

## Expanded Explanation for sole or primary carer for dependant relatives

**Effective from:** 01 October 2019

### Care should be taken to avoid double counting factors including those already taken into account in assessing culpability or harm

This factor is particularly relevant where an offender is on the cusp of custody or where the suitability of a community order is being considered. See also the [Imposition of community and custodial sentences guideline](#).

For offenders on the cusp of custody, imprisonment should not be imposed where there would be an impact on dependants which would make a custodial sentence disproportionate to achieving the aims of sentencing.

Where custody is unavoidable consideration of the impact on dependants may be relevant to the length of the sentence imposed and whether the sentence can be suspended.

For more serious offences where a substantial period of custody is appropriate, this factor will carry less weight.

When imposing a community sentence on an offender with primary caring responsibilities the effect on dependants must be considered in determining suitable requirements.

In addition when sentencing an offender who is pregnant relevant considerations may include:

- any effect of the sentence on the health of the offender and
- any effect of the sentence on the unborn child

The court should ensure that it has all relevant information about dependent children before deciding on sentence.

When an immediate custodial sentence is necessary, the court must consider whether proper arrangements have been made for the care of any dependent children and if necessary consider adjourning sentence for this to be done.

When considering a community or custodial sentence for an offender who has, or may have, caring responsibilities the court should ask the Probation Service to address these issues in a PSR.

Useful information can be found in the [Equal Treatment Bench Book](#) (see in particular Chapter 6 paragraphs 131 to 137)