

Participant Information Sheet

The Experiences of Prisoner's Families in the Case of Extreme Geographic Distance in the US

Molly Biddle | MPhil Candidate

mkb43@cam.ac.uk | Institute of Criminology, Sidgwick Ave, Cambridge CB3 9DA

Before you decide to take part in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part.

What is this study about?

Research on prisoners' families has explored questions related to contact and visitation, and many studies have shown that family contact generally leads to positive outcomes for prisoners and families alike. Research has also demonstrated that distance makes family visits emotionally and practically difficult, leading to less frequent visitation and social and financial strain. But, no research has yet focused specifically upon the experiences of people whose incarcerated family members are sent hundreds or thousands of miles away.

This study seeks to understand (1) how such immense geographic distance impacts prisoner-family relationships; and (2) what can be learned about how families cope with and adapt to this distance.

This interview will take place over Zoom or another video conferencing platform at a time that is convenient for you.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate in this research because you are an adult family member of a prisoner who is held at one of three private prisons that contract with distant US states and territories. You have specifically been identified for this study because you are separated from your incarcerated family member by hundreds of miles or more. Your experience gives valuable insight into the experiences and difficulties that families who are separated from their incarcerated family members face.

Do I have to take part in this study?

No. Taking part in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to take part or withdraw from this study later on, with no adverse consequences or penalties now or in the future.

You can withdraw any of the information you have shared anytime before Tuesday 1 August 2023.

What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you decide to take part in this study, you can keep this information sheet and you will be asked to sign the consent form.

We will determine the date and time for an hour-long interview. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your experiences being separated from your incarcerated loved one. I will ask questions regarding your ability to stay in contact, how your contact has changed overtime, the cost of phone calls and travel, your experience of prison policies regarding calls and visits, and

the emotional experience of navigating these obstacles. I will also give you a chance to explore your thoughts on what might make this separation easier to navigate or any other issues you would like to bring to my attention. You may choose to answer or skip any of the questions asked during the interview, and there will be time for breaks as needed.

Are there possible disadvantages and/or risks in taking part?

There is no disadvantage to you or risk other than that you may need to give up an hour of your time if you do decide to take part.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in this research. However, your participation can offer significant insights that can be used to assess the challenges and needs associated with the experience of distant separation from incarcerated family members.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Yes. All information that you share during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be identified only by a code, and any identifying information about you and your family member in prison will be removed and anonymized. This will be kept on an encrypted external drive and only I know the password. If you would like more information on this, attached below is a link detailing how the University of Cambridge uses personal data:

<https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data>.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results will be used as the basis of my MPhil dissertation. They may also be presented at conferences and written up in journals. If any individual data are presented, the data will be anonymous, without any means of identifying the individuals involved. In other words, there will be no means of identifying the participation of you and your family in the project. Once I have completed my dissertation, I can send a summary of it if you would like to read one.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

No organization or company is sponsoring or funding the research.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research is looked at by an independent ethics committee at the University of Cambridge. This project has been reviewed by the University of Cambridge Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information

If you would like further information or you have any concerns, please feel free to contact the researcher at mkb43@cam.ac.uk.

If you have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Cambridge Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSSREC): HSSREC@admin.cam.ac.uk who will do their best to answer your query. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Research Integrity Office of the University of Cambridge: researchintegrity@admin.cam.ac.uk