

Cyrenians

KEEPING FAMILIES
TOGETHER
WITH CASHBACK FOR
COMMUNITIES
2020/2021



"It is the first time I felt that someone was listening to what I wanted to change and not telling me what I had to do"

Our project is specifically targeted at young people (aged 12+) across Scotland who are at greatest risk of spiralling further into the criminal justice system.

We provide intergenerational support for whole families to build positive supportive relationships. Research on desistance and resilience shows clear links between positive supportive relationships and reduction in offending.



Keeping Families Together

At any one time in Scotland, up to 84 young people can be in secure accommodation. The aim of such secure care units is 'to provide intensive support and safe boundaries to help these highly vulnerable children re-engage and move forward positively in their communities' [1].

Until now, there has been no national approach to offering the same level of support to young people and their families upon entering and leaving care across all five units in Scotland. Without support, the issues affecting families and young people – whether the impact of earlier ACEs (adverse childhood experiences), low income and related stresses – can be left unchecked. Communication can break down, and relationships can fracture, with devastating consequences for the young person their families and the wider community.

Strong, positive relationships are essential to a person's health and wellbeing, and that could not be truer for young people. At what can only be an enormously stressful and difficult period in a young person's life, it is only right that both the young person and the rest of the family receive the support they need to maintain those relationships, and for the young person, where possible, to return home with a positive route forward.

[1] Secure Care Strategic Board (2019) Report of the Secure Care Strategic Board to Scottish Ministers. Available online at: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3468/secure-care-strategic-board-report-to-scottish-ministers.pdf>



the promise

The Independent Care Review's (ICR) 'The Promise', published in February 2020, sets out an ambition for Scotland 'to be the best place in the world to grow up' so that children are 'loved, safe, and respected and realise their full potential'. Five foundations are set out to do this, namely:

- to include the 'voice' of young people in decision making, and for example to use data to do this.
- to support 'family' to stay together, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention, drawing attention to the pervasive impact of poverty.
- 'care' so that where families are not able to stay together children are provided with loving stable, safe relationships.
- to recognise the 'people', the workforce and wider community that affect children's lives.
- to provide 'scaffolding', that is support for the workforce, to uphold children's rights as a matter of course, to create conditions for loving relationships.

The focus of the 'Keeping Families Together' project is to support young people to rebuild relationships with their families and return to the family home where possible. Family contact has been highlighted as a specific area where more attention is needed for those in secure care (Gough, 2017; Malloch, 2013).

In the draft standards developed by the Secure Strategic Board (2019) families, friends and those important to the young people are to be actively supported to remain in contact with the young person, unless this is not in their best interests.

Secure centres do a really good job with what they have, but only within the window that the young person is with them. Across society, there is widespread support and recognition for greater wrap-around services for those entering and leaving the care system – it is often those points, at the 'edges' of the care system, when young people are most at risk.

The plan

Thanks to funding from Cashback for Communities, our Keeping Families Together project will work alongside Scotland's five secure care centres to support young people and their families to rebuild their relationships with the aim, where possible, of enabling young people (aged 12+) to return to their family home. Cyrenians will offer a combination of mediation, practical support and conflict resolution workshops at two stages: the point of admission and with those who are in the process of returning home.

We work with people on a voluntary basis because we feel strongly that young people and families should decide themselves the changes they want to make to improve things at home and then we can work together to achieve this.

Mediation

Skilled Mediators offer 1-to-1 meetings with individual family members before bringing families together for facilitated conversations. Working with young people, parents/carers and siblings to encourage them to try new communication approaches which result in more positive relationships within families and in their wider interactions with others.

Practical Support

Family Outreach Workers develop individual support plans for each family member on the issues they identify as causing additional strain on family relationships. Parents are offered support around their individual needs, including if relevant, their own adverse childhood experiences and trauma, benefiting themselves and the young people they care for.

We support parents with their own issues which can influence parenting such as health, emotional wellbeing, employment, housing, finance, substance abuse, and social networks. Also, where appropriate, they can discuss underlying family issues - divorce, family dynamics, bereavement, abuse, trauma, anti-social behaviour. We help them to think about and find ways to manage the effects of trauma effectively in their family. We also signpost to other agencies when family members need more specialised support.

We can also help with travel costs, child care and other expenses to enable families to visit their children.



Conflict Resolution Workshops

Interactive workshops for young people who have been identified by secure care staff as struggling with conflict – promoting better communication and reducing the potential for future conflict. Our six week 'Fight or Flight' workshops skill up young people to better manage anger, build stronger relationships and limit the negative consequences of conflict.

Age range: 12 years +

Number of Young People Project expects to work with: 380

Areas where project will be delivered:

Year 1 - Edinburgh Secure Services and The Good Shepherd Centre. Year 2 will bring in St Mary's Kenmure and Rossie. In Year 3 we will add Kibble Safe Centre.

Where possible additional support will be offered in the local communities where families live.



What we did

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak we were unable to begin working face to face with young people and families in year one but we did offer remote support.

Throughout the pandemic we have successfully transitioned our services to be able to engage with families virtually and offer them the support they need.

With the generous support of funders like Inspiring Scotland, Cyrenians have been able to adapt our previous regular activity tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness, and respond to the pandemic as flexibly and innovatively as needed. Most specifically, Inspiring Scotland supported us to provide remote support for young people and families experiencing relationship breakdown.

We continue to take on new referrals, and have seen an increase in self-referrals from parents experiencing conflict within the home as a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We provided families with well-being packs and continue to deliver conflict resolution workshops remotely for young people. Support on resolving conflict was offered to our school partners through advice and lesson plans.

We anticipated that lockdown may lead to increased levels of conflict for all families, especially if they are separated as a result of the young person being looked after away from home. With this in mind, we contacted all 5 secure care centres to update them on our situation and to share and promote information about the digital resources available for families experiencing conflict from our Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution.

As a result of lockdown there was a reduction in family contact which could have resulted in increased conflict amongst young people and staff within the within secure care centres. To mitigate this happening, we offered additional advice on reducing conflict and the option of lesson plans and online workshops for young people.

The reduction in family contact, restrictions on travel and indoor contact have no doubt impacted on the wellbeing of young people in secure care. Additionally, young people and families experienced limitations in accessing their support networks both formally and informally. To minimise the effect of this, we sourced electronic equipment through Connecting Scotland to enable families to stay connected. This included the provision of additional support in providing training for parents and carers to use this technology. This is of particular importance for families of young people in secure care, as there is a limit to video conferencing methods that are used both for professional meetings and family visits.

Throughout this year we have continued to build our relationships with the staff at the Good Shepherd Centre and Edinburgh Secure Care Services, who have both been providing amazing support to the young people in their care. We have worked together to make sure we got a start on our Keeping Families Together project despite the pandemic.

We began delivering our conflict resolution workshops online for young people in Good Shepherd and Edinburgh Secure Care centres. Working closely with staff in each centre to adapt the sessions to meet their needs, this included reducing the group size, offering 1-2-1 sessions, adjusting timings of the sessions and offering more frequent sessions.

In spite of government restrictions meaning we can only offer remote support, we began taking referrals for family mediation and support. Developing trusted relationships remotely has been challenging, but we had our first video call with a young person in secure care. This was especially tough to arrange due to the extra rules surrounding safeguarding which apply to young people in this situation. This was a real milestone in the project because as it has been really difficult for young people and families and centre staff with the Covid restrictions limiting contact with external partners



As we had a delayed start to the project we have concentrated on laying strong foundations and pushed forward in building our relationships with key partners. Time has also been spent developing our skills. As part of the Scottish Government's vision to implement trauma informed practice across Scotland, Cyrenians are taking part in the pilot of the national trauma training programme with National Education Scotland. This will lead to every member of Cyrenians staff undertaking trauma training, no matter what their role is within the organisation, ensuring staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the needs of people affected by trauma, their families, carers and supporters. Over 100 staff have already participated in trauma informed practice training and all the Keeping Families Together team are trained to level 2 Trauma skilled practice.

Our colleagues from the Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution delivered their Untangling the Knots conflict resolution training online, enabling staff from Edinburgh Secure Care, the Good Shepherd Centre and Cyrenians to take part in joint online sessions, building relationships and developing skills to better support young people.

We attended the Cashback portfolio session and shared learning about the impact of the pandemic across the projects and information on training and resources that partners have found helpful. Thanks to Inspiring Scotland, we received an excellent summary of the session and a bank of resources that will enhance our skills in supporting young people going forward.

Media & Communications

Our initial announcement about starting the project was issued by press release to our local and national contacts in January 2020 where it was picked up by Scottish Housing News and re-shared on Cyrenians own social channels and website.



cyrenians

"A whole family approach, built on trusted relationships, compassion, and respect, will better enable young people and their families to move forward from their experience of secure care and realise their full potential, together"

Kerry Watson, Service Manager

Areas of focus

- Referral process
- Arrangements for external agency work during lockdown
- Arrangements for family contact
- Video conferencing arrangements.
- Service paperwork - finalising referral forms, equalities monitoring, outcome star, family star, initial family assessment / young person assessment / closing form
- Sharing information on each secure care centre, key contacts, visiting arrangements, information for families, information for staff.
- Data sharing agreements
- Staff meet ups virtually
- Agreeing preferred communication and frequency and key contacts
- Scheduled monitoring meetings
- Advisory group – membership, terms of reference, frequency of meetings
- Dates for recruitment and start date for new team members
- Staff training requirements
- External evaluation – introducing our external evaluator to secure care staff
- Online facilitation training to support our future blended approach to client work

Advisory Group

Our Advisory Group is made up of representatives from Cyrenians; Glasgow Caledonian University; Aberlour; Children's Hearings Scotland; The Scottish Government; Aid & Abet; East Lothian Council; The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit; Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice; and The Care Inspectorate.

The purpose of the Advisory Group is;

- to bring and share knowledge and expertise, from a range of interested stakeholders, of issues relating to working with families and young people who are entering or leaving secure care across Scotland.
- Provide insight on related policies and practice.
- Provide support and guidance to ensure the success of the project.
- Raise awareness of the impact of the project and the benefits of offering a strategic intergenerational approach in supporting whole families.
- Advise on effective evaluation and monitoring.
- Nurture collaboration and partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for young people and their families.
- Provide a consultative forum to offer advice on the future development of the Keeping Families Together project.

We are looking forward to hosting our first Advisory Group meeting very soon.

Evaluation



The Keeping Families Together Project is being evaluated by Dr Brieghe Nugent and Media Education. Dr Nugent is an independent research consultant and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Salford. Her research interests are in poverty, homelessness, social services, families & relationships, social exclusion and criminal justice and over the past 12 years has worked for the government, private, academic and third sector.

Media Education was set up in 1989 specifically to work with people furthest from power in order to move individuals from complaint to effective, reasoned argument where they advocate for themselves to create positive change. They deliver a wide range of media outputs including creative films, documentaries, animation and graphics.

The main focus of the evaluation of the 'Keeping Families Together' Project is to capture the lived experience and journeys over time of the young people and their families, their views of their situation and the impact of support. The meaning of 'family' will be approached in the widest sense. It is important that the research does not 'box' young people into being identified solely as 'care experienced', and that rather intersectionality, and them being seen as whole beings is recognised.

It will be valuable to draw out the specific impact of the different interventions, namely the Conflict Resolution Workshops, Mediation, One-to-One and Practical Support. As well as one off interviews, it is hoped that a group of around ten young people and their families will engage in a longitudinal study over two years enabling the opportunity to capture longer-term outcomes, transitions out of secure care and barriers encountered.

In the final year of the research in 2023, 5 young people involved in the longitudinal interviews will be offered the chance to work with Media Education to each create a film documenting their experience of the process. Interviews with staff at each stage will allow for observations to be collated about the changes made, the good practice identified, meaningful partnerships developed, challenges faced and views of the wider system. The evaluation of the Keeping Families Together Project above all else is a chance to hear from families directly about their lived experience and the support that matter to them.

Plans for the future

In agreement with our Cashback Performance Advisor we have adjusted our plan for referrals and workshop delivery and agreed to work with more young people and families in years 2 and 3 which will result in us delivering the service for the same number of young people and families as originally planned before the outbreak of Covid.

- Welcoming our year 2 partners for St Mary's Kenmure and Rossie
- Embedding the trauma informed approach into our project
- Developing our relationships with young people and their families
- Working alongside our partners in secure care centres to achieve the very best outcomes for our young people.
- Supporting the centres with implementing the new secure care standards
- Being part of keeping the promise that Scotland has made for our care experienced infants, children, young people, adults and their families - that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, able to realise their full potential.

Case study Alan Jeffrey



Our Conflict Resolution Workshops are flexible and ultimately guided by the young people who attend them, but generally look at anger management skills, adopting conflict strategies and exploring what it means to foster positive relationships.

Alan Jeffrey has worked for Cyrenians since 2014 leading our Conflict Resolution Workshops to young people and adults as part of our Mediation and Support team. With a first-class degree in Drama and Theatre Arts from Queen Margaret University Alan prides himself on delivering fun, interactive workshops that are adaptable to a variety of audiences.

"Recently I began delivering workshops with three young people in secure care. I am remaining flexible on topics covered to allow for the young people to guide the sessions though I have informed them that my skills lie in anger management, adopting conflict strategies and exploring what it means to foster positive relationships.

Each of the young people believe that within the centre they have made dramatic improvement in their ability to manage their anger, have important relationships and make decisions rationally based on the consequences and their desires. However, each of them self-identify that taking these strategies and skills they have adopted in the centre outside into the community is a daunting challenge.

As a group we have decided that this will be our focus; to celebrate and identify the strategies and skills they have successfully adopted in the centre, explore the different pressures of home and community life and attempt to adapt these skills so that they can remain effective when they return to the community.

I feel confident that the young people are in charge of this plan and remain at the centre of their journey to more positive relationships and conflict reactions.

One young person joining these workshop sessions had spent over a year in the secure centre over 2 separate periods. After only two workshops, the young person believes that they have made a dramatic improvement in their ability to manage their anger, maintain positive relationships and improved their ability to make rational decisions based on the consequences. They have also self-identified that taking these strategies and skills out into the community will be a daunting challenge.

'I don't know how to act the way I do in here, out there – I've tried everything'

As a result, the group will focus on how to adapt these skills so that they can be applied when they return to the community.



Case study

Joan Hodgkiss Wellbeing Team Manager - Good Shepherd Centre



The Good Shepherd Centre's Health and Wellbeing Team are currently working in partnership with the Cyrenians – Keeping Families Together Project.

As part of the partnership working as the Wellbeing Support Manager, I have been taking the lead in supporting with the integration of this project into the GSC service. The Health and Wellbeing Service offers a holistic approach to promoting well-being which involves understanding and addressing the young person's functioning in physical, behavioural, social, and cognitive areas. A focus on well-being is integrated and encompasses the whole young person and supports them to reach their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

Our approach is to offer groupwork, individualised therapies and family support to develop a range of positive outcomes for young people which is always underpinned by the promotion of wellbeing. Good mental health is the foundation of the young people's emotional and intellectual growth, the development of confidence, independence and a sense of self-worth

By taking a whole systems approach to interventions for young people in our care, we develop a good collaborative relationship with interagency and External Partners.

Plans for the future

The partnership working with the Cyrenians – 'Keeping Families Together' Project has provided young people and families within the GSC with additional support to strengthen the relationships and empower them to deal with the challenges within their own lives.

The support that the young people and families receive from the family support workers and family mediators through the project has been tailored to recognising and responding to the individualised needs of the young people and their families with a flexible approach. Thus, promoting wellbeing and resilience which will motivate families to empower them to bring about change to improve relationships.

Looking forward, the Project will also support young people when moving on from the GSC to the community, including the family home supporting with connections during this time.

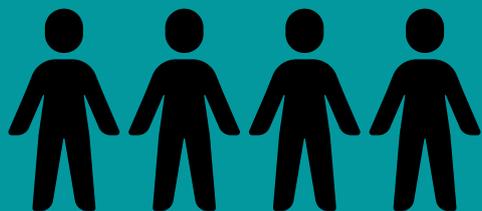
Financial Information

	2020/2021		
	Actual	Target	Variance
Project Activity			
Staff related	45,906	47,342	1,436
Client related (travel/sustenance/childcare/barriers to participation)	-	-	-
Total Project Activity	45,906	47,342	1,436
Other Project Costs			
Management and marketing	8,068	8,068	-
External Evaluation	4,650	4,650	-
Total Other Project Costs	12,718	12,718	-
Total Expenditure	58,624	60,060	1,436

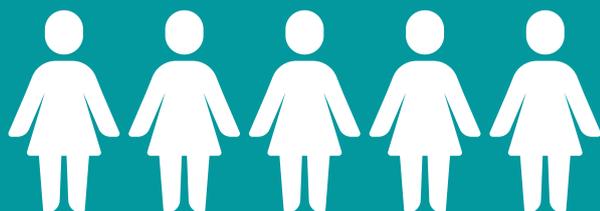
Local Authority Analysis

	£ expenditure	Young people supported
Edinburgh	19,541	3
East Dunbartonshire	6,514	1
Falkirk	6,514	1
Highland	6,514	1
Glasgow	6,514	1
South Lanarkshire	13,027	2
	58,624	9

Participant Information

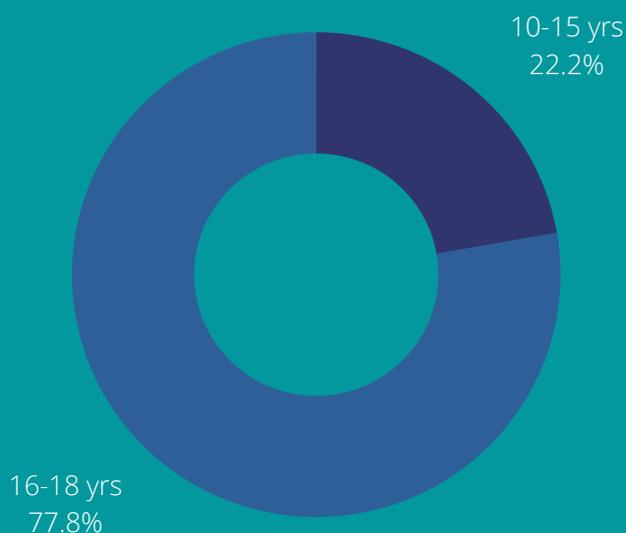


4 Males



5 Females

Age Breakdown



Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation



Outcomes & Indicators Performance

During the reporting period we began working with 9 young people. The Covid-19 Pandemic has meant altering the pace of the project and as such, indicators and outcomes in respect of our work with these young people will be reflected in the 2021/21 data as impact is achieved.