



**For the Attention of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee**

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the largest charity supporting people affected by crime across Scotland through the provision of practical help, emotional support and essential information. As such, we welcome the Equalities and Human Rights Committee request for the views of VSS on the blanket ban on prisoner voting in Scotland.

1. VSS Supports the Human Rights Act and understands the current blanket ban on prisoner voting is not compatible with the legislation.
2. The Supreme Court ruling requires our legislature to revisit the blanket ban on prisoner voting in Scotland. We accept there is an opportunity to look at the balance between the different purposes of punishment and where the ban on the right to vote sits within that.
3. Whether the ban remains or is removed, in part, or in full, we believe there needs to be explicit and readily available public information on punishment processes. Any changes need to occur alongside awareness campaigns on what the principal purpose of incarceration sets to achieve. We agree that prisoner voting should be seen in the wider context of equalities and human rights, but with the caveat that victims remain paramount to any discussions on legislative changes.

**ENDS**