

**CrossReach Statement on the Prison Visitor Centres April 2025**

CrossReach has been saddened to learn of the Scottish Government decision not to approve funding to continue to work of the Prison Visitors Centres at HMP Perth and HMP/YOI Polmont into 2025-2026. This comes after a period of discussion on how to run the services in a way which was viable, ensured quality and retained good coverage of visits over a week in the face of a stand-still budget and increasing cost pressures.

The Church of Scotland, through CrossReach has been involved with providing high quality support to families of prisoners through the Prison Visitor's Centres since 2007, initially at HMP Perth, which was one of the first of its kind, and latterly at HMP/YOI Polmont which opened its doors in 2015. Over £1.5M of charitable donations have been raised over this time to contribute to the work of both centres.

We have been also been pleased to contribute in kind to a number of groups over that time, including the Prison Visitor Centre steering group, which was first chaired by the Church of Scotland, and has seen a number of partners come round the table so that part- funding for the sixteen centres now in operation today, could be agreed, along with a set of standards which each has to operate to.

In the light of the decision made we will now have to withdraw from providing service at HMP Perth and HMP/YOI Polmont but will continue to run both centres, on a reduced basis, until a new Provider can be identified. While this is a difficult decision all round CrossReach remains proud of the legacy left behind and will continue to support discussions about how the prison visitors centres can operate, sustainably, into the future.

Viv Dickenson  
CEO CrossReach