



Families Outside Report

Scottish Government – Winter Hardship Fund 2021

support for families affected by imprisonment in Scotland

1. Preface

On 18 December 2020, Families Outside received a grant from the Scottish Government entitled the Winter Hardship Fund which was to be spent on families who do not receive support from other agencies and are disproportionately disadvantaged by the imprisonment of a family member.

Following agreement between the two parties, the spending of the grant started on 20 January and concluded on 31 March 2021.

✚ Of the £50,000.00 grant, £49,491.79 was spent on 82 families, leaving a small surplus of £508.21.

2. How the grant was spent in each local authority

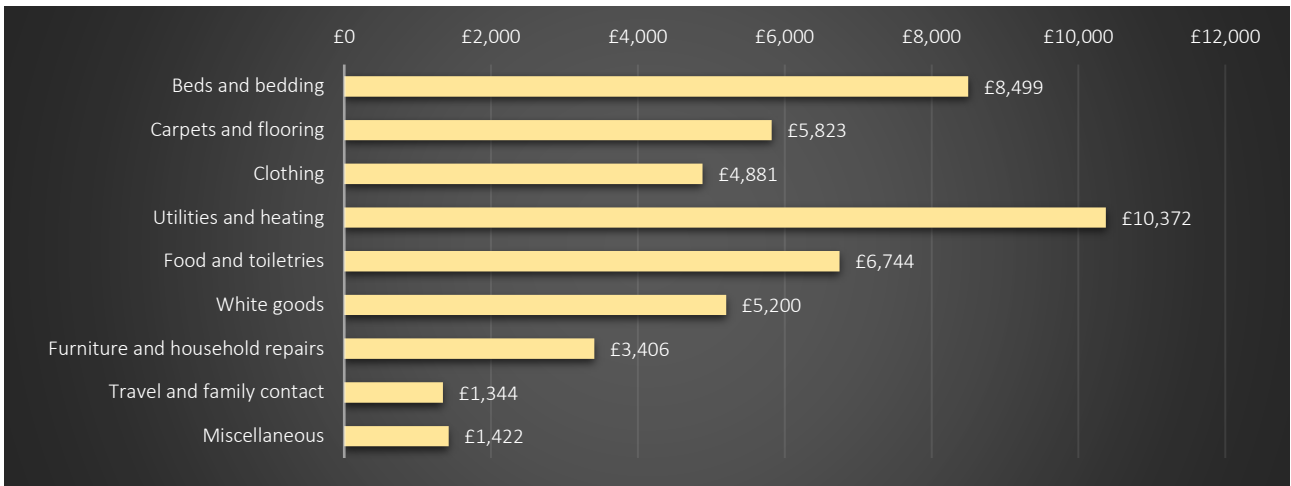
The funds were spent on a variety of different needs for families affected by imprisonment, identified by the Families Outside Regional Coordinators. Application forms were then submitted to the Administrator, who processed the purchases before submitting documentation and receipts the Finance & Office Manager for reconciliation against the bank, while monitoring the remaining grant available.

Though submissions were made on behalf of families from prison visitors' centres and processed in the same way as noted above, £1,800 was also allocated directly to the visitors' centres across Scotland. This was in the form of £200 worth of vouchers to be allocated to families as each of the following nine visitors' centres deemed fit:

HMP Addiewell	The Cyrenians
HMP Polmont	Crossreach
HMP Grampian	Action for Children
HMP Shotts	Getting Better Together Shotts
HMP Glenochil	Stirling Interfaith Community Justice Group
HMP Cornton Vale	Stirling Interfaith Community Justice Group
HMP Barlinnie	The Croft
HMP Perth	Crossreach
HMP Edinburgh	Barnardo's

Of the remaining £47,691.79, the funds were spent on various different ways to support families in need, from support with utility bill debts and food vouchers to household repairs and new furniture. The total spend was broken down into nine categories:

Beds and bedding	Beds, duvets, bedding, curtains, blankets
Carpets and flooring	Carpets, fitting costs, rugs, flooring
Clothing	Children's clothing, jackets, footwear, nightwear
Utilities and heating	Electricity, gas, oil heaters, coal, wood, kindling
Food and toiletries	Food, nappies and other baby items, toiletries
White goods	Washing machines, tumble dryers, refrigerators, vacuums
Furniture and household repairs	Chests of drawers, seating, door locks, decoration, repairs
Travel and family contact	Travel budgets, mobile bills
Miscellaneous	Books, photobooks, gift vouchers, delivery charges



Support from the fund was provided to families across many local authorities, with a small proportion of funding either being spent across Scotland as a whole, or on a small proportion of families in England who have a loved one in a Scottish prison.

Aberdeen City

Families supported: 7

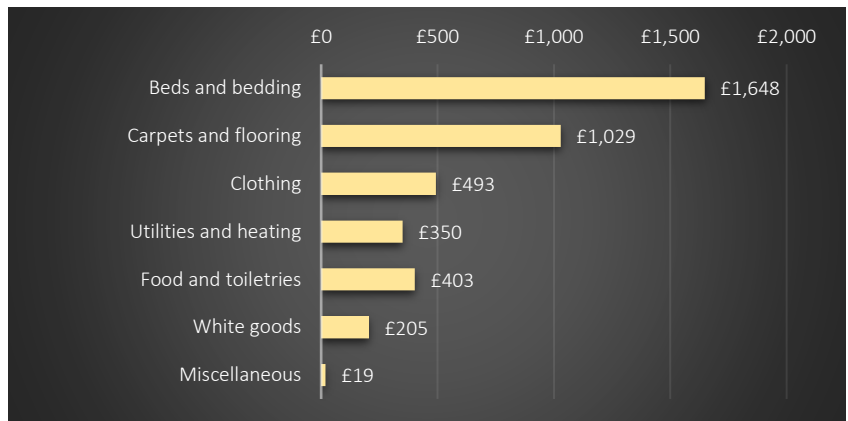
Amount spent: £2,118



Aberdeenshire

Families supported: 6

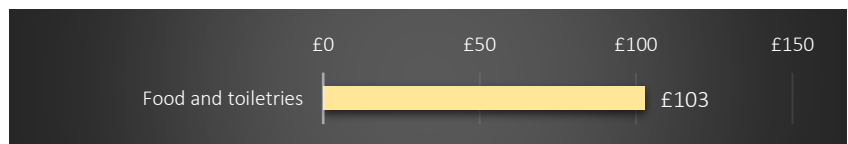
Amount spent: £4,147



Angus

Families supported: 1

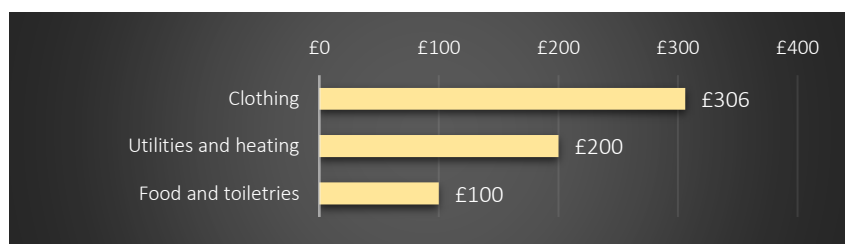
Amount spent: £103



Dumfries & Galloway

Families supported: 1

Amount spent: £606



Dundee

Families supported: 6

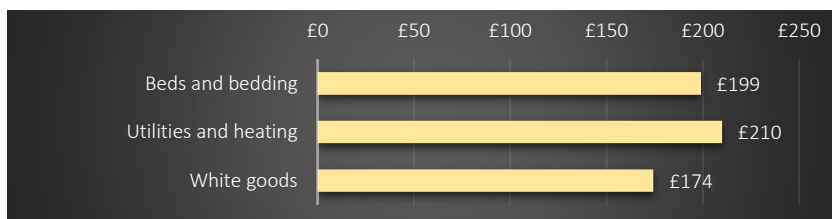
Amount spent: £4,846



East Ayrshire

Families supported: 1

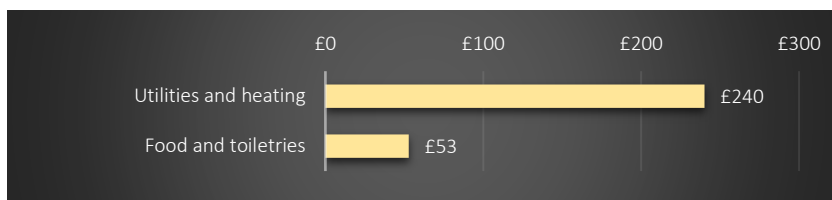
Amount spent: £583



East Dunbartonshire

Families supported: 1

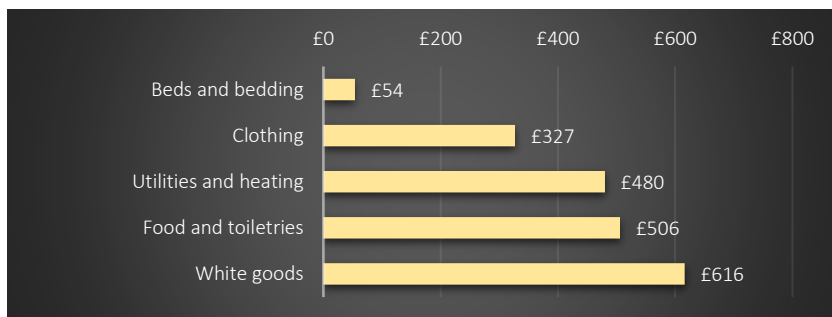
Amount spent: £293



East Renfrewshire

Families supported: 2

Amount spent: £1,983



Edinburgh

Families supported: 6

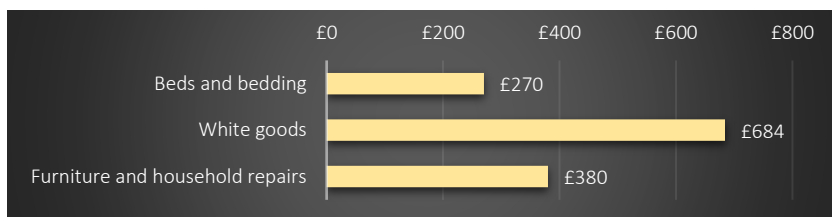
Amount spent: £5,937



Falkirk

Families supported: 3

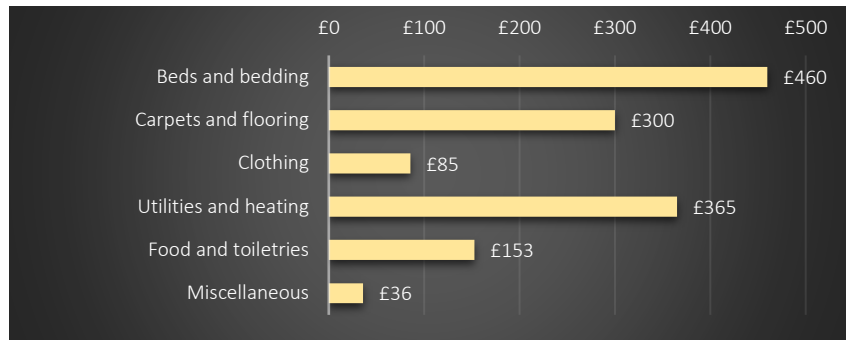
Amount spent: £1,334



Fife

Families supported: 5

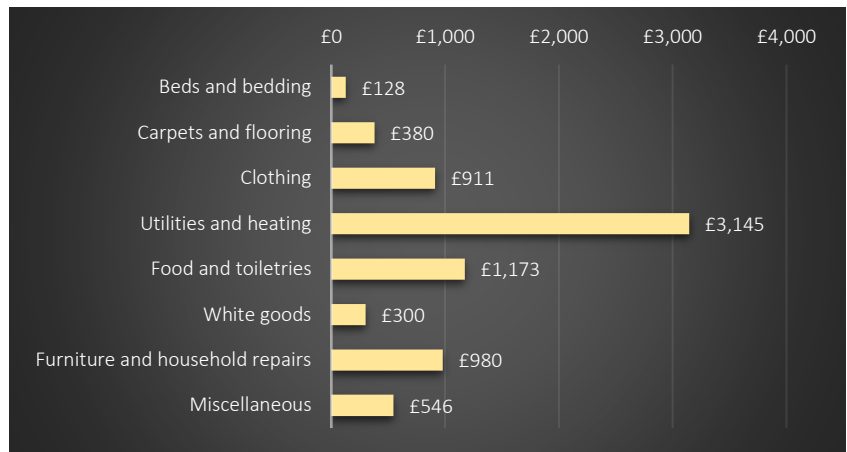
Amount spent: £1,399



Glasgow

Families supported: 15

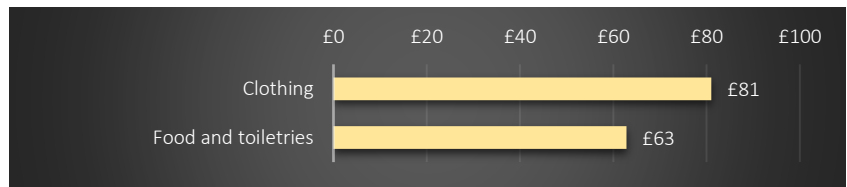
Amount spent: £7,562



Highlands

Families supported: 1

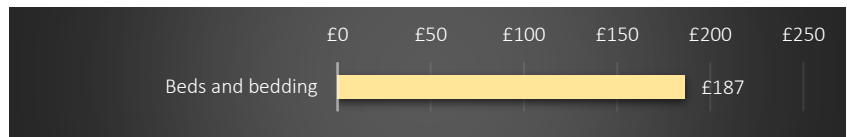
Amount spent: £144



Moray

Families supported: 1

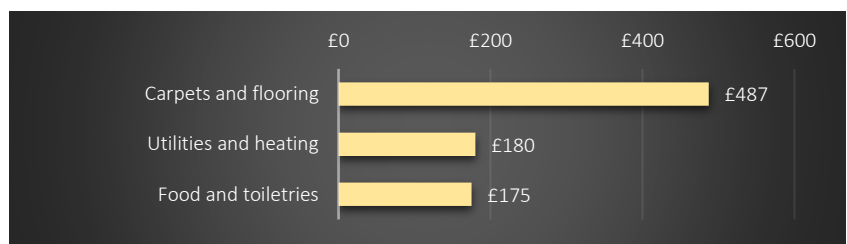
Amount spent: £187



North Ayrshire

Families supported: 1

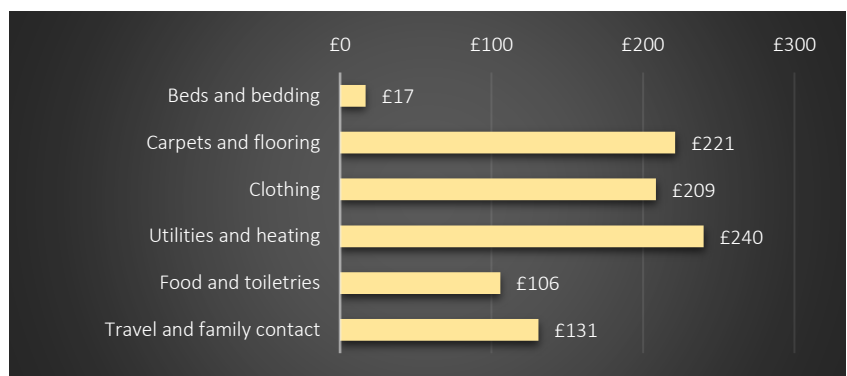
Amount spent: £842



North Lanarkshire

Families supported: 2

Amount spent: £924



South Lanarkshire

Families supported: 10

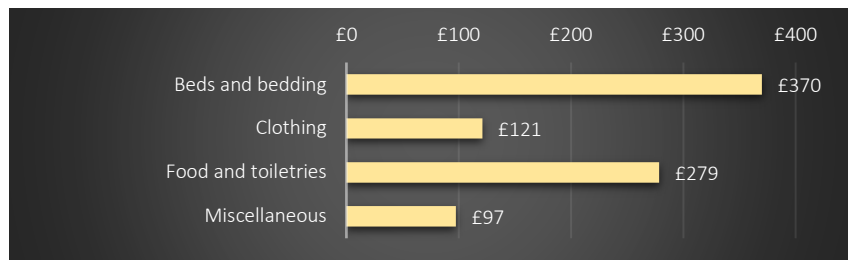
Amount spent: £5,994



Stirling

Families supported: 2

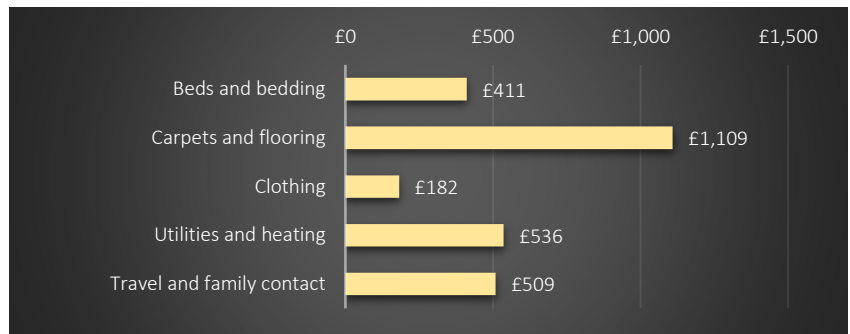
Amount spent: £867



West Dunbartonshire

Families supported: 2

Amount spent: £2,747



West Lothian

Families supported: 3

Amount spent: £3,782



Scotland-wide or England

Families supported: 6

Amount spent: £1,293



3. How the grant was spent across Scotland

With the total spend of £49,187.29, and £1,800 of this allocated to nine prison visitors' centres across Scotland in the form of vouchers, the remaining funds were spent on families who submitted applications from 20 of the 32 local authorities across Scotland. This is illustrated in the graph below, with the second graph capturing the number of families in each local authority area that were supported.



4. Family member feedback

The fund was used to support 82 families throughout Scotland who, as a result of having a family member in prison, suffer additional hardship, something that is increasingly evident during the winter months. The words of gratitude expressed from the families illustrated the value in the funding provision, showing that this really made a difference to these families.

"This is so great, I can't believe that you are helping us like this"; "Families Outside has done so much to help (daughter) and me, thank you".

"Thanks you so much for thinking of us and for all the help you give us "; "It really does make a difference"; "We don't want to ask for too much because there are so many other families out there, anything you can get for us would make a difference"; "Thanks".

"I forgot to email you last night, but it's just to let you know that my jacket arrived last night, and it fits perfectly. Thank you so much!!"

"I got my bed yesterday, it's just so amazing!"

"Thanks for everything. I will give you a wee text when it goes into my account to let you know I have got it. Then I will email the receipt... We got the bedding and carpet down on Monday thanks. We are over the moon... can't thank you enough."

"Just to let u know that my coat came today and its lovely thank u so much x"

"WOW! WOW! (crying) thank you so so much, this means so much to us (crying). Thank you for thinking about us and for putting us forward for this funding (crying)."

"Just go let you know that gas / electricity payments went through and the vouchers arrived today."

"Cooker installed and totally amazing. They literally came removed old one re-connected new one took rubbish away. Thanks to everyone for this – the old one was 'done'."

"The money went into my bank and I put it straight on the electric. It lifted a weight off my shoulders knowing I didn't have to worry about the electric going off, I'm really appreciative, it really helped thank you."

"It's a major difference, I've not had to look at my meters in ages. Families Outside has made a major difference, not sure would have got through. Great to have someone to speak to, amazing. There hasn't been anything I've spoken to you about that you haven't been able to help with."

"I really appreciate everything you did for me and my daughter Suzanna."

"... I got everything just waiting for the curtains. Everything was nice. Thank you so much ☺"

"...and also received my clothes!....thanks again so much for everything."

"A massive thank you for the money for the gas and electricity and the Primark vouchers. What a big help so thank so much again."

"..... got the Argos email. Delivery will be on Saturday for the stuff - something to look forward to"

"I hope you are all well and sound. I would like to express my warmest thank you for the support you offered to me and my son in recent hard times. Your generous help in form of vouchers for clothing and food and the bed for my son helped me to survive last few months. Being a single mum and facing employment issues due to my poor health made me and my family more vulnerable than before and your organization helped greatly. We will always be very grateful for your support and remember about you in our prayers."

"Just to let you know I received my vouchers, also the money in the bank for my electricity. I am so overwhelmed, n very grateful, never did I expect as much as this. Thank u so so much, I really appreciate all the help, this will help me out tremendously."

5. Learning from the Winter Hardship Fund

During the ten weeks of the Winter Hardship Fund project, Families Outside had two staff allocated to deal with the substantial number of purchases and reconciliation and audit of that spend against the £50,000.00 grant provided. In addition to this, our full family support team of Regional Family Support Coordinators and Helpline staff, along with staff from prison visitors' centres across the country, engaged with families to identify those in need and determine their requirements

In total, the 365 individual payments or transactions for the 82 families took an significant amount of time to process, with the necessary checks being in place to ensure purchases made were relevant and appropriate for each individual family.

Families Outside works tirelessly to support the needs of families affected by imprisonment across Scotland, and should a fund like this become available again in the future, the charity would of course be willing to administer this for the benefit of the many families we support.

However, we would like to note the lack of funding from the Scottish Government to increase our capacity for administrative support temporarily during the project period. This put undue pressure on our staff, who had to balance this weighty, yet worthy piece of work alongside their own day to day roles - something that unavoidably had staff going well beyond the call of duty to ensure families were supported and that they received the items needed, or that urgent bills or payments were made timeously to ease their stress and anxiety.

Families Outside will allocate the small £508.21 surplus to our restricted Discretionary Fund which is used during any given year in the same spirit as the Winter Hardship Fund, purchasing much needed items for families and helping with outstanding costs such as utility costs. This fund is provided to families with a limit of £50.00 applied to each spend made on their behalf by our staff.

6. Conclusion

It is evident from both the success in a near-full spend within ten weeks and from feedback from the families we supported during this time that the Winter Hardship Fund was a great success. Regardless of the pressure felt by our staff to ensure this fund was spent for the good of families in need, there has been a huge sense of satisfaction and reward from the many messages of gratitude that were provided by families, many of which were not able to be included within this report.

"I wanted to thank you and the all the people from Families Outside for all your help. The furniture and the money voucher really helped me to get a new great start in my new home. It was amazing that I could provide for my daughter everything what she needs thanks to your help."

The feedback from families shows how such funding means more than the material goods themselves. It means the ability to support your family, the opportunity to share a family meal around a table for the very first time, and the knowledge that someone cares.

The amount of funding that Families Outside was able to allocate over a very short period of time indicates the level of need the families we support face on a daily basis. A steadier stream of resource to allocate over a longer period of time would be helpful to identify and respond to the needs of families as we connect with them, in preference to the considerable time and effort required to find and support families over a very restricted time period. We are however grateful to have had the opportunity to support so many families in this way.

Jonathan Goodfellow
Families Outside
April 2021