**Participant Information Sheet for Scottish Prison Service Staff**

**Name of department:** School of Social Work and Social Policy  
**Title of the study:** Prisoners’ Families and Families in Prison

**Introduction**My name is Dr Kirsty Deacon and I am a Research Associate at the University of Strathclyde working on a Post-Doctoral Fellowship which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). I am based within the School of Social Work and Social Policy and further information about myself and my research work can be found at <https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/deaconkirstydr/>.

**What is the purpose of this research?**Families of prisoners have increasingly become a priority area of research for academics, as well as being the focus of recent criminal justice policy and practice. The Scottish Prison Service introduced their own Family Strategy in 2017, covering the period up until 2022, and have also initiated a number of innovative developments related to families. These include the introduction of Family Contact Officers across all prisons, the opportunity for families to be involved with induction processes or Integrated Case Management meetings, and special family events within individual prisons. The purpose of this research is to understand how this recognition of the importance of prisoners’ families within the prison system – the experiences of these families and the role they can be seen to play in relation to their imprisoned family member and the prison itself – is translated into strategic documents and policy, such as the Family Strategy. It aims to understand how an organisation-wide policy or strategy document is first created and then later put into practice by individual prisons and their staff. It will explore how the SPS Family Strategy was produced, the understandings behind the document and how it has then been used and put into practice at an operational level within a range of different prisons, whose differing populations (e.g. women, young people, long-term and remand prisoners), may have differing familial set-ups and requirements which will result in varying implementation strategies. At the end of the project a report will be written and a copy provided to the Scottish Prison Service and published through the University of Strathclyde.

**Do you have to take part?**

Participation is voluntary. It is your decision and you can decide not to take part, or to subsequently withdraw your participation until data analysis has been completed if you do initially agree to participate. Deciding not to take part will not affect how you are treated by the researcher, by the Scottish Prison Service or by anyone else. As your data will be anonymised for the inclusion in any reports, once data analysis has taken place and the data has been anonymised it will not be possible to remove your data from this research project.

Should you decide to take part in the research you are not required to answer all the questions within the interview and can either skip questions or withdraw from the interview entirely at any point.

**What will you do in the project?**You will be invited to take part in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. These can take place by telephone or an online platform such as Skype for Business, Teams or Zoom. This choice is down to you as a participant and is the form of interview that you would feel most comfortable with and you have access to the necessary technology. The interview will last around 60 minutes and you will be able to take part in this interview either during your working day or at home, whichever is most convenient for you.

These interviews will explore your experience of creating or working with the SPS Family Strategy document and its aims, and/or families of prisoners, and/or prisoners in relation to their own family experiences, as is applicable for your particular role within the organisation.

**Why have you been invited to take part?**You have been invited to take part as you have been identified by the member of staff who sent you on this form as having expertise or experience either with the creation of the SPS Family Strategy or in the achievement of its aims through your role relating to prisoners’ families.

**What information is being collected in the project?**The University of Strathclyde is committed to telling you about how it is using your personal data and to make sure it acts legally in relation to data protection laws. This section sets out important information regarding how we will use your information and your rights under the legislation. It is important that you understand this section before you provide your information or agree to your information being shared with the University.

The University of Strathclyde is a data controller under data protection legislation. Any enquiries regarding data protection should be made to the University’s Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@strath.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@strath.ac.uk).

During this study, I will be collecting specific information relating to participants. This information may be provided by participants, like yourself, directly to the researcher, or it may be provided by the Scottish Prison Service. I will collect the following information:

* The Scottish Prison Service will provide participants’ first and last name, email address and job title.
* Participants are all staff within the Scottish Prison Service and will provide their name and job title during the interview, their position within the Scottish Prison Service, the years they have spent in this post and the Scottish Prison Service overall and their opinions and views given within their interview.

Audio recordings of interviews may also be taken and this will take place using a digital audio recorder. I will not use an audio recorder unless consent is given.

**Who will have access to the information?**

I will take great care of any information shared with me by you or anyone else and myself as the researcher will be the only person who has access to the information provided as part of this research project. I might use direct quotes from interviews in the report I produce at the end of the research and any related papers that I write or presentations which come from this research, but I will not include your name, or other identifying details (e.g. the name of the prison, other individuals). Despite this anonymisation, given the small number of participants, and that the person who sent you on this form will be aware that you were a potential participant, there is the possibility that they or other staff within the Scottish Prison Service may read the final report and be able to identify participants from their knowledge of yourself and the organisation.

An exception to this promise of confidentiality will be in the event of a disclosure of information related to serious or imminent harm. Should this arise, full disclosure will be made in relation to this to the Scottish Prison Service following discussion, and preferably along with, the participant who made the disclosure.

**Where will the information be stored and how long will it be kept for?**

The information will be stored within a secure filing area and using encrypted computer files to ensure that only I am able to see what you have told me. I will store the information for three years after the end of the study, in case there are any follow-up questions.

The anonymised transcripts of the interviews will be deposited within the UK Data Service repository, if participants consent to this, and these will be retained indefinitely. This repository is run by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and provides other researchers with access to the anonymised data.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

Please also read our [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/rkes/ethics/Privacy_Notice_Research_Participants_Oct18.pdf).

**What happens next?**The researcher will provide you with all the details you need to take part. The Consent Form which accompanies this information provides you with a written copy of what consenting to being interviewed means, and that you will be asked separately if you also consent to any interview being audio recorded and the depositing of any anonymised interview transcript into the UK Data Service repository. You are able to decline both of these specific aspects and still take part in the research. Given that the interview will take place by telephone or an online platform you will not be required to provide written consent but instead your consent will be confirmed verbally within the interview and recorded at this time.

At the beginning of any interview taking place I will be able to answer any further questions you have. You can also contact me prior to this by email ([kirsty.deacon@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Kirsty.deacon@strath.ac.uk)). After the study is completed a copy of the final report will be provided to the Scottish Prison Service (and yourselves individually if you would like). I will also publish a summary of the findings on my research page at the University of Strathclyde (<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/deaconkirstydr/>) which you are welcome to access.

If you do not want to be involved in the project then you need not do anything further, and I thank you for your attention up until this point.

**Chief Investigator details:**You can contact me by phone or email at any time to ask questions about the study. My details are as follows:

Dr Kirsty Deacon [kirsty.deacon@strath.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.deacon@strath.ac.uk) 07494 675 189

This research was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee  
Research & Knowledge Exchange Services  
University of Strathclyde  
Graham Hills Building, 50 George Street  
Glasgow, G1 1QE

Telephone: 0141 548 3707  
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