

# Paying the Price:

# The Cost to Families of Imprisonment and Release

Scotland has the highest imprisonment rate in Western Europe, with approximately 7,400 of the 5.5 million Scottish population in prison.

## Financial Impact Report

Literature review analysing 51 interviews of people (majority women) financially supporting loved ones in prison

This research highlights the role of prison in creating, sustaining and deepening poverty, particularly in the wake of a decade of austerity, pandemic and cost-of-living crises. Significantly, people held in prison often



**61%** of people in prison have a child.

come from the **most deprived areas in Scotland.**



The current definition of 'low income', according to the Scottish Government, is that a person earns less than or close to £1771.25 per month before deductions

- Across the whole research group, only **five** participants earned the Minimum Income Standard and had around £1200 to spend a month after paying rent.
- For the other 46, after paying rent and after tax, people were living on around **£500** a month and in some cases as little as **£300**.

### Cost of Remand

Travel: **£70** per month  
Refreshments at visits: **£60** per month  
Paying into personal account: **£100** per month  
'Other' costs, such as clothes, letters: **£55** per month  
Total median cost: **£300** per month, **more than half of income**

### Cost of Imprisonment

Travel: **£77** per month  
Refreshments at visits: **£36** per month  
Paying into personal account: **£86** per month  
'Other' costs, such as clothes, letters: **£75** per month  
Total median cost: **£180** per month, **a third of income**

**1/2** were supporting someone who was not in their local prison

"...I only eat one meal a day. It is for costs. It is for the kids."

The cost of imprisonment is overwhelmingly borne by single women on low incomes, who describe 'coping' with the costs through: sacrifices and silent suffering, food poverty, fuel poverty, lack of 'free' time, isolation and loss of connection...



Families already in poverty are being **squeezed financially, to the point of being crushed.**