Introduction
The Scottish Association of Social Work represents social workers, many offering frontline services throughout Scotland. They work in both rural and urban communities, local government and voluntary sector services and often are the gateway to local government and third sector services. SASW members are daily involved in the criminal justice system and work towards deterring people from crime. SASW would endorse the submission already lodged by the Howard League for Penal Reform in Scotland, The Prison Reform Trust, SACRO, Positive Prison? Positive Futures, Professor Fergus McNeill and Emeritus Professor Mike Nellis.

Ethical practice and rehabilitation back into the community
One of the core principles in the Code of Ethics all our members sign up to is to treat people with dignity and respect. It means accepting the person, not condoning the deed. From this basis we are able to establish relationships with people to help them on their journey of change and that relationship is often the catalyst to achieving that change.

Prison sentences create many challenges for people who become easily institutionalised which results in them losing the ability to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. It often results in losing family contact, a home and where they had work their employment. Rebuilding a sense of responsibility is part of through care work and post sentence support.

It is the view of our members, from their long and persistent work with people in the criminal justice system that treating people with respect, like making sure they have citizen rights of voting will contribute to helping offenders become ‘social citizens’ rather than perpetuating their exclusion. It should be noted that Social Inclusion (along with Justice and Safety) has become one of three overarching aims of our new national CJ SW standards as noted in Scottish Government (2010b) National Outcomes and Standards for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/925/0103556.pdf

Conclusion
Whilst our members recognise the complexities of including serving prisoners in the electorate SASW would support the submission by others that this is an opportunity to move forward an important issue that would lead to improved social inclusion and redress a serious human rights issue.

12 April 2013