-4 hours ■ 12 hours ■ 24 hours

What safeguards should be in place

- Probation/security checks (like lifer days now)
- Stable relationship where you can prove you have been visiting or living with them before sentence
- Full family check, searching before and after visit, family support available before and after the visit , prisoners to earn the privilege:
 - An alarm/panic button
 - **None, he is my husband for goodness sake**
 - Contraception
 - Relationship counsellors on hand if needed
 - Maybe couples attend a workshop at the end of the process

- It is clear, conjugal visits not seen as just an opportunity to engage in sexual activity
- Most partners wanted some private space to express physical and emotional connection.
- COPING research findings
- How to offer prisoners and their families a chance to support their relationship?
- **Wright 1997** – conjugal visits can be an asset to the CJS if used wisely and responsibly

- **Pilot conjugal visits** with longer term prisoners and their partners.
- **Consider ‘extended family visits’.** Not just a space for partners but also for other extended family.
- **Consider piloting a family reunion programme.** Promote family ties (e.g. Safeground’s family man course). Successful completion could lead to a 12/24 hour private family visit.

- If prisoner passes risk assessment for conjugal visits **why not utilise ROTL?** Alleviates problem of administering conjugal visits (Cat D)
- **Pilot a private/enhanced visit within the prison as part of the resettlement** changes within the system. (Cat C Resettlement Prisons). Reduce numbers who abscond due to earlier work with family.

- If we are serious about promoting family ties as a factor for desistance from further offending then it is only right that we offer more to families of offenders than we currently do at the moment.
- Piloting a private family visit scheme that doesn't focus on sexual activity but on emotional communication, potentially attached to a supportive relationship programme is something that POPS families could see to be a valid and possible process that they could engage with.