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| **Local Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028** | **Improving Outcomes for Families Impacted by a Loved Ones’ Imprisonment** |

**Contents**

[Welcome – A Note from the Chair 1](#_Toc148094257)

[Our Strategic Context: 3](#_Toc148094258)

[About the Croft 4](#_Toc148094259)

[Our Governance Arrangements 5](#_Toc148094260)

[Our Vision, Values and Focus 5](#_Toc148094261)

[How we will achieve this 8](#_Toc148094262)

[Appendix 1 - Participation Statement 9](#_Toc148094263)

[Appendix 2 Needs Assessment 10](#_Toc148094264)

Content

Welcome – A Note from the Chair 2

Our Strategic Context 3

About the Croft 4

Our Governance Arrangements 5

Our Vision, Values and Focus 5

How we will Achieve This 8

Appendix 1 – Participation Statement 9

Appendix 2 – Needs Assessment 10

1. Welcome – A Note from the Chair

I am pleased to present our local collaborative Strategy 2024 to 2028, on behalf of the people we support, the Croft’s board of trustees, our staff, direct / indirect partners, and key stakeholders.

[The Croft](https://www.barlinnievisitorscentre.org/) is a non-statutory, not for profit organisation - independent of the prison.

Our local Strategy, first and foremost, recognises that partnership and the voice of lived and living experience of those impacted by another’s imprisonment must be at the heart of what we do if we are to be successful in delivering this ambitious plan.

This local strategy will be supplemented with a series of collaborative improvement / delivery plans based around our key focus areas - to drive delivery of improved outcomes of families/loved ones impacted by the imprisonment of someone they care about at [HMP Barlinnie](https://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Prisons/Barlinnie/HMP-Barlinnie.aspx). Together this Strategy and subsequent delivery plans represent our commitment to continuous improvement and our focus on supporting the best outcomes for the families and loved ones we provide our service for.

In the development of our local strategy, we have consulted with key partners and stakeholders (**see Participation Statement – Appendix 1**) to gain insight into what is important and have reflected this in the creation of a vision for the Croft and underpinning values / aims which reflect the core direction and focus of future work.

We have listened to the people who experience the impact of a loved one’s imprisonment to ensure that our plan is informed by that direct experience. We will continue to engage with listen and act on those voices, to inform and deliver the ongoing implementation of our local strategy.

On behalf of the Croft, I commit this, our local strategy, and subsequent collaborative improvement plans to address the immediate and longer-term impact of a loved one’s imprisonment on those left behind.

Margaret Smith

**Chair,**

**The Croft,**

**Welcoming, Connecting & Supporting,**

**Visitors’ Centre, HMP Barlinnie**

## Our Strategic Context:

The Croft is one of several [Prison Visitors’ Centres](https://www.mygov.scot/prisoner-family-support) across Scotland that receives core funding from the [Scottish Government](https://www.gov.scot/) within the context of the [National Performance Framework for Prison Visitors’ Centres in Scotland](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/06/Nat_Perf_Frame_VCs.pdf) and the framework for the [Support of Families Affected by the Criminal Justice System](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/03/Families-Framework-FINAL-July-2015-v3.pdf). The core funding and purpose is specifically to support those impacted (left behind) when a person goes to prison – the funding does not support work with the prisoner themselves.

Three **guiding principles** underpin every outcome and recommendation listed in the Framework which informs all practice relating to families affected by the criminal justice system:

1. Family members are not guilty.
2. Every family is unique and will respond in different ways to a family member’s involvement in the criminal justice system.
3. Multiagency partnership working is key to successful outcomes.

The development of our Strategy has been influenced by wider local and national context including (but not limited to):

* [Scottish Prison Service Family & Parenting Strategy 2024 - 2029](https://www.sps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/Family%20and%20Parenting%20Strategy%202024%202029.pdf)
* [Families Outside Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2023/04/Families-Outside-Strategic-Plan-2023-2026.pdf)
* [Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/)
* [Glasgow City Council Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/strategicplan)
* [Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2023-2028](https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=60226&p=0)
* [Families Affected by Drug & Alcohol Use in Scotland Framework](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2021/12/improving-holistic-family-support-towards-whole-family-approach-family-inclusive-practice-drug-alcohol-services/documents/families-affected-drug-alcohol-use-scotland-framework-holistic-whole-family-approaches-family-inclusive-practice/families-affected-drug-alcohol-use-scotland-framework-holistic-whole-family-approaches-family-inclusive-practice/govscot%3Adocument/families-affected-drug-alcohol-use-scotland-framework-holistic-whole-family-approaches-family-inclusive-practice.pdf)
* [Glasgow City Alcohol & Drug Partnership Refresh 2023 - 2026](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=50921&p=0)

By mitigating as far as possible the negative short- and longer-term impacts - emotional, financial, and practical - on the families and loved ones impacted and leveraging wider community connections that can sustain those improvements, we can deliver on our own **VISION** for a future where:

***The imprisonment of a family member does not limit the current lives or life chances of those on the outside.***

This will support the wider vision for the City of Glasgow:

[*“Supporting a fair and sustainable city where everyone gets to contribute, and all can benefit from a flourishing Glasgow”*](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/strategicplan)

**Equalities Protected Characteristics**

[The Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) applies to everyone, both in the public and private sector. By equalities protected characteristics, we mean: Age, Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race, Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation. More information on each of these characteristics can be found [here](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics).

The people we support will experience the system differently, depending on their own identity, and so it is important that we reflect different needs when planning and co-ordinating services. We aim to ensure existing services, as well as any new developments do not discriminate based on individuals’ characteristics.

**Financial Inequality and Poverty**

In addition to the characteristics protected via the [Equality Act,](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) the majority of the families who come into contact with the Croft will also have experienced other forms of inequality, such as income inequality and poverty. Glasgow, where a significant percentage of the families the Croft supports reside, is the [most deprived city and local authority area in Scotland](https://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/poverty/overview), this includes an estimate of 29% of children in the city living in poverty. We know that most families who come into contact with the Croft will come from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

The Croft recognises that the impact on families is even more acute when the family member is imprisoned, and this is reflected in findings of research that has been carried out in this area. [Families Outside](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/) have published [Paying the Price: The Cost to Families of Imprisonment and Release](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/11/Paying-the-Price-October-22022.pdf), and this research illustrates the role of prison in creating, sustaining and deepening poverty, and its disproportionate effect on women and people from the most deprived areas.

Our Board felt that the impact of inequality and poverty be acknowledged, and that as a priority, we should strive to mitigate, in collaboration with our partners, both the immediate, compound and intergenerational impacts of this for the families we support.

## About the Croft

[The Croft](https://www.barlinnievisitorscentre.org/) is a non-statutory, not for profit organisation - independent of the prison we work alongside ([HMP Barlinnie](https://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Prisons/Barlinnie/HMP-Barlinnie.aspx)).

HMP Barlinnie is a national prison, the Croft supports people impacted from across Scotland - in the main the families we support come from Glasgow and the surrounding areas. We have been supporting people since 2012 and exist to achieve positive outcomes for prisoners’ families and friends (those impacted by the imprisonment of someone they care about) by fulfilling **our three core functions**:

1. **Improving the visits experience** for people visiting their family member or loved ones in prison.
2. Allowing families to **access independent and impartial advice, information, and support**, which meets their needs.
3. **Voicing the needs of families affected** by imprisonment to the prison we work alongside - HMP Barlinnie.

The service we provide is accessible to all family members and visitors to the prison.

Many of the people that the Croft supports have never been in a prison environment before and are often in shock about their situation. People can be apprehensive about accessing support both due to stigma around having someone in prison and potentially having had previous poor experiences with agencies. The Croft staff work to build relationships with visitors to allow them to feel comfortable accessing support.  You can watch our first [PODCAST](https://vimeo.com/861245040?share=copy) where our staff talk about some of those challenges.

## Our Governance Arrangements

The Croft is led by a Board of Trustees with a mixture of professional skills and lived / living experience and guided by our Constitution as our overarching Governance document which can be found on our [website](https://edrms/otcsdav/nodes/188367921/thecroftfamilysupport.org) thecroftfamilysupport.org.

We report on our progress in relation to our core funded functions in an Annual Performance Report to the Scottish Government’s Justice Division via the National Prison Visitor Centre Co-ordinator.

We secure added funding through Charitable Trusts and other funding bodies to pursue additional aims that complement and enhance the 3 core functions (noted at the top of this Page). Our progress to meet our wider aims – set out in this strategy - is monitored and reported direct to the funders and through our management structure to the Croft’s Board of Trustees. This funding allows us to grow and deliver our ambitions beyond the core funded functions, including outreach work, community connectivity etc. recognising the need for sustainability.

The everyday work of the Croft staff, and Board to deliver on our Vision, Values and Focus is guided by our Constitution and a comprehensive set of Policies, reviewed annually, to ensure continued good governance and compliance.

## Our Vision, Values and Focus

We want our work to be informed by best practice and underpinned by values shared by those we support and our partners. We will work with and for families visiting prisoners in HMP Barlinnie; **Welcoming**, **Connecting** and **Supporting**, ensuring everyone is visible, heard and can thrive:

**Welcoming to All**

Understanding the journey families & loved ones have been on, validating the challenges they have faced, and recognising the difficulties ahead. Offering an open door to everyone we work with and for.

**Connecting with All**

Enabling families to remain connected to their imprisoned loved one. Understanding their needs and bridging the link to the most appropriate and effective help. Working with partners to build a resilient, evolving community.

**Supporting All**

Listening and taking creative action to provide the practical and emotional support our families need and deserve. Empowering Croft families to navigate the obstacles and determine their own future.

We have collaboratively identified the vision, values and aims that will inform all of our work:



**Non-Judgemental**

We know from evidence and experience that the people we support are often stigmatised by the incarceration of a family member / loved one. As a guiding principle we believe that family members should never be made to feel guilty about the actions of another. We will treat everyone with respect and dignity and provide emotional and practical support to mitigate the impact where stigmatisation / blame has occurred.

**Evidence Based**

Evidence based practice means that decisions about services and practice are based on the best available, current, valid and relevant evidence. These decisions should involve those using or impacted by services, be informed by the knowledge and experience of practitioners, and by the most up to date and relevant research available and within the context of those available resources. Through using an evidence-based approach as an underpinning value in all our work, we aim to provide the most effective interventions available, at the time that is right for individuals. This will help us deliver improved personal outcomes. In being evidence based, our approach can evolve with known best practice.

**Collaborative**

The core value of "collaboration" is at the heart of the Croft. It embodies our commitment to working together, both within our organisation and with external partners. We believe that by collaborating, we can strengthen our ability to assist those who rely on us, ensuring that they receive the most relevant and effective support possible. We arrange events and awareness raising days with our partners, to strengthen our service for our visitors, and to strengthen our relationship with our partners.

**Inclusive**

The core value of "inclusivity" is integral to the Croft. We provide support that ensures that everyone, regardless of their background or financial circumstances, is welcomed to the prison. Our approach means that we aspire to always include every visitor, and make sure that they get our help should they want it. We do not judge, and maintain an unbiased mindset at all times.

**Social Justice**

Social justice is at the core of what we do at the Croft, and we are driven by a commitment to working towards fairness and equity, and we want to always reflect this in our service. We work together with our partners to find opportunities for our visitors, to ensure that they have plenty of access to resources that benefit them.

## How we will achieve this

We will develop a local outcome reporting tool to ensure that the ongoing and improvement action we take is having the desired impact of improved outcomes for the people we support – *our overarching aspiration*.

Our board, management, staff, immediate partners and wider stakeholder, through a Visitors Forum and Steering Group will develop, monitor and report on a series of improvement / delivery plans which take account of the each of the aims set out in section 5 above, whilst:

1. **Welcoming All**
2. **Connecting All**
3. **Supporting All**

We will continue to report to Scottish Government via the National Prison Visitor Centre Co-ordinator via the performance framework for our core funded functions.

The Board will have oversight and give direction and support to the Management and Staff, bringing their wide-ranging professional skills and expertise. We will continue to review the evidence available and act accordingly.

We will continue to monitor and participate and represent in the wider strategic context, ensuring that families impacted by another’s imprisonment have a voice and their needs are taken account of and acted upon in that context.

## Appendix 1 - Participation Statement

The Croft is committed to continue to talk with people, listen and empower them to influence and shape our plans and actions across all aims and priorities.

In preparing and informing our Strategic Plan we carried out a number of specific engagement activities to maximise participation in this process. These included:

* Consideration and strategy development at Board Meetings which include Members with Lived/Living Experience.
* Staff consideration and comments of the early drafts Values / Aims developed by the Board as a starting point for a wider stakeholder Strategy Development Event
* Stakeholder Strategy Development Event (07/12/2023) – collaboratively agreeing the Vision, Values and Aims of the Croft.
* Consideration of the final draft by the Croft Visitors’ Forum.
* Consideration of the final draft in a ‘You Said/We did’ Stakeholder Session launching the Strategy at our AGM on 12th June 2024.

## Appendix 2 Needs Assessment

Recognising that the whole family can be affected by a family member’s involvement with the Justice System. Families are recognised as a protective factor in reducing re-offending, providing support to help the family member(s) involved in criminality to move on from offending. This has been recognised in the [National Strategy for Community Justice](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2022/06/national-strategy-community-justice-2/documents/national-strategy-community-justice/national-strategy-community-justice/govscot%3Adocument/national-strategy-community-justice.pdf), which aims to include people with convictions, victims and families in the planning and delivery of Community Justice within their local areas though the local [Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan](https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=60226&p=0).

# Impact on families is even more acute when the family member is imprisoned, and this is reflected in findings of research that has been carried out in this area. Most recently, [Families Outside](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/) have published [Paying the Price: The Cost to Families of Imprisonment and Release](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/11/Paying-the-Price-October-22022.pdf), and [Paying the Price Social Media Study](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2023/03/MASTER-COPY-FI-Social-Media-Survey.pdf) which furthers that research and illustrates the role of prison in creating, sustaining and deepening poverty, and its disproportionate effect on women and people from the most deprived areas. The impact has also been shown in recent research with families as part of Community Justice Scotland’s research in relation to [the Commissioning of Voluntary Throughcare and Mentoring Services](https://communityjustice.scot/reports_and_stats/commissioning-research-findings/) that that impact extends beyond the prison sentence to the re-integration of loved ones.

Having a parent in prison is recognised as an adverse childhood experience, which can impact negatively on the life experience of those affected. While the numbers of children affected by parental imprisonment are not routinely gathered, [Parenting Scotland](https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/info-for-practitioners/facts-about-families/children-with-parents-in-prison/), in collaboration with [Families Outside](https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/), have estimated that 7% of children experience parental imprisonment during their schooling. It is estimated that every year, between 20,000 and 30,000 children in Scotland are affected by parental imprisonment. Around 63% of prisoners have children and 60% of all women in prison have children.

It is estimated that around 27,000 children in Scotland are impacted by parental imprisonment and in Glasgow it is estimated that around 12,000 children are affected by parental or sibling imprisonment. Ensuring appropriate family contact and relevant direct family services, is therefore seen as necessary, to reduce and mitigate family impact[. Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership (GHSCP)](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/) have adopted a whole family approach across the partnership, and their [Family Support Strategy 2020-23](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/Family%20Support%20Strategy.pdf) is guided by principles which include early intervention and collaboration. This includes working with community partners, providing a joined-up approach to better meet families’ needs, including those that are impacted by a loved one’s imprisonment.