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Police Scotland

Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024

3 Year Report

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Our Vision and What Matters To Us

The Police Scotland Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24 set out our vision as a Corporate Parent:

“To contribute to a care system which prioritises a child’s need for a happy childhood and results in positive experiences and outcomes”.

What is a Corporate Parent?

A Corporate Parent is any organisation, whether public, private, or voluntary, who has responsibility to make decisions that impact on care experienced people in Scotland. Everyone in Police Scotland has a role to play as a Corporate Parent, and in line with the wide variety of roles and responsibilities that officers and staff have, this will mean different things across our workforce.

Each and every member of staff across our organisation have a moral obligation and a legal duty to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people. As one of a number of organisations named as a Corporate Parent in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which provides protections and supports for everyone with care experience, we are acutely aware of the importance of the role we play organisationally and individually as Corporate Parents in the scaffolding of support for our care experienced community in Scotland.

A person with care experience refers to anyone who is (or has been) in care, regardless of their age. People can be cared for in different settings such as residential care, foster care, kinship care, adoption or looked after at home with supervision.

Police Scotland uses the phrase “Corporate Parent”, but people with experiences of care told the Independent Care Review that it sounds unfriendly and doesn't show care or understanding and feels cold and official. In this report, we have tried our best to use kind and understanding words throughout our plan.

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We strive to support Scotland's care system through the provision of the scaffolding of support required to enable the formation of the stable environments and loving, supportive and enduring relationships that every child needs to thrive ensuring children and young people have a strong foundation and support that is ready and responsive, when it is needed, for as long as it is needed.

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Our Corporate Parenting Priorities 2021-2024

We set out our priorities within this plan under five key themes, ensuring that we work together, collectively across the Police Scotland workforce and with partners, to be considerate to issues that affect Care Experienced children and young people and achieve our Corporate Parenting Vision, namely:

1. Language and Stigma
2. Building Better Relationships
3. Supporting Children in Conflict with the Law
4. Offering Employment and Development Opportunities
5. Engage, Evaluate and Learn.

Internal Governance structures which monitor how we deliver these priorities to support people with care experience are now well established. The Corporate Parenting Working Group meetings chaired by the Children and Young People management team are held quarterly and attended by Police Scotland representatives from across all of our local and specialist divisions. These meetings provide our workforce with a forum to consult on and direct work under our key themes.

At a national level, we continue to work with other Corporate Parents and partners to form the strong scaffold of support children and young people, ensuring we take a children's rights-based approach in all that we do now and in the future to keep The Promise.

Corporate Parenting Leads across all thirteen local policing divisions, work closely with their community and Local Authority partnerships to deliver our priorities at a local level and support national work in this area. This collaborative approach now forms an important part of all Local Authority planning and Harm Prevention Partnership structures. This allows Police Scotland, as a national organisation, to be receptive and alert to local community needs and respond appropriately.

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We continue to build upon and strengthen internal partnerships across our service and with The Scottish Police Authority.

During this three-year period, significant progress has been made to improve the lives of people with care experience and their experience of Policing. We realise this is a continuous journey which requires reflection and learning as we strive for year-on-year improvement and progression in our duty as a Corporate Parent and in order to make a real difference to the lives of those with experience of care across Scotland.

This progress report seeks to capture the work currently being undertaken, the learning gained from our work thus far and to highlight areas of good practice.

Examples of our progress and learning to deliver the priorities set out within our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024 are captured below in the form of case study examples. We hope this gives an overview of the range, breadth and variety of work undertaken and ongoing, which we will seek to build upon within our Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-2027.

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Progress, Learning and Promising Practice

Language and Stigma

All children and young people need to be treated with care and respect. The Care Review and The Promise remind us that the language of care is stigmatising for many people who have experience of care and that we need to focus on building a better narrative for everyone. Throughout the lifetime of our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024, we have raised awareness amongst Police Scotland officers and staff about the impact of language in order to change the way we speak, write, and refer to people with care experience.

Priorities

1. Raise awareness among Police Scotland staff about the impact that language has and how it affects our practice.
2. Work with children, young people, and other professionals to change the way we speak, write, and refer to care experience in our practice.

Actions

- In partnership with Each and Every Child we delivered training to selected police officers and staff across the service. Each and Every Child showed our staff how to utilise their Toolkit to reframe the language of care and tackle associated stigma, providing them with the learning and understanding to support them to reframe internal and external communications within each of their respective areas of work across Scotland to influence long lasting, positive change.

We supported the formation of a national advisory group of young people from the Care Experienced community in Lanarkshire with Who Cares? Scotland to enable meaningful community engagement. The advisory group created a “Language Glossary” to improve understanding and tackle stigma, which will be communicated to our workforce through posters in police stations across Scotland and form part of National Guidance to

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ensure our workforce communicate appropriately with the Care Experienced community. This included the removal of language with acronyms, for example, LAC, LAAC, as well as the word 'unit' when writing and speaking about children's houses.

- Our North East Division worked alongside Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Aberlour Futures Aberdeen, Children's Services Board, Children 1st, Children's Hearing Scotland, Includem, NHS Grampian, Barnardo's, Universities in Aberdeen and Scottish Children's Reporter to create 'Write Right about Me', a training course for all partners and local staff on the issues of language and stigmatisation of young people through the written word.
- In Fife the introduction of a single point of contact in local policing for Children's Houses provides a vital link between young people and carers (police, staff and Social Workers). Children House staff and Social Workers created a learning package which was delivered to police officers across Fife, highlighting the impact of language and also raising awareness regarding adverse childhood experiences (ACE's).
- In Tayside, local policing are building strong, stable relationships and responding to what children in their communities want, expect and need from the police service through regular engagement, informal activities and workshops. Dundee & Angus College host an annual multi-agency event across three of their campuses which seeks to promote healthy relationships for all students and with additional supports for those with care experience through the provision of advice and guidance on language and stigma, promoting strong and positive relations between our officers and students.
- Lothian and Scottish Borders are raising awareness of the impact of language in our interactions with others through their delivery of the 'Act, Don't ReAct' probationer training programme. The programme is delivered to all probationary Constables who join the division and covers two

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important models, namely The Communication Framework, and the Science of Interaction. These assist new officers in their understanding of their role, the importance of engagement and relationships. A series of practical exercises support officers learning allowing them to consider appropriate communication styles, understand the importance of first impressions, stereotypes, unconscious bias and how this can affect decision-making.

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Building Better Relationships

A healthy relationship is one where a young person is respected and feels valued for who they are. Our work to deliver our Corporate Parenting Vision has and will continue to focus on nurturing and sustaining positive relationships with and for children and young people with experience of care. Throughout the course of this plan, we did this by empowering our workforce to value and develop these crucial relationships.

Commitments

1. Renew and deliver trauma informed training, which reinforces the importance of relationships.
2. Engage with local Corporate Parenting networks to listen to other voices and embed local partnerships.
3. Provide mentoring opportunities to support children and young people with experiences of care.
4. Develop opportunities for our people who have experiences of care to talk about their experiences at work.

Actions

- We have refreshed and continue to deliver 'Understanding Childhood Trauma' inputs, providing an understanding of the impact of trauma on the lives of children and young people, the links between trauma, intergenerational trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) and their impact on behaviour and development. These learning sessions are delivered to Probationary officers and specialist Detective training courses, as well as the Early Intervention through Education course, aimed at officers/staff who engage with children in an education setting. This learning has been further extended to cover officers and staff within the Contact, Command and Control Contact Centres, custody suites, special constables, and Police Scotland Youth Volunteer co-ordinators.

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- The Police Scotland Care Experienced Colleagues Group provide a unique perspective of being an officer or staff member in Police Scotland and having care experience. Formed during the consultation stage of the 2021-2024 Plan, the group continues to attract new members from a variety of roles throughout the organisation. Together with Who Cares? Scotland, the group produced an animation and case study highlighting their experience of being in the organisation and being Care Experienced. This was assessed by Who Cares? Scotland as an example of 'demonstrably promoted collaboration and growth within an organisation on their Corporate Parenting journey'. Our national Children and Young People team provide information on how to become a member when attending internal events within Police Scotland and continue to provide support and guidance to external partners who are seeking to model similar staff groups within their organisations.
- Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services have worked in collaboration with Rossie Young People's Trust to deliver an engagement and learning event within Rossie Children's House, termed "CSI: Rossie". The event aimed to support groups of young people currently residing within the centre through provision of a positive experience of Police Scotland, a fun and interactive introduction to Forensic Science and Police Investigations and showcase employment opportunities across both areas. Over four days, young people acted as police officers, scene examiners and forensic experts in DNA and fingerprinting to investigate a mock break-in at their in-house cafe. By gathering and analysing the evidence they successfully identified the person responsible whilst considering support services for all involved. Capturing feedback from this first event will add to the development of similar events being planned throughout other areas of the country.
- We are aware that regardless of whether someone is Care Experienced or not, children and young people on occasion stay out beyond their set curfew. Local divisions continue to work with all care providers to ensure

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the use of both 'Not at Home' and 'Philomena' policies. These are detailed below:

- Not at Home Policy - If a child is 'Not at Home', carer/residential staff will take whatever action has been previously recorded in the Prevention Plan to contact the child with no requirement to contact police. Relevant parties will record decisions and actions to form part of any risk assessment.
- Philomena protocol – Applies to children who reside in private or local authority residential children's houses and to those in foster care. Social workers are also aware of the policy, therefore children who reside at their home address may also be applicable. This protocol includes a standard form, which care givers use to collate all relevant information in relation to each individual child. The form is held by the care giver and provided to police should the child be reported missing.

The 'Not at Home' and 'Philomena' protocols and learning have been rolled out nationally, supported by the National missing person coordinators forum and regular Divisional Health Checks conducted by the National Missing Person Unit.

- It is important we collaborate with all Corporate Parents across Scotland. Various networks, hosted by partners across the country, continue to support Police Scotland by providing intervention and prevention planning for Care Experienced children and young people.
- MCR Pathways' aim is to help children and young people with experiences of care to unlock their full potential, no matter the circumstances. We continue to advertise mentoring opportunities with MCR Pathways to our staff, many of whom now mentor young people within their free time in schools across Scotland. Mentors are fully trained and matched with an identified young person within their High School setting, meeting for one hour per week, encouraging and supporting them through positive relationships. MCR Pathways have delivered online interactive information

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sessions with officers and staff throughout Police Scotland to highlight their work and encourage members of our workforce to become volunteer mentors. MCR Pathways prioritise this support for young people within the care experience community and those living in families with addiction issues.

- Edinburgh have delivered 'See the Child, Not the Behaviour' inputs to various teams and officers across the Division, explaining a variety of areas impacting and affecting young people, including trauma, adverse childhood experiences, language and stigma. These inputs are provided to all new probationary Constables as part of the induction to their policing division. They further reinforce our roles and responsibilities as a Corporate Parent, highlighting the importance of language in ensuring all young people are treated with respect and courtesy.
- Our Divisional Youth Justice Sergeant in Edinburgh has collaborated with various partners, including the City of Edinburgh Council and other statutory and third sector organisations regarding Contextual Safeguarding, what this means to Corporate Parenting bodies involved with children and young people. A Language Document has been devised to assist in the use of preferred language against commonly used outdated wording and phrases, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with key terms aimed at Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Contextual Safeguarding, Community Guardians, Extra-Familial Harm and Peer on Peer Abuse.
- Supporting our children and young people is an important way of keeping them safe. Both the Youth Justice Sergeant and Missing Person Co-ordinator for Edinburgh regularly identify Care Experienced young people who come to their, or statutory partners attention, to ensure the provision of appropriate support. Collective discussions identify choices, pathways or diversionary opportunities that may be of interest or beneficial to the young person. This approach has seen many positive outcomes and

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improved relationships and interactions with those children and young people in residential houses but is also used in engagement with those who are Care Experienced at home or within different settings.

- Police Scotland Youth Volunteers is an inclusive programme proactively engaging with young people from a variety of backgrounds. The programme successfully supports numerous Care Experienced young people to increase their confidence and experience as they move towards a period of significant life decisions around education and employment.
- Our Missing Persons Co-ordinator in Fife holds regular forums with children's house staff, both in person and online to share good practice, learning and training opportunities on how to better support Care Experienced young people.
- The role of a School Engagement Officer and Staff within Police Scotland aims to build positive relationships and break down barriers with all children and young people within an educational setting. Throughout greater Glasgow's three local authority areas, 30 school-based officers continue to work closely with partners to provide educational support to Care Experienced young people; this includes educational inputs and informal support and engagement from various statutory and third sector partners. Positive relationships continue to be made with other agencies by attending local Corporate Parenting meetings.

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Supporting Children in Conflict with the Law

Care Experienced children and young people are over-represented in the criminal justice system with no evidence to suggest they engage in more offending behaviour than their peers. Research highlighted incidents within children's houses that were reported to police which would not ordinarily have merited a police response in terms of the minor nature of the incident or associated behaviour. It was apparent in many instances that care staff could offer a more appropriate response to the behaviour displayed in order to avoid minor acts of disorder, which would normally go unpunished within a home environment, resulting in a justice disposal and their unnecessary criminalisation.

Commitments

1. Continue with, and evaluate, the test of change to stop the unnecessary criminalisation of children and young people within residential care and consider national roll-out across Scotland in all local policing divisions.
2. Improve the experience for Care Experienced children and young people within custody suites to develop a trauma-led approach to their care and wellbeing.

Actions

- With a focus on our Corporate Parenting duties, and in response to the growing evidence and research relating to the unnecessary criminalisation of children in care settings, Police Scotland identified opportunities to alter existing practice and enhance partnerships between police and children's houses to better support our children and young people. A test of change pilot, first undertaken in Dumfries & Galloway with support from Who Cares? Scotland to ensure that the voice of Care Experienced children and young people informed the approach taken. The pilot has since been expanded to Greater Glasgow Division, where it is now known as the 'The Respect Programme'. The test of change is now embedded within twenty-seven children's houses throughout the Greater Glasgow area and a further eight within East Dunbartonshire. The provision of alternative

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responses to minor incidents, within strict parameters, ensures behaviours are resolved in house without the need for police attendance. The pilot also allows for a non-criminal disposal to be taken if police are called and deem this appropriate. Reports show this pilot has led to a significant reduction in unnecessary criminalisation of children with experiences of care. An academic evaluation is underway and will inform next steps towards a national rollout of the Respect Programme. At the time of publication there are no timescales for wider rollout but work in this area continues.

- The 'Not at Home' aspect of the test of change has now been rolled out nationally across Police Scotland to ensure we provide a supportive, proportionate, and proactive response to children and young people who go missing from a care setting. The 'Not at Home' category can be used by Local Authorities and other care providers in cases where there are grounds to believe that the child's current circumstances involve no apparent risk, or the level of risk is a tolerable one not meeting the threshold for a police-led missing person investigation. For example, a child failing to return from contact with family, staff/carers knowing the child is still in the family home or the child being or staying with others without consent and where there are no concerns for their wellbeing or safety. In these types of circumstances, it is permissible to have a single-agency response and there is no need for the police to be contacted with the safety and protection of the child at the centre of every response. This minimises unnecessary police contact with care experienced young people, acknowledging that the way we respond when a child goes missing, and when they return – either as a single agency or on a multi-agency basis – will have a significant impact on whether a child is likely to go missing again, and ensuring that we adopt an appropriate, risk assessed response for every child.
- Police custody suites can be a traumatic experience for a child or young person. The London Road Child Custody Suite in Glasgow provides a 'child friendly' facility including adapted cells, a discrete charge bar and the

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ability to provide distraction tools and integrated partnership working on-site. Police Scotland have co-produced an animation with young people, for children who have been arrested and taken into a police station to provide information on the processes, their rights and what support is available to them.

- We have collaborated with The Scottish Police Authority to co-deliver a series of multi-agency workshops focused on 'Places of Safety', acknowledging that the issue of 'Children in Conflict with the Law' is multi-faceted and that we and the Scottish Police Authority are fully committed to working in partnership to keep people safe, while reducing the impact of children being held in police custody. This is a long-term piece of work which must involve many other key stakeholders moving forward.
- We continue to work in partnership with The Scottish Prison Service within HMP & YOI Polmont to support the delivery of a voluntary "Positive Choices" course, which aims to engage and educate participants on a range of topics, some of which may well have resulted in them coming into conflict with the law, whilst seeking to positively influence future choices & behaviours and prevent or reduce further offending. This programme is based on a trauma informed & rights-based approach, ensuring participants have a voice throughout and includes interactive sessions delivered by people with relevant lived experience. Open discussions are encouraged throughout with key messages shared around the main areas of offending behaviour and other factors that typically bring people to the adverse attention of police and other authorities.
- Keeping officers, staff, and members of the public safe is our priority. A National review into child restraint is being carried out within Operational Safety & First Aid Training.
- In Edinburgh the Youth Justice Assessor and Missing Person Co-ordinator regularly review incidents involving children and young people. At the earliest and most appropriate times they look at opportunities to work with

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the children and young people, their families, and other professionals to prevent continuation or escalation of behaviour, to prevent them coming into conflict with the law.

Offering Employment and Development Opportunities

Ensuring employment and development opportunities are available to all children and young people, our 2021-2024 Plan set out our aim to ensure children, young people and adults who have experiences of care are aware of, consider and feel supported to join Police Scotland. This can be as a youth volunteer, member of police staff, a special constable or to become a police officer.

Commitments

1. Provide the option to self-identify on all Police Scotland application forms and offer mentoring opportunities to all who meet any standard entry requirements.
2. Provide focussed recruitment events for Care Experienced young people and adults.

Actions

- We co-hosted our first Emergency Services Engagement Event which provided the opportunity for children and young people from the care experienced community to meet and engage with uniformed and non-uniformed members of each emergency service to learn about the variety of roles across each organisation. The first event, aimed at 16-year-olds and over from the Care Experienced community was held at the Scottish Fire and Rescue training centre in Cambuslang, Glasgow, led by Who Cares? Scotland in collaboration with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland, Disclosure Scotland, and the Scottish Police Authority.

The children and young people in attendance found the event engaging and worthwhile with feedback from those who attended indicating they felt trust had been built and barriers were broken down, successfully enhancing public confidence, and promoting career opportunities to the Care Experienced community. The event was an opportunity to gain an understanding of the emergency services and learn about the wide range

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of roles that exist across all services, speaking to officers and staff from each organisation in an open and relaxed environment. Due to its success, plans are ongoing to replicate this event and roll it out within the North, South and East of Scotland, with the aim of making these annual events.

- The Police Officer recruitment application process now acknowledges care experience as a protected characteristic. A section within each application form provides the definition of care experience and allowing potential applicants the option to disclose they are part of the Care Experienced community together with the option of additional guidance and practical support to support them through the application process, akin to existing support offered by our Positive Action Team to applicants with other protected characteristics. We understand that a person's care identity and experience of care is a deeply personal experience and therefore there is no expectation for the applicant to self-identify as being Care Experienced at any time, however, any declaration is treated with respect and confidentiality and will not impact on their selection process. We understand that individuals with Care Experience sometimes feel that the application process is more difficult than their non-Care Experienced peers might find it.
- The Police Scotland Youth Volunteer (PSYV) scheme promotes a practical way for young people to understand policing by supporting the police in their local area through volunteering. as part of this, children, and young people with experiences of care are given a chance for their voice to be heard and encouraged to promote good citizenship. Across Scotland local PSYV co-ordinators work to promote applications from care experienced young people.
- Mentoring services to support Care Experienced young people are being supported Nationally throughout Police Scotland in collaboration with MCR Pathways, to promote the benefits of this support, with many officers and staff across the country volunteering as mentors. Our North East Division, Early Effective Intervention (EEI) staff, along with School Based Officers

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and in partnership with MCR Pathways, hosted a talent taster day at Nelson Street for Banff Academy and St Machar Academy students who are part of the MCR Pathways mentoring service. This showcased the work of different departments throughout Police Scotland such as Road Policing, Officer Safety Training, Dog Unit, Dive Unit & Public Order.

- Edinburgh's 'Sidestep' programme works with children and young people to look at ways of providing opportunities for them. It is run by Action for Children who work in partnership with Edinburgh City Council and Police Scotland, as well as the VOW Project which provides mentors with lived experience of care and/or the justice system. The opportunities are wide and varied and are dependent on the person, and their potential likes and needs. Probationary constables have delivered inputs to explain the police recruitment process to encourage Care Experienced young people to consider a career within Police Scotland.

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Engage, Evaluate and Learn

At Police Scotland we strive for continuous improvement in our role as a Corporate Parent. We seek to adapt to the needs of our Care Experienced community by listening to their voices in a meaningful way ensuring we embed learning within our practices.

Commitments

1. Prioritise our engagement with Care Experienced children, young people and adults through our Contact and Engagement Strategy and our Public Confidence Board.
2. Develop our newly established Care Experienced Colleagues Group, empowering this group to give direction and guidance on Corporate Parenting topics and issues.
3. Form an internal Corporate Parenting Working Group, regularly review our priorities and our Action Plan.

Actions

- We are developing a proposal to include the voice of children and young people in our policies and procedures, Respect Programme evaluation and engagement on learning resources. It will include a child right's-based approach to policing, in line with the requirements of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, and particularly a respect for children's views under Article 12. This proposal is being considered under the Equality and Diversity Service Delivery group.
- We have employed two members of staff on a six-month contract through the Scottish Youth Parliament to assist with the planning and engagement of the new 2024-27 Corporate Parenting Plan. The new Youth Engagement Officers, who are Care Experienced, will provide a strategic oversight to meet the different needs and intersectionality of a broad range of children and young people with care experience.

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- Recognising the effects of trauma and adversity, responses can be made in ways that prevent further harm whilst supporting recovery, addressing inequalities & improving life chances for all. By looking at everything through a trauma informed lens, we can understand and improve our responses at every level throughout our organisation. We continue to deliver inputs on Understanding Childhood Trauma to officers and staff at Probationer and Detective Training courses at the Scottish Police College. This has been further rolled out to colleagues within C3 Division, CJSD & special constables. This training is part of our commitment to having a trauma informed workforce and responsive nation as part of the shared ambition of the Scottish Government, COSLA and partners from across Scotland.
- Researching triggers, movements and interactions of Children and Young People who go missing is an important step in supporting them. We are collaborating with John Moores University, Liverpool looking at an Academic research project of a PhD study Part of this study involves a PHD student interviewing children and young people who have been missing to gauge their views and inform police/partnership practices preventions and responses through lived experience.
- Trauma Informed Champions are the point of contact for their area and best placed to attend at children's houses in the first instance. Within our Northeast Division, 40 officers and staff have been trained as Trauma Informed Champions, through the sharing of TURAS modules, provided by NHS to support colleagues. Following the initial Trauma Informed input, workshops/drop-in sessions have taken place with staff from Children's Houses in Aberdeen. Where possible and with the exception of an emergency response, they will have the appropriate skill set in relation to being trauma informed. Police Scotland support the Trauma Informed Champions, who in turn support workforce development with regards to raising awareness of trauma and look to building positive relationships between the children and young people and staff in children's houses within their areas to break down barriers with police.

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- We continue to engage with Champions Boards throughout Scotland who play a significant part through their voice and dedication of raising awareness of Care Experienced children and young people. They are heavily linked with Social Work and other agencies and organisations where learning can be taken from their awareness and experiences. This is ongoing work and extremely helpful in looking at the impacts and what can be done to improve the voice and vision of children and young people.

Conclusion

Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024 set out what mattered to us through our Vision, Priorities and Key Themes. We ensured continuous evaluation reflection and learning across the lifetime of this plan, considering the voices of the care experienced community in Scotland in a meaningful way in order to ensure we are and continue to be responsive to their needs. We will continue to build upon and strengthen the scaffolding of support we provide to and for our Care Experienced community, working alongside our partners, to continue development of a shared understanding through better use of data and practices to evaluate our progress and inform our commitments within the new Corporate Parenting Plan 2024 -2027.

Contact Details / Further Information

For further information on Police Scotland's National Corporate Parenting Plan please contact: PolicingTogetherChildrenandYoungPeople@scotland.police.uk