



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

Police Scotland Corporate Parenting Plan

2021 - 2024





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Foreword

Police Scotland's purpose is to improve the safety and well-being of people, places and communities in Scotland. Children and young people are an integral part of our communities and their needs must be represented in all aspects of policing.

We recognise that our Care Experienced children and young people are a community with different needs, expectations and experiences of engaging with and seeking the assistance of Police Scotland.

In 2015, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 created the legal framework for statutory organisations to become Corporate Parents, and to improve, where possible, the lives of Care Experienced young people in Scotland.

In 2018, we published our first Corporate Parenting Plan 2018-21, we have now reviewed our actions and reflected on our progress. In November 2020, we formed our Corporate Parent Advisory Group, co-chaired by Who Cares? Scotland, drawing together other organisations who advocate and support Care Experienced children, young people and adults. Our Advisory Group has helped us shape our priorities and supported our engagement with Care Experienced children, young people and adults, the statutory and third sector organisations who support them and our own staff.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international human rights treaty, was ratified by the UK Government in 1991. We will continue to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the UNCRC by embedding it within all policies and

procedures, and it will shape our Plan and the work we do. We have engaged with, and listened to the independent Care Review and commit to work with The Promise Scotland Team as it sets out the priorities for change in Scotland.

The effects of the pandemic are still being felt and research tells us that some children have been disproportionately affected. We will continue to work with others to review how this has, and will impact on Care Experienced young people.

The vision for our Corporate Parenting Plan is to contribute to a care system that prioritises a child's need for a happy childhood and results in positive experiences and outcomes. Our three-year Plan sets out our priorities for achieving this vision.

We will focus on language and stigma, building better relationships, supporting children in conflict with the law, providing employment and development opportunities and continuing to engage, evaluate and learn throughout the lifetime of this Plan. We will provide governance through our Action Plan, reviewed annually.

As we embark on fulfilling the commitments we have made in this Plan, I am committed to ensuring we take a children's rights-based approach in all that we do now and in the future to ensure we keep The Promise. Therefore, I am delighted to endorse our new Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24.

ACC Gary Ritchie,

Partnerships Prevention and Community Wellbeing Division

What is a Corporate Parent?

A Corporate Parent is any organisation either public, private or voluntary who has responsibility to make decisions that impact on Care Experienced young people in Scotland.

Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, as a Corporate Parents we must;

- Be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of Care Experienced young people;
- Assess the needs of Care Experienced young people for the services and support we provide;
- Promote the interests of Care Experienced young people;
- Provide Care Experienced young people opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing;
- Take action to help Care Experienced young people access the opportunities we are providing and make use of services and access support available
- Take any other action we consider appropriate to improve the way we work with Care Experienced young people;
- Collaborate with other corporate parents.

The latest figures shows that 14,015 children or young people are looked after in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2020). This includes our young people in foster care, kinship care, those who are looked after at home, residential care, and secure care or with prospective adopters.

While there may be less than 2% of children in Scotland being looked after, there are many more thousands who are Care Experienced, having spent time in the care system in the past.

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. Our operational and community teams will interact with Care Experienced children and young people every day; casual interactions in the street; planned visits to schools, children's houses; responding to calls where young people or their family need our help. Our specialist teams will be there to support Care Experienced children and young people whether we are investigating crime, as part of a multi-agency team or those behind the scenes putting together the policy and procedures in place to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities.

Whatever the role or responsibility, we must consider how best to support Care Experienced children and young people. We will do this as Police Scotland but also with our many partners. In police terms, "every contact leaves a trace", and this provides a great opportunity to support children and young people and adapting our policing style. We must work together across the Police Scotland workforce, to be considerate to issues that affect Care Experienced children and young people. We will only know this if we continue to assess their needs, and listen to what they tell us matters to them. We must be an advocate for them and provide opportunities to access our services.



Engagement

We have carefully considered how we assess the needs of Care Experienced children and young people to make this Corporate Parenting Plan reflective of these needs.

Many voices have had an input in this Plan, and none more important than Care Experienced people themselves. Supported by Who Cares? Scotland, we have carried out workshops with young people, some of their feedback to us is mentioned throughout this Plan and many more took the time to respond to our survey. We have formed a Care Experienced colleagues group with our staff who provide a unique perspective reflecting on their own experience as children and now as police officers and corporate parents.

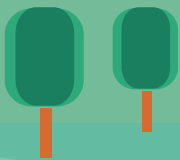
We formed our Corporate Parenting Advisory Group with organisations supporting children's rights; Who Cares? Scotland, Children and Young Persons Commissioner for Scotland, Youthlink

Scotland, Scottish Network for the Reduction of Restrictive Practices and supported by the Promise Scotland.

This group's advice and guidance has been invaluable for the review of the existing Police Scotland Corporate Parenting Plan, the engagement for and priorities for the revised Plan 2021-24. We sought the views of our external partners through our online survey and appreciate the feedback from the nearly 140 responses.

We carried out workshops with our own staff, with such a diverse range of roles, responsibilities and experience. The sessions were so worthwhile that a new Corporate Parenting Working Group will be formed so we can continue this engagement, share good practice and monitor our progress.

We understand the value of engaging with children, young people and adults who have experience of care and this will be included in our priorities for the next three years and beyond.





Our Corporate Parenting Vision and Priorities

As Corporate Parents our vision is;

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

We have set out our priorities under key themes; language and stigma, building better relationships, supporting children in conflict with the law, providing employment and development opportunities and continuing to engage, evaluate and learn throughout the lifetime of this Plan.

These priorities will be supported by our Action Plan and will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

This vision and our priorities are embedded in the Joint Strategy for Policing (2020) - Policing for a safe, protected and resilient Scotland.





Our Corporate Parenting Priorities 2021-2024

Language and Stigma

The language of care is stigmatising for children, young people and adults who are Care Experienced.

Care Experienced children, young people and adults tell us that the language needs to change to normalise their lives and shift away from "professional speak". For children, unintentional use of this professionalised language compounds a sense of them being different.

We will -

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

You should have grown up by now

~ Care Experienced young person





Building Better Relationships

The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with Police Scotland. We will make every effort to nurture and sustain positive and important relationships for Care Experienced children and young people. We know that we must empower our workforce to value, develop and nurture those with Care Experience.

Police make people that are already vulnerable feel even more vulnerable

~ Care Experienced young person

We will -

- Renew and deliver trauma informed training, which reinforces the importance of relationships.
- Engage with local Corporate Parenting networks to listen to other voices and embed local partnerships.
- Provide mentoring opportunities to support Care Experienced children and young people.
- Develop opportunities for our people who are Care Experienced to talk about their experiences at work. We will listen to them to understand and value their experiences to create a safe and positive workplace culture for everyone.





Supporting Children in Conflict with the Law

Care Experienced children and young people are over-represented in the criminal justice system but there is no evidence that they engage in more offending behaviour than their peers. However, the consequences of their behaviour, whilst in care, are much more likely to result in police attendance and, therefore, criminalisation.

Our workforce must be supported to ensure a caring, relational and trauma-informed response to challenging behaviour. We must recognise that children will show risk taking behaviour that may amount to criminal conduct.

We will -

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

Prevention by means of education would help

~ Care Experienced young person





Offering Employment and Development Opportunities

The Police Service of Scotland is a welcoming organisation which must reflect the communities we serve. We want Care Experienced young people and adults to be aware of, consider and then feel supported to join Police Scotland as a youth volunteer, member of police staff, a Special Constable or to become a police officer.

We will -

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

We are people and individuals
~ Care Experienced young person





Engage, Evaluate and Learn

Our Corporate Parenting Plan sets our vision and our priorities but we must continue to engage and evaluate what we do so we can continually learn and improve. We will adapt to the needs of our Care Experienced community by listening to Care Experienced voice in a meaningful way and embed this in our practice.

With our partners, we will continue to develop our shared understanding by using better data to evaluate our progress and priorities annually.

Police need to look at it with fresh eyes and act differently

~ Care Experienced young person

We will -

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





Contact Details / Further Information

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

