

OFFICIAL

Police Scotland

Corporate Parenting Plan 2024 - 2027

OFFICIAL

Contents

Police Scotland 1

Corporate Parenting Plan 2024 - 2027 1

 Foreword..... 3

 What is a Corporate Parent?..... 5

 Engagement..... 7

 Our Corporate Parenting Vision and Commitments 9

 Our Vision 9

 Our Commitments 9

 Language 12

 Relationships..... 13

 Scaffolding 14

Conclusion 16

Contact Details and Further Information 16

OFFICIAL

Foreword

As a proud and dedicated Corporate Parent, I am pleased to introduce Police Scotland's Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-27. Across Police Scotland we recognise the vital role we all play in upholding The Promise Scotland made on 5th February 2020 to its children to ensure they grow up loved, safe and respected.

Our children form such an important part of the communities we serve, and we will continue to ensure that we make progress at national and local levels to Keep the Promise Scotland made to them. We will do this by supporting and promoting their needs and wellbeing, whilst nurturing our relationships with those with experience of care in our communities.

I am incredibly proud of the progress Police Scotland has made so far. Throughout the lifetime of our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24, we have worked tirelessly to enhance our provision of services to people with experience of care. Full details of the work ongoing across our service is detailed within our Corporate Parenting Plan 21-24 review, however some highlights of this work have included a collaboration with Each and Every Child, an initiative which builds understanding and shifts public attitudes towards care experience in Scotland, by delivering language and reframing training to staff across our organisation. The continued promotion of our internal Care Experienced Colleagues Group has resulted in increased representation, ensuring that we are responsive to the voices of people with experience of care across our service. We have also worked with our recruitment teams and Care Experienced Colleagues Group members to provide support to people with experience of care who are applying to join Police Scotland officer; and co-hosted our first Emergency Services Engagement Event with partners for children with experience of care. Together with our colleagues in Forensic Services we hosted a fun four-day event at Rossie Children's House, teaching children about forensic science and policing and will deliver this more widely to children in secure care settings throughout our next plan.

This year saw the introduction of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 which strengthened and protected children's rights in Scotland and has ensured children's voices are heard and are a significant factor in decision making for Police Scotland and our partners. The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 sees the introduction of real

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

changes which will improve children's experiences of the care and justice systems. We welcome the enhanced protection and support these Acts of Scottish Parliament bring for children across Scotland.

Police Scotland have not only key legal responsibilities but a moral obligation to promote and support the physical, emotional, and social development of all children throughout their childhood and into adulthood. We recognise the importance of our role in the lives of children with experience of care to ensure they grow up nurtured, loved and can realise their full potential.

We have reviewed our progress to date and together with extensive meaningful engagement and consultation with children with experience of care, the statutory and third sector organisations that support them and our Care Experienced Colleagues Group, we have ensured our Vision and Commitments for this plan are purposeful, inclusive and reflective of our journey so far and our ambition going forward.

'Through collaboration and relationships, Police Scotland will support people with experience of care, throughout their lives. We will show this through our engagement, language and actions.' (Vision)

We will deliver our Vision by focussing on four key commitment areas, namely Language, Relationships, Scaffolding and Opportunities.

Over the course of this plan, we commit to improve the equality of opportunity and outcomes for all of Scotland's care experienced communities, ensuring that decisions affecting them are made with their best interests at heart. We will continue to work collaboratively to reduce the disproportionate criminalisation of children and young people at the same time improving justice outcomes for them.

Alongside our commitments, we will continuously monitor our progress, reflecting on and understanding the impact of our activities within each commitment area to ensure we make a positive difference to the children, families, and communities who have experience of care and for whom The Promise was made.

We are proud to be one of the many organisations named as Corporate Parents in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and I am delighted to endorse our new Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-27.

ACC Catriona Paton
Policing Together

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

What is a Corporate Parent?

A Corporate Parent is any organisation either public, private, or voluntary who has specific duties and responsibilities towards children and adults with experience of care.

Police Scotland is one of many organisations and individuals who are named as Corporate Parents within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which provides protections and support for people with experience of care. We recognise the importance of not only our legal duty, but our moral obligation to uphold the rights and protect the wellbeing of children and adults.

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

- Be aware of matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of people with experience of care.
- Assess the needs of people with experience of care for the services and support we provide.
- Promote the interests of people with experience of care.
- Provide people with experience of care with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take action to help people with experience of care to 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 people with experience of care.
- Collaborate with other Corporate Parents.

The terms “Care Experienced” or “people with experience of care” refer to anyone who has lived or is currently living in care, in settings such as residential care, foster care, kinship care (both formally and informally), are adopted, or living at home with a supervision order.

Whilst we use the phrase “Corporate Parent” as is set out by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 throughout this plan, we recognise that people with experience of care told the Independent Care Review that they found this term “cold and official” and that it did not show care or understanding.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

The community of people with experience of care is diverse and each of its members are unique with differing preferences on the use of certain words, terms, and labels. Throughout this plan we refer to people with experience of care. We believe this is more inclusive language as it speaks to the diverse range of experiences and the potential lifelong impacts of experience of care. We endorse and agree with the Independent Care Review that we must ensure Scotland's children grow up loved, safe and respected. We will welcome and reflect upon all feedback on our use of language.

Our care system in Scotland seeks to provide the stable, loving, and supportive environment that every child needs to thrive. It offers a strong foundation with responsive support available, for as long as required, and as a Corporate Parent, Police Scotland plays a key role in supporting this framework.

Everyone across our organisation has a responsibility as a Corporate Parent and due to the wide variety of roles and responsibilities that our officers and staff perform, this will mean different things across our organisation. Whatever the role or responsibility, we will work to ensure the rights of people with experience of care are being upheld.

To ensure we fulfil these responsibilities, we must continue to assess the needs of and listen to what those with experience of care collectively, and individually, tell us matters to them, recognising experience of care is a lifelong right. By doing so we will ensure we advocate for people with experience of care in our communities and provide equitable opportunities to access our services.

This process of continuous engagement and assessment, together with the strong relationships Police Scotland has already formed across our Corporate Parenting partnerships, will ensure we work collaboratively to do all we can to support our community who have experienced care.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Engagement

Many people helped create this plan, but the most important input came from people with experience of care.

We have carefully thought about what people with experience of care need from Police Scotland to make sure we, as a Corporate Parent, do everything we can to help them to grow up loved, nurtured, safe and respected. Police Scotland commissioned Scottish Youth Parliament to lead a process of engagement and participation to run alongside our development of this Plan.

Two Youth Engagement Workers, who have experience of care, were recruited to design, deliver, and evaluate an engagement and participation programme which involved a survey and a series of focus groups. The engagement approach was also co-designed with Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), with experience of care, who collaborated in the survey creation process and analysed the results gathered from young people with experience of care. They engaged and facilitated workshops with children and adults to hear their ideas, and we have included their feedback throughout the Plan. The Police Scotland Care Experienced Colleagues Group also shared their feedback to help shape this Plan. This Group consists of police officers and members of police staff with experience of care and their input was invaluable.

Finally, we brought together a Corporate Parenting Advisory Group of organisations working who work with and advocate for people with experience of care. Their professional wisdom and guidance helped us review our previous Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24 and shape the development of this new Plan.

We know it is important to listen, and actively listen to, to children, adults, and communities and act based on what we hear. Engagement will remain a priority for the next three years of this plan and beyond. Police Scotland's Vision 2030 is focussed on:

Safer Communities, Less Crime, Supported Victims and a Thriving Workforce.

We are committed to engaging, listening, and responding to the public, our communities, colleagues, and stakeholder insights to better inform our services.

Our public [Engagement Hub](#) provides more information about what we are doing to involve our diverse communities in the delivery of policing across Scotland.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

“Provide ways for CEP [Care Experienced People] to easily, regularly, and meaningfully feed into Police Scotland policy and service delivery.”

Quote from SYP Engagement Report.

OFFICIAL

Our Corporate Parenting Vision and Commitments

Our Vision

Through collaboration and relationships, Police Scotland will support people with experience of care, throughout their lives. We will show this through our engagement, language and actions.

Our Commitments

In support of our Vision, we have made commitments in four key areas:

- Language
- Relationships
- Scaffolding
- Opportunities

These commitments will be supported by our Action Plan and will be reviewed and refreshed annually. Each year a progress report is submitted to the Scottish Police Authority.

The commitments in this plan remain largely similar to the priorities set out within the Corporate Parenting Plan 2021 – 2024. Whilst we believe as a service, we have made significant progress throughout the lifetimes of each of our previous Corporate Parenting Plans, we also acknowledge that this work needs to continue at both a national and local level to ensure we Keep The Promise. The commitments we have set out link directly with the Promise Plan 2024-2030 and are relatable directly to policing and our delivery of services. We will ensure that work already underway continues at pace as well as taking forward new opportunities to enhance the services we provide to people with experience of care.

Key initiatives have been carried out within Police Scotland's 2021-2024 plan and will continue throughout the course of this Plan. These focus on improving relationships, collaboration and nurturing inclusivity within the organisation. Some key areas we will be focussing on within the new Plan include:

OFFICIAL

- Language and Training: Priority will be made to promote kind and respectful language amongst colleagues, with plans to refresh training and create an appropriate language poster to be rolled out Nationally.
- Forensic Collaboration & Partner Engagement: Collaborative work with partners will continue, including a Forensic Collaboration pilot across Children's Houses, Emergency Services Engagement events, and enhanced promotion of MCR Pathways, a national award-winning mentoring program.
- Unnecessary Criminalisation for those with experience of care: The 'Respect' programme aims to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children in care by addressing minor incidents within care establishments. When an incident involving a child in a children's house is reported to the police, the programme seeks to resolve the issue without further police action, allowing for internal support procedures to handle the situation, similar to the way it would be managed in a traditional home environment. Additionally, efforts will be made to improve processes to ensure that people with experience of care entering police custody receive appropriate support and are connected to relevant services. This approach focuses on supporting vulnerable individuals rather than criminalising them, in line with broader goals of care and rehabilitation.
- Career Support: Police Scotland's Positive Action Team in recruitment and Care Experienced Colleagues Group will continue to encourage and support those with experience of care wishing to pursue careers within Police Scotland.
- Ongoing Local Initiatives: Local Divisions within Police Scotland play a crucial role in supporting and implementing the national priorities. Their active involvement is essential for ensuring these priorities are effectively carried out at the grassroots level. Local divisions contribute by focusing on specific initiatives, adapting them to their communities, and working closely with the National Children and Young People Team within Policing Together division for ongoing review, support, and alignment with broader objectives. Their engagement is key to the success and delivery of the overall Plan.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

All work is governed by an internal Governance structure with an ongoing internal Action Plan to focus on delivery.

During the review process, we identified areas for improvement in delivery and recording of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities, particularly at local levels. To ensure a consistent commitment to the delivery of this Plan across all local and specialist divisions, we have arranged a Police Scotland wide launch event. The event will be hosted by a member of the Executive Team for Police Scotland, with representatives from across all local, national and specialist divisions attending. The launch will include a tabletop discussion, whereby support and guidance will be provided to all officers with responsibilities for the delivery of our Commitments within their respective business areas, highlighting the importance of our role as a Corporate Parent. We aim to collectively achieve the commitments set out in this plan.

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

Engagement, evaluation, and review will ensure continuous progress is made within each of these areas.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Language

Everyone should be treated with care and respect. Both the institutionalised nature of language used within the setting of care and the language used when speaking about people with experience of care can often add to the stigma of care, which has come from lack of knowledge and understanding of experiencing care.

We must focus on building acceptable language for everyone and will continue to work alongside other Corporate Parents and partners to ensure we all use similar kind and understanding words when speaking or writing about people with experience of care. We always welcome feedback on our use of language and we will continue to learn from this.

Commitment

We will use kind, understanding language, showing people with experience of care dignity, fairness, and respect. This commitment will ensure through training and learning that we continue to raise awareness of stigma, confirming understanding and inclusivity of people with experience of care in Scotland across our workforce.

We will:

- Refresh our training for our staff to continue raising awareness of our duties as Corporate Parents. We will highlight the appropriate use of language, outlining how our language can impact those with experience of care.
- Through participation and engagement with children, adults and our partners, we will continue work to change the way we talk and write about people with experience of care to show empathy and compassion making them feel respected and understood.

Quote from young person with experience of care when asked about their relationship with police officers:

“I feel as if from the moment an officer hears I have experience of the care system, they have already decided who I am, and who I truly am will never change the picture they have painted of me in their mind.”

Source SYP Engagement Report.

OFFICIAL

Relationships

A healthy relationship is one where a person is respected and feels valued.

Building and maintaining positive trusting relationships between our workforce and children, adults and their families is a key part of ensuring that we Keep The Promise. We will support and encourage our workforce to nurture these relationships.

Commitment

Police Scotland will make every effort to provide the right support, at the right time to nurture and sustain positive and important relationships with people with experience of care in Scotland. We recognise that traumatic experiences can have a significant lifelong impact on people with experience of care. We know that we must empower our staff to recognise where people have been affected by trauma, respond in ways that prevent further harm and provide support to aid their recovery.

We will:

- Build upon and strengthen mentoring opportunities for all staff across Police Scotland to help people grow and succeed.
- Continue our work towards becoming a trauma informed and responsive organisation ensuring our staff understand and respond to trauma appropriately.
- Support our officers and staff to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to work with children and adults with experience of care in a trauma-informed way.

Quote from young person with experience of care sharing their views on their treatment by police officers:

“I've had traumatic encounters with police that have strongly affected my view of the officers in my area and the way the profession treats vulnerable people in society.”

Source SYP Engagement Report.

Scaffolding

Like scaffolding constructed around a building to provide support, we will continue to work collaboratively to ensure our services are tailored to the needs of people with experience of care to enhance their wellbeing and provide stability. We will listen properly to the voices of those with lived and living experience of care to improve the experiences of those who come in conflict with the law, ensuring a rights-based youth justice approach, building on the [Kilbrandon](#) principles. We will build additional support for people with experience of care when they need it, providing scaffolding to help nurture them to flourish and grow.

Commitment

We are dedicated to actively listening to and understanding the perspectives of individuals who are in conflict with the law. By engaging with their experiences, we aim to identify areas for improvement and implement meaningful changes that enhance their journey through the justice system. Our goal is to create a fair, supportive, and responsive environment.

We will:

- Reduce the disproportionate and unnecessary criminalisation of children with experience of care.
- Continuously improve the experience for all children and adults where it is proportionate and necessary for them to be brought into a Police custody setting. We will ensure we adopt a trauma informed approach and always ensure their rights are upheld.
- Improve justice outcomes for children and adults with experience of care ensuring they receive the appropriate support, and are signposted to, and provided with opportunities to access support services.

SYP Engagement report on number of people with experience of care who did not feel fully informed of their rights whilst in police custody.

Of those who reported via our survey that they had been in conflict with the law, 54% reported not feeling fully informed of their rights when in police custody.

Source SYP Engagement Report.

OFFICIAL

Opportunities

Children with experience of care told us they want to feel included, supported and valued as they explore opportunities for their future.

By providing opportunities for children to explore career pathways across our organisation, we will help children and young people gain confidence, develop a sense of purpose, encouraging new possibilities for their future and challenge any assumptions and reservations they may have about careers in Policing.

Our aim is to create an environment where people with experience of care are empowered to follow their dreams, equipped with the skills and confidence needed to thrive, and provided with equitable access to employment opportunities. In doing so, we seek to build a sense of belonging and purpose, ensuring they feel their unique potential is recognised and valued.

Commitment

We will ensure that people with experience of care are supported to explore and apply for career and volunteering opportunities across our organisation. By offering guidance, mentorship, information, and resources, we will help them navigate challenges and opportunities to build their futures.

We will:

- Support and mentor people with experience of care when applying for a career within Police Scotland.
- Continue to run focussed recruitment and awareness events for people who have experience of care.
- Collaborate with our colleagues in Scottish Police Authority to build positive engagement and relationships with children within children's houses and secure accommodation by delivering interactive sessions and activities.

Thoughts of children and young people with experience of care for their future.

Multiple young people who responded to (the) survey expressed their desire for programmes and initiatives that specifically address the needs of the care experienced community, such as mentorship, counselling, and community engagement activities. Source SYP Engagement Report

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Conclusion

Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2024 – 2027 sets out our Vision and Commitments as an organisation dedicated to supporting those with experience of care across Scotland. By engaging with our community who have experience of care and working closely with our partners, we will gather insights, monitor our progress, and continue work to ensure we keep The Promise. Through this collaborative approach, we will identify opportunities for growth and make the necessary changes to consistently enhance the support and care we provide.

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations who contributed to this Plan through our Advisory Group:

- Who Cares? Scotland
- Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
- YouthLink Scotland
- Each and Every Child
- Children in Scotland
- Young Scot, Care Inspectorate
- Scottish Violence Reduction Unit
- The Promise Scotland.
- Police Scotland's Care Experience Colleagues Group
- Scottish Police Authority
- Scottish Youth Parliament
- Special thanks to Zander Newman and Hope Taylor (Youth Engagement)

Contact Details and Further Information

For further information on Police Scotland's National Corporate Parenting Plan please contact:

PolicingTogetherChildrenandYoungPeople@scotland.police.uk

OFFICIAL