

# **FAMILIES OUTSIDE**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2011 – 2014**

**The imprisonment of a relative has an impact on the social, emotional, financial and, especially for children and young people, educational development of the remaining family members.**

**Families Outside is the only national organisation which works exclusively on behalf of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland.**

**Families Outside is recognised as a national Scottish charity by the Inland Revenue and is constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee.**

## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

Imprisonment is a traumatic experience for families, and its impact is often significant and enduring. Families Outside works to mitigate the effects of imprisonment on children and families - and consequently to reduce the likelihood of reoffending - through support and information for families and for the people who work with them.

## **2. CORE VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS**

- Families Outside is committed to equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory approach.
- Family members should not be judged or discriminated against because a member of their family has been imprisoned.
- The responsibility for ensuring that families are not disadvantaged due to imprisonment of a family member lies with agencies in the social justice, inclusion and care systems as well as with agencies in the criminal justice system. We will therefore develop and promote partnerships with other organisations in order to achieve our goals. Where competition for funding is unavoidable, we will maintain open and honest dialogue with the other parties in order to maintain positive partnership relationships.
- The needs of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland should be researched, acknowledged and reflected in public policy and sustainable, accessible and empowering services made available to meet these needs.
- Where appropriate to the families' needs, relationships with their relative in prison should be actively supported and maintained and recognised as a significant contribution to reducing reoffending. Children separated from a parent due to imprisonment have the right to maintain their relationship with an imprisoned parent (as determined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Our effectiveness will be measured by outcomes for individual families (eg. through the Helpline and support workers) and in our impact on the responses of other agencies to families affected by imprisonment (eg. through influencing policy and practice, through partnership work and support of other organisations that work with families).
- We are committed to developing and maintaining high standards of financial and management practice in order to ensure efficiency and accountability to our members and funders.

### **3. BRIEF HISTORY**

The Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families was established in 1991 by professionals in criminal justice and childcare organisations who recognised that the needs of families affected by imprisonment were overlooked by all parts of the system. Initially hosted by Save the Children, the Forum initiated research into the impact of imprisonment on family members which led to SPS establishing the role of Family Contact Development Officer within prisons. SPS also provided continued support through chairmanship of the Forum, the secondment of an officer to the Forum as the base from which to develop the FCDO role, and a financial contribution to the Scottish Prisoners' Families Information Line, set up in 1998, which provides a national confidential freephone service.

During 2001/02 the Management Committee of the Forum reviewed the progress of the organisation and subsequently implemented a change of name (to Families Outside) and constitutional status, appointed a Board of Directors with an independent chairman, and recruited a full time Director who joined the organisation in January 2003. The organisation has continued to grow ever since, taking an active role in the development of policy and practice nationally and in supporting locally-based family services. In October 2008, Families Outside entered into direct service provision for the first time through the recruitment of full-time family support workers.

In 2009/10, the Board restructured its Constitution, streamlining membership of the Board to create a smaller, more strategic group. Significant amongst these changes was that Board members would now be selected for the expertise they could contribute rather than automatically including people from particular organisations.

#### 4. CURRENT CHALLENGES

A number of developments that have an impact on the work of Families Outside have taken place since publication of the previous Strategic Plan. These include the following:

**The creation of Community Justice Authorities (CJAs) under the Management of Offenders Act (2005):** This divided Scotland into eight CJAs, each with a Chief Officer. CJAs coordinate work towards the reduction of offending in their area, taking into account the fact that offending is not purely a criminal justice issue. CJAs therefore create a structure to link the work of criminal justice organisations with other entities such as health, education, housing, Children & Families Social Work, and the wider voluntary sector. The future of CJAs is, however, somewhat uncertain due to their potential overlap with the work of Community Planning Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships in each Local Authority.

**The move to Single Outcome Agreements:** Scottish local authorities now have more autonomy for their own governance, as long as they work towards agreed national outcomes. This means that they have more responsibility for allocation of funding. While some central government funding remains ring-fenced (eg. Criminal Justice Social Work), non-statutory services increasingly have to apply directly to each of the 32 local councils to secure funding for their work.

**Increasing prison population:** Despite decreasing crime rates, the average daily population in and receptions to Scottish Prisons are at their highest level ever (7,835 ADP and 38,910 receptions in 2008-09, with the prison population over 8,000 people for most of 2009). Meanwhile, Scottish courts are imposing the highest number of prison sentences in ten years. Prisons throughout Scotland are under considerable pressure from overcrowding, and prisons have to prioritise core programmes over other areas. This meant, for example, that bonding visits at HMYOI Polmont were suspended following cessation of the YOI's (non-core) parenting programme once its minimum targets had been met. Based on the increased population, estimates of the number of children affected by the imprisonment of a family member increased from 13,500 in 2002 to 16,500 in 2008, based on a prison population of 8,000 people. More children are affected each year in Scotland by a parent's imprisonment than by a parent's divorce.

**Economic downturn and the 'credit crunch':** At a time when the client group for Families Outside is increasing, the global financial crisis means that funding, especially over the longer term, is increasingly uncertain. Families Outside has the benefit of working towards preventative policies over both the short and long term, which is appealing to funders in times of financial hardship. The reality, however, is that many voluntary organisations and businesses are losing their funding, and both Government and Trust funds have less and less money to distribute.

## **5. KEY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS 2010 - 2013**

Based on this context, vision, and core values, the Key Objectives for Families Outside for 2010 – 2013 are as follows:

- **Families affected by imprisonment can readily access appropriate information and support at the time they need it. This in turn will improve their experience with the criminal justice system and mitigate its impact on them.**
- **Policy makers, decision makers, and relevant service providers will be well-informed about the issues facing families affected by imprisonment. They will recognise prisoners' families within their remit and take the needs of these families into account in the decisions they make and the services they provide.**
- **Families Outside will provide a sustainable and viable service as long as the demand for its work is evident.**

In order to achieve these objectives, our targets include the following actions:

- **Raise awareness and influence policy and practice regarding families affected by imprisonment;**
- **Provide and increase direct support and information to families;**
- **Support and collaborate with other organisations to support families; and**
- **Ensure viability, effectiveness and impact of the organisation.**

These aims are essential and ongoing. Methods of and progress towards achieving these aims are detailed in the Families Outside Business Plan and will be updated annually.