



supporting
families affected
by imprisonment



**Celebrating thirty years of working
to support children and families affected
by imprisonment in Scotland**

Chair's Report

This is my last report after six years as Chair of the Board of Trustees and nine years on the Board. For me, the time has flown by. For the organisation, there have been many successes, alongside challenges, especially since the start of the pandemic. However, without a doubt, the organisation has continued to thrive and provide a much needed and valued service to families, advice and support to those working with them, and a clear steer for policy makers in Government, Parliament, and other organisations.

The Board has marvelled at the resilience of the organisation to continue to deliver services that were more needed than ever. The Board quickly realised that we should step up our engagement with the senior staff team to give them our support in their leadership of the organisation through such a difficult time. I am very grateful to the Trustees – all giving their time voluntarily – for their willingness to take part in extra meetings. It was heartening to see that funders valued the work being done so much that we were awarded various special grants to help meet COVID-related needs.

We have been very pleased to note some important achievements, such as long hoped for additions to family contact using technology, progress towards the accreditation of training and the introduction of online training events, an increase in the number of responses to consultations, successful and popular conferences with more attending online than would ever have been able to come in person, and, as is always the case, many appreciations from the families supported that are at the heart of our work.

In 2021, Families Outside marks its 30th anniversary. It does this in a strong position, in spite of all the extra challenges that Covid has brought about. Nancy has led her strong team with great sensitivity, through changes in structure and personnel, and I feel proud to have had a role in the success of a unique and much valued organisation. My thanks go also to the superb team of Trustees. The Vice Chair, Satwat Rehman, and Rona Fraser will, like me, stand down at the AGM and will be much missed.

Valerie Macniven
Chair

Chief Executive's Report

This year, Families Outside celebrates its 30th anniversary. We have seen incredible change in that time, from the focus, operation, and size of our staff team, to the firmer placement of the families we support on the agendas of key agencies and the establishment of highly constructive international links.

As the rest of the world, Families Outside began the 2020/21 financial year in lockdown, introducing a new organisational structure aligning with our Strategic Aims while all staff were working in isolation from home. Interestingly, the sense of solidarity inspired incredible agility and creativity within our staff team, who moved swiftly to create new remote systems for group work, training, and support to families. The numbers of referrals decreased due to family isolation from schools, prisons, and community services, but we saw the needs of families increasing, and our staff spent more time supporting them than ever before.

The resumption of lockdown conditions, particularly at the turn of the new year, hit our staff and the families they support hard. Staff wellbeing became a primary focus, as our staff felt the pressures of the pandemic themselves while trying to support families. Our staff team has proven to be remarkably robust, facing every obstacle head-on, and I remain grateful for their continued hard work and dedication to a cause they believe in.

I am pleased to share our progress over 2020-21 with you in this report. Families Outside can only achieve its outcomes through devoted and hard-working staff, students, and volunteers as well as a tremendously well-qualified and supportive Board. I am particularly grateful for the wisdom, guidance, and support over the years from departing Chair Valerie Macniven, Vice-Chair Satwat Rehman, and Trustee Rona Fraser. I am also grateful for the continued interest and support of our funders; of the many agencies we work alongside; and especially of the families who share their experiences and expertise with us. Our work would not be possible without you.

Prof Nancy Loucks OBE
Chief Executive

Helpline

Through a mix of phone calls, webchat enquiries, and email, the Families Outside Helpline responds to thousands of enquiries from families each year, providing non-judgemental support and information.

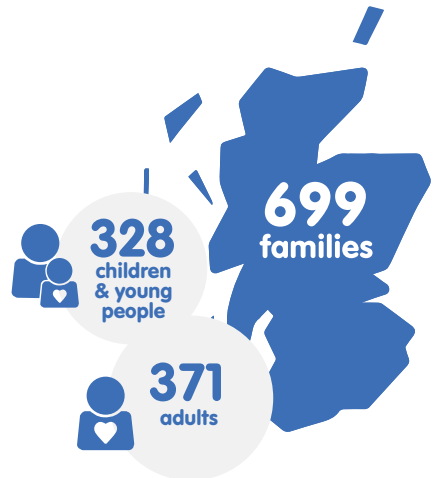
During the first months of lockdown, we experienced a huge increase in demand for our Helpline service. In June 2020, we saw a 247% increase in enquiries compared to the previous year. This stabilised as both families and prisons adjusted to the life during the pandemic. Overall, we saw an 18% increase in contacts to our Helpline service in 2020-21.



“I am very grateful to [the Helpline] for facilitating a [compassionate] call between [son] and my mum last night. I am hopeful that this will be repeated soon. I have to say that everything about the way she handled this task was exemplary. I could tell that she genuinely cared and was determined to achieve an outcome, which she did in a very short timeframe.”

Regional Support

Our team of Regional Family Support Coordinators, based throughout Scotland, provide in-person support to families. The continuing COVID-related restrictions reduced these opportunities, with support provided primarily via telephone or video links. As restrictions eased, staff developed creative ways of meeting with families such as in gardens, through ‘walk and talk’ meetings, or even as part of a community gardening project. Overall, referrals were lower, as referral sources such as schools and prisons also had relatively limited contact with families. However, the number of contacts with families increased by 13%, reflecting the increased needs families experienced as a result of the pandemic.



“Thank you so much for helping us out so we can be ready for virtuals [video calls]. Respect to Families Outside and a massive recognition of all the positive, painstaking and persistent tackling of the problems during this trying time. Without the help of Families Outside I know things would be left to decompose and it would be a dire shame. God Bless the work of you and your colleagues and a huge thank you for being our voice and above all the prisoner’s voice. Human rights are being tested, but you are keeping the faith. Wow! Groundbreaking work, thank you with all my ❤️ x.”

Training and Awareness-Raising

Lockdown restrictions introduced in March 2020 meant that we had to suspend the delivery of community and prison-based training and awareness-raising events. As we adapted to a remote model of working, we developed a training webinar for professionals working with families affected by imprisonment, which we delivered monthly throughout the year:

386 professionals attended our online webinars for professionals

209 participants attended our annual conference *Health, Human Rights, and Hope*

In March 2021, we also delivered our first online Constructive Connections training sessions, developed in collaboration with NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.

"I remember having a child in my placement class last year who really struggled to cope with one of their parents being imprisoned just weeks before my arrival. At the time I felt I was quite powerless and unable to offer any meaningful support other than listening to her concerns. I feel that following this input today, I am now better equipped to help other children in a similar position in the future. Thank you!"



1,141

participants in total benefited from our training and awareness-raising opportunities



Practice Learning

Following the national suspension of social work student placements in March 2020, placements resumed in August 2020. We creatively adapted learning opportunities and formats used to support and assess students to comply with SSSC guidance and Covid-19 regulations. **One University Tutor said:**

"I am so impressed by all the work that has gone into the planning already. It is a real pleasure to work with organisations that are committed to ensuring that students have a rich learning experience, particularly at the moment, with all the restrictions."

From August 2020, we provided 4 placements to social work students based in the North, West, and East of Scotland. **One student reflected,**

"My placement at Families Outside exceeded my expectations and any student fortunate enough to secure a placement within the agency will have exposure to the best learning opportunities and the most supportive team, in spite of the pandemic. My placement experience was filled with rich learning opportunities, regardless of the physical distance the pandemic put between people and services."

Prison Visitors' Centres

Families Outside continues to provide the national coordinating role for Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland. All Visitors' Centres closed following the suspension of prison visits in March 2020.

We supported Visitors' Centres to think of innovative ways to make contact with families, and offer service remotely via helplines, email, telephone, online, and mail. Newsletters, adverts, and social media were also utilised by many of the Centres, as they continued to offer a range of support and advice, including emotional support, to individuals impacted by imprisonment.

The Centres also continued to signpost and refer individuals to other agencies.

"Firstly, I would like to say a massive thank you to you all at the Visitors' Centre for all the help and support during what has been, by far, the most difficult time for us... knowing you were always at the other end of the phone has been absolutely essential for us, which I'm sure is the case for so many other families."

Over
900

food packs were
distributed to
families

Over
1,200

activity bags including
crafts and books
were distributed
to children

958

individuals were
supported to set up
virtual visits

Support for families

61

Devices were
distributed to families
through the Connecting
Scotland initiative



Influencing Change

A priority following the introduction of lockdown restrictions was to ensure families remained connected with loved ones in prison. We worked closely with the Scottish Government and Scottish Prison Service – often with daily communication – to ensure the swift implementation of new methods of contact, namely mobile phones and video calls. Crucially, our expertise and international contacts provided swift access to guidelines and models of practice that were not otherwise readily available.

The pandemic prompted a flurry of legislative consultations and COVID-related research over the course of the year. Families Outside contributed to 25 consultations and research projects including:

- Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into Vulnerable Children during the COVID-19 pandemic
- QUNO and Child Rights Connect report, Covid-19 and the Rights of Children of Parents who are incarcerated
- Mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on children's right to privacy
- University of Glasgow's Scotland in Lockdown research, including participation in the steering group for the project
- Equalities & Human Rights Committee consultation on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Equality and Human Rights
- Equalities & Human Rights Committee's call for views on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Scotland Bill



We also released 7 new publications, including a new guide for professionals working with children and young people affected by imprisonment, and conducted initial scoping research into families' experiences of video calls to their family members in prison.

Peer Support

Our Group Work & Peer Support team has created a variety of local and national group work sessions delivered virtually via Zoom, or in-person (where possible) to support children, young people and adults affected by a family member's imprisonment.



The 'Stronger Families Inside Out' programme in partnership with Streetsport and HMP Grampian delivered:

- 10 online sessions
- 1 family activity day
- Supporting 25 children, young people and adults
- 8 children and young people attended 6 online yoga sessions
- 16 children and young people participated in our national Reading Activity Challenge
- 7 children and young people participated in our national art competition run in collaboration with Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)
- 10 children and young people participated in our national Music Broth project run over 6 sessions
- 4 adults participated in a joint project with SHMU run over 8 sessions

"It was important for me to understand the situation, what was happening. It reassured me to know the [age-appropriate] facts. I preferred to have the truth even if that was bad. This was important for me to know so that I knew the truth based on fact and to be told by someone I trusted. People didn't tell me because I was 13, they thought I was too young or wouldn't understand and didn't want to tell me. This didn't help me because I needed to know, he was my dad!"



Supporting families through lockdown

Following the suspension of prison visits, video calls, or 'virtual visits', were introduced in June 2020. We supported families to access these by distributing tablets to families who did not have access to a device and recruited a digital support volunteer to provide technical support to families and help them get online.

12 Twelve devices were distributed to families

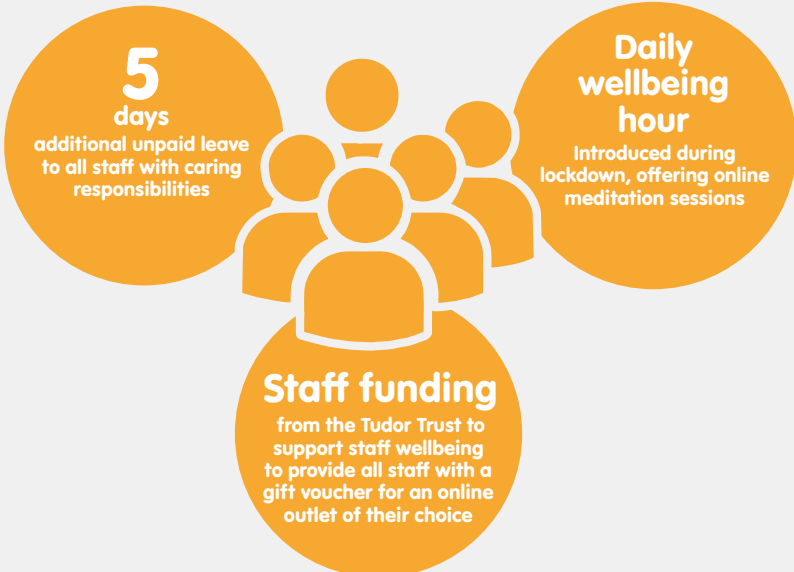
20 Digital Support volunteer supported twenty families

We were able to provide direct financial support to families over what was a particularly hard winter for many.



Supporting Our Staff

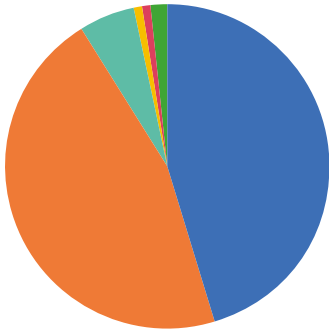
The COVID-19 pandemic was a uniquely challenging time for our staff, many of whom were juggling caring responsibilities with extended school and nursery closures and facing restricted access to services for their own needs. To support our staff during this time, we provided:



Finance

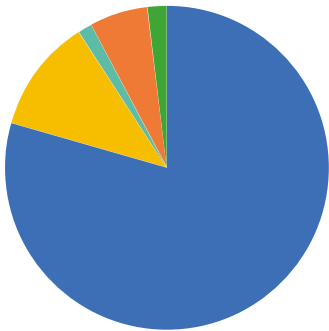
In spite of the difficulties posed by the COVID pandemic, Families Outside has had a steady year with our income in line with an increase in our expenditure. This increase in expenditure was mainly the result of increase in the staffing of our Family Support Team to meet the ever-growing demand for the service we provide to children and families affected by imprisonment.

We would like to thank the many organisations, charitable trusts (both large and small), local authorities, and statutory agencies, along with the many individuals who donated funds to Families Outside during the year. Without your help, we could not provide the support we give to families affected by imprisonment in Scotland.



Income 2020/2021

- Statutory income – £537,133
- Charitable Trusts and companies – £538,578
- Local Authority – £66,966
- NHS – £10,130
- Donations – £9,544
- Other income – £18,178



Expenditure 2020/2021

- Staff costs – £898,492
- Activity costs – £128,976
- Governance – £15,426
- Office running and premises costs – £68,409
- Other expenditure – £19,242

Families Outside is the only national charity that works solely to support the families of people affected by imprisonment in Scotland. Our purpose is to improve outcomes for children and families affected by imprisonment so they can live lives free from stigma and disadvantage.

For information and support:

Freephone 0800 254 0088

Text FAMOUT followed by your message to 60777

Email support@familiesoutside.org.uk

Visit www.familiesoutside.org.uk

