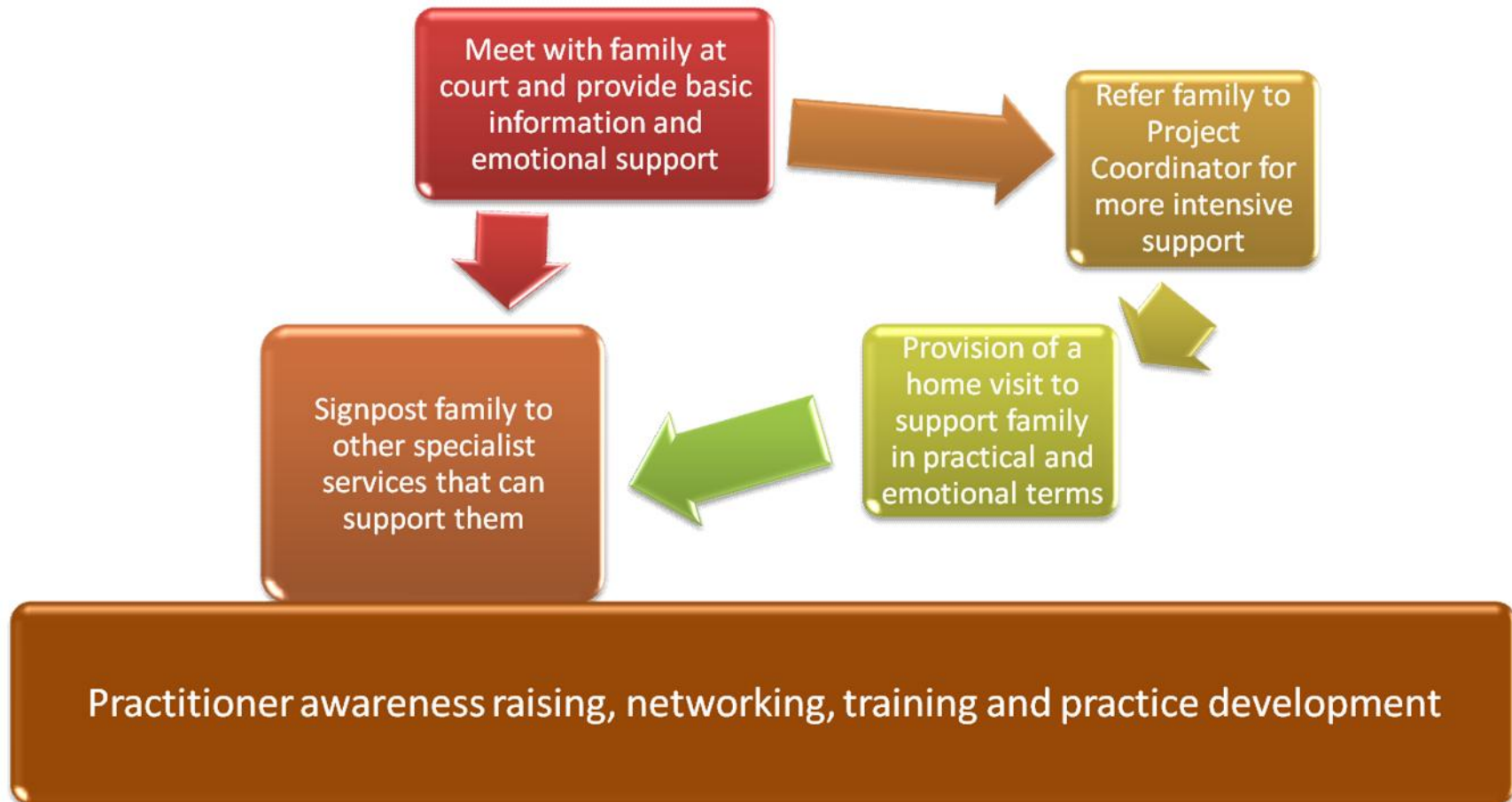


Family Approaches to the Criminal Justice System

Thames Valley Partnership

20th March 2014

Family support at court



Why is this work necessary?

- About **200,000** children per year (3x the number in care).
- Only **5%** of children with a mother in prison remain at home.
- Harm of **traumatic separation** and **damage to attachment**.
- **Economic difficulties, strained care-giving** and **stigma**.
- 3 x more likely to have **mental health** or **behaviour problems**.
- Nearly 2/3 of boys **go on to commit crime** themselves (3x).
- **Abuse** and/or **significant loss** is a factor for most young violent offenders in custody (35% experience both).

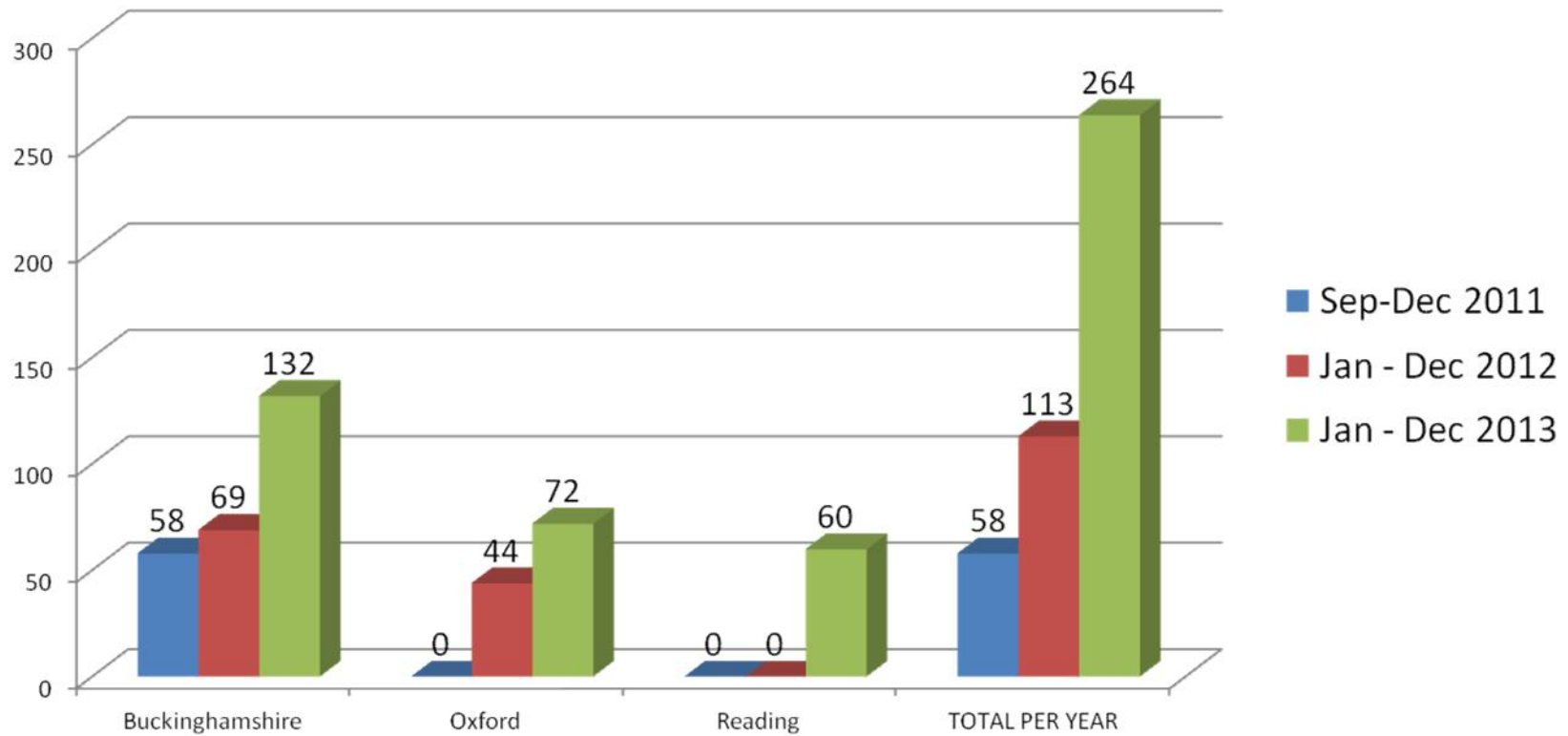
Why is this work necessary?

Prisoners:

- Almost **25%** have been in care as a child.
- Over **25%** have experienced childhood abuse and violence in the home.
- **37%** of prisoners have family with convictions: **84%** had been in prison.

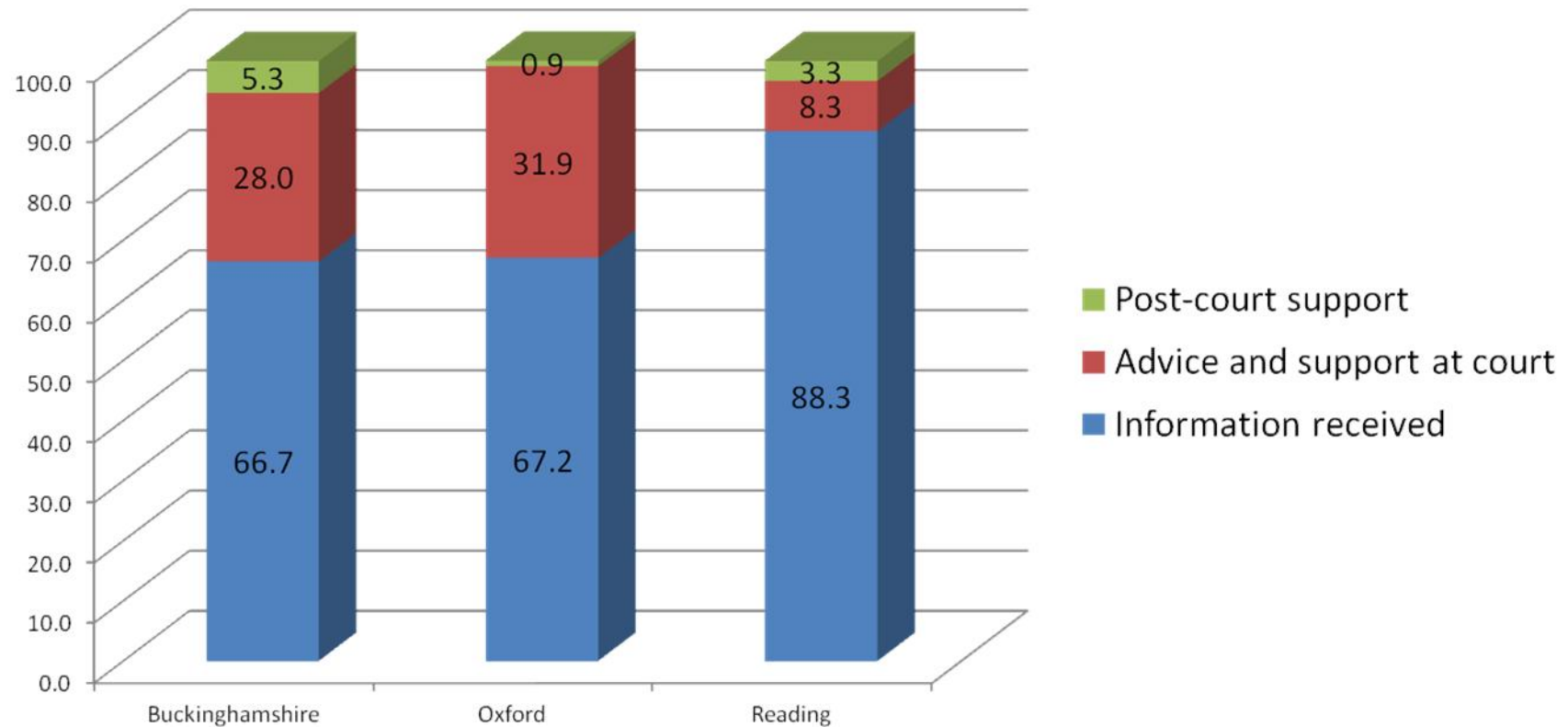
What has the project achieved?

Numbers of families supported at each court site over time



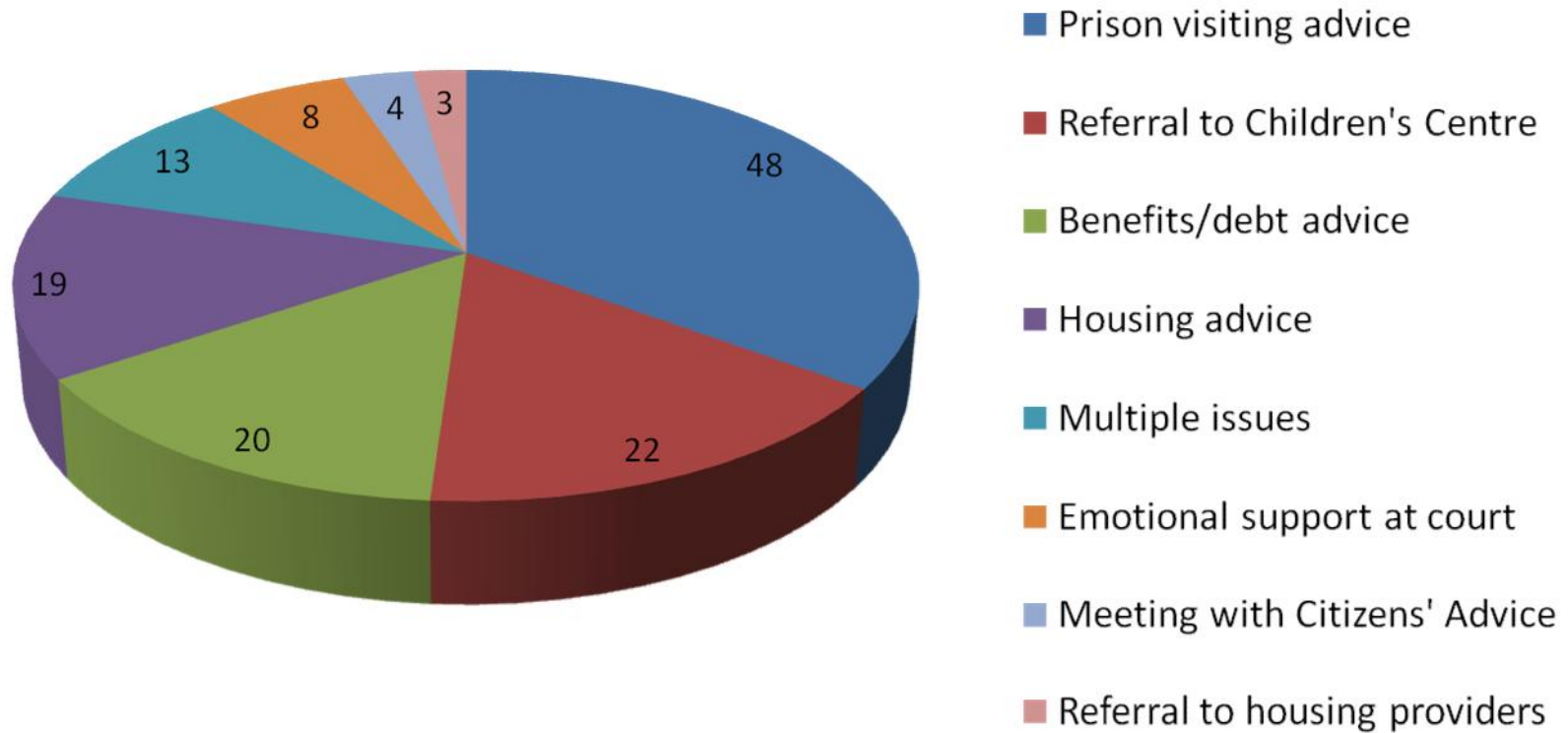
What has the project achieved?

Intensity of support provided



What has the project achieved?

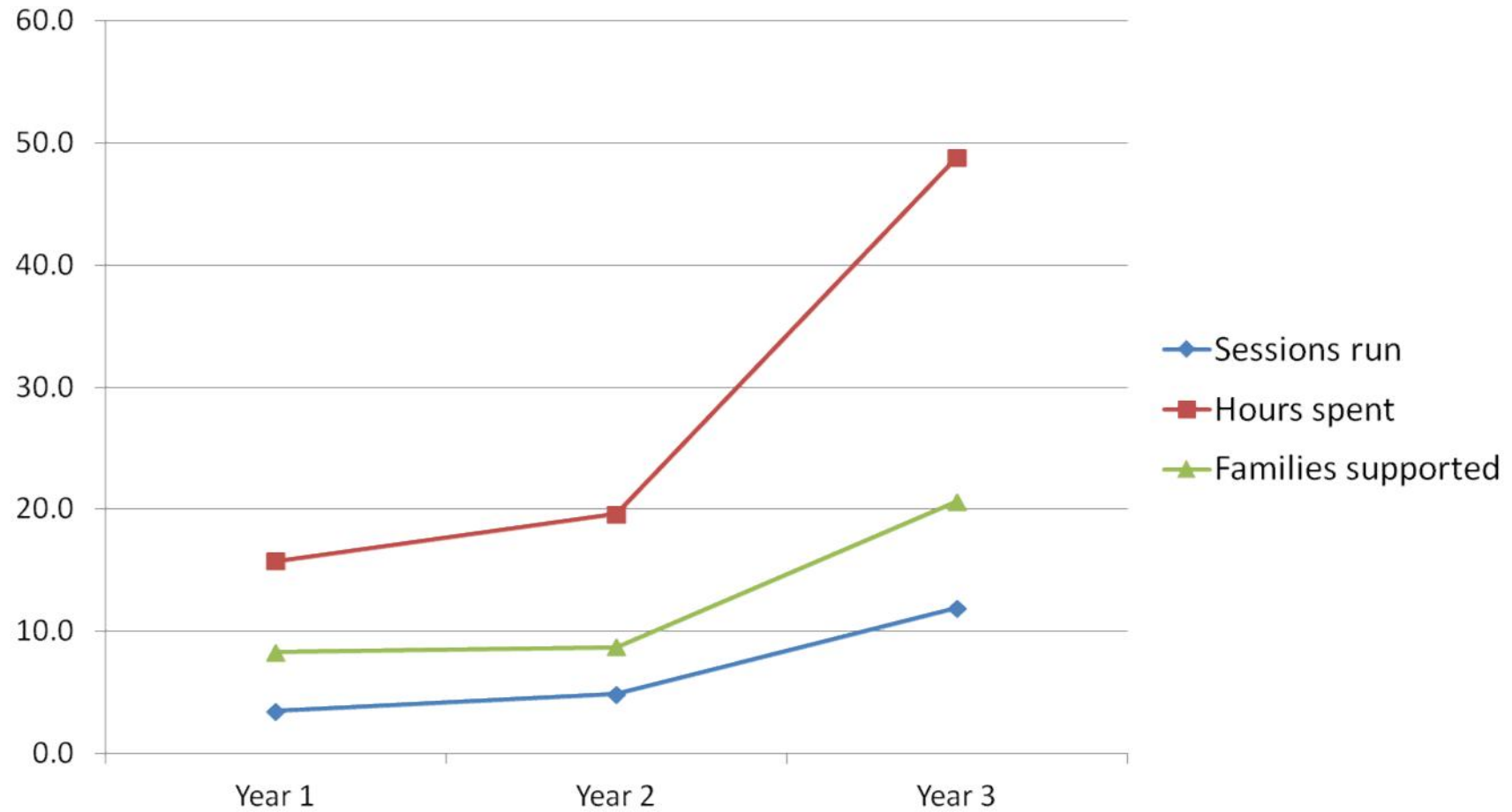
Type of support provided at court



Main referral routes



Work achieved per volunteer



Family Approaches Network development

Buckinghamshire

Family Information Service

Oxford

North Oxfordshire Family Matters

Reading

Fathers Inside parenting programme

Supporting Offenders' Families strategy

Inset training for secondary schools

Milton Keynes

Research in Woodhill prison

Pilot information service at Woodhill's
visitor centre



**What was it like delivering
the court-desk service?**

Case study

What are the barriers?

- **Recruitment and loss of volunteers:** Volunteer turnover can be unpredictable and volunteers leaving at short notice poses challenges to the resourcing of the project.
- **Court management:** It is difficult to coordinate the service around court listings, venues and logistics to ensure that the court desk is covered at key times.
- **External agency resources:** Cuts to public sector budgets and the scale / rapidity of criminal justice within the sector have made partnership working very challenging.
- **Development and delivery of services to families:** There is scope to develop more in-depth programmes for families but it requires resourcing.

What conclusions have we reached?

- There is an urgent need to break the intergenerational cycle of offending and reduce re-offending. agenda.
- The point of sentencing to custody provides a crucial early intervention point to reduce social exclusion among prisoners' families.
- The volunteer service provided excellent value for money and added considerable value to provision.
- The Family Approach programme should be mainstreamed, integrated and embedded in practice.
- It provides a model for potential national replication.

What is the way forward?

- Further embed ownership within the criminal justice system.
- A more strategic role for the probation service in identifying families.
- Systematic engagement of practitioners on a geographic and sector basis.
- Ongoing training to enable frontline staff to broach sensitive issues.
- Follow-on monitoring of families to ensure that support is accessed;
- Volunteers access further training and take on more responsibility.
- In-depth research to monitor a cohort of families to explore their support needs and the impact of early intervention.

The Family Approaches project is a trailblazing piece of work that deserves wider recognition. It merits careful examination as part of any strategy to address both re-offending and child welfare.

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