

# cyrenians

## ANNUAL REPORT

**KEEPING FAMILIES  
TOGETHER &  
FALKIRK KEY TO POTENTIAL**

**WITH CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES**



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# Cyrenians

At Cyrenians we take a public health approach to homelessness prevention. We know homelessness impacts on the health of the nation, on the outcomes of our young people, on the life expectancies of people living in dangerous, lonely and precarious circumstances. A public health approach strives to stop people becoming homeless by addressing risk factors and offering support at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting until a crisis happens. It seeks to move away from addressing a lack of accommodation without addressing the underlying reasons why people have become homeless in the first place, such as poverty and trauma.

Addressing homelessness effectively requires population level prevention, as well as individual level interventions with services and sectors working together.



# CYRENIANS' CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES PROJECTS

**Cyrenians** offer two distinct, but related, values-led and relationship-based interventions to nurture skills and improve resilience amongst young people and families most at risk of spiralling into the justice system. Locally and nationally, our trauma-informed approaches address clear gaps in provision which are 'tried and tested', enabling individuals to overcome barriers and break intergenerational cycles of unemployment and involvement with crime.

Our pioneering **Keeping Families Together (KFT)** project works across Scotland in partnership with Scotland's four secure centres, adding value and independent expertise, through the provision of skilled **Mediation**, rights-based **whole family support** and **conflict resolution workshops**. Our integrated approach enables young people and families to improve communication, address underlying issues and build stronger, more positive, relationships.

In Falkirk, **Key to Potential (KTP)** provides **skilled person-centred support** for some of the most disadvantaged young people in our communities, offering **one-to-one outreach** and home-visiting **careers advice** to those who have disengaged from school, and at high risk of becoming involved in antisocial or offending behaviours.

Working with local partners, young people are supported to make informed life choices as they transition from school, enabling them to realise their ambitions by moving onto positive destinations in employment, education or training.



# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – WHAT WE DO

The KFT project is a test of change, in partnership with secure centres, we support young people aged over 12 years old to rebuild relationships with their families and return to the family home where possible after leaving secure care.

The project was imagined to specifically target those who are at greatest risk of spiralling further into the criminal justice system. The project does this by engaging with young people and their families, before the young person leaves care, and ideally as early as possible, on a one-to-one basis first. It then supports the family to come together, to communicate with each other, providing mediation, family days out, highlighting their strengths as well as addressing needs.

KFT staff offer practical and emotional support, and in keeping with the values set out by The Promise, offers a whole family approach. The project also provides conflict resolution workshops to young people, to help them to reflect and understand ways in which they can communicate better, reducing conflict.

The project offers three separate yet interconnected interventions:

- Mediation between young people and their care-givers, siblings and other relevant family members.
- Outreach support breaking down barriers such as education, well-being, employment or training.
- Group workshops to build resilience, conflict resolution skills, and emotional regulation.

The various KFT interventions – all aim to support families to create positive memories and build stronger relationships. Project staff offer emotional and practical support, such as around housing, finance, understanding about neurodivergence, and where appropriate, discuss underlying family issues, signposting families to agencies and specialised support.

# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER - KEY THEMES FROM THIS YEAR

## 1. The importance of offering support for siblings who are living apart

Support offered by our project has aimed to alleviate the stress and worry young people in secure care have for their brothers and sisters at home, and vice versa. This has taken shape in various ways:

- Encouraging phone calls between family members.
- Funding family days out where young people who are able to have home stayovers so they can enjoy time with their family.
- Alternatively, funding family days out for younger siblings and parents/ carers to promote positive family time during a stressful period when they are living away from their brother or sisters.

### **“Thank you for the best day” (a family on their day out to a local visitor attraction)**

#### **Parent feedback**

- Having joint support meetings over lunch with a brother and sister staying in different residential units.
- Where young people have offered their brother or sister advice when things haven't been going well at home, via calls and texts we have praised the young person and reassured them that although they are in secure their input as the 'older' brother or sister can go a long way.
- We have funded art therapy for a younger sibling when an older brothers' placement has taken a toll on his mental health. Equally, other supports such as counselling and bereavement counselling where appropriate.
- We have funded sports clubs and sought grants to enable longer-term memberships for siblings who feel disconnected from their community after having to move closer to a brother or sister's care placement.

- We have given funding for older siblings to babysit/look after younger siblings enabling parents/carers to attend meetings with mediators or other professionals and their child at secure care centres.

**“We are really grateful for the money and it will help them attend mediation”**

**Feedback from parents after receiving money to help with babysitting**

- Ensuring that siblings have access to advocacy during their own children’s panel hearings, as well as during their own. This ensures their rights are upheld and their voices are included in decision making (preferences for living arrangements, measures put in place to ensure sibling contact).

**“I am very pleased to hear that you are working with the family and hopefully we can build a timetable that suits the young person and their support needs”**

**Feedback from a Headteacher of a young person’s sibling**

- Crucially, making sure that siblings know what is ‘going on’ with brothers and sisters who are living in secure care. We have found that including them in the process and ensuring they have access and ability to visit can alleviate a lot of distress, during a unsettling period.
- We always ensure families are able to afford travel to the secure care centres through letting them know that social work can fund this and help out where possible.
- Where travel is not feasible for families, our support can be delivered remotely. This has allowed families to engage in the mediation process regardless of placement and distance from home. Our support is being delivered on an outreach basis enables us to offer support to the family where they are.

# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – KEY THEMES FROM THIS YEAR

## 2. Keeping Families Together with CashBack for Communities Steering group

We are extremely grateful for the support, advice and input of our steering group, the purpose of the group is as follows;

- Bring and share knowledge and expertise, from a range of interested stakeholders, on issues relating to working with families and young people who are in residential care, kinship care or entering/leaving secure care.
- Provide insight on related policies and practice.
- Provide support and guidance to ensure the success of project work.
- Raise awareness of the projects and the benefits of offering a strategic intergenerational approach to support families.
- Provide feedback on progress and evaluation & monitoring.
- Nurture collaboration and partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for young people and their families.
- Provide a consultative forum to offer advice and insight.

Current group members include:

**Dr Ruby Whitelaw- Practice Development Advisor - Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) (Acting Chair)**

**Alison Melville - Child Placement and Secure Care Policy Manager - Scottish Government**

**Andrew Nelson- Inspector Children and Young Person's Team – Care Inspectorate**

**Cara Jardine – Senior Lecturer/Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Strathclyde (Chair – on maternity leave)**

**Janine McCullough - Senior Education Officer- Education Scotland**

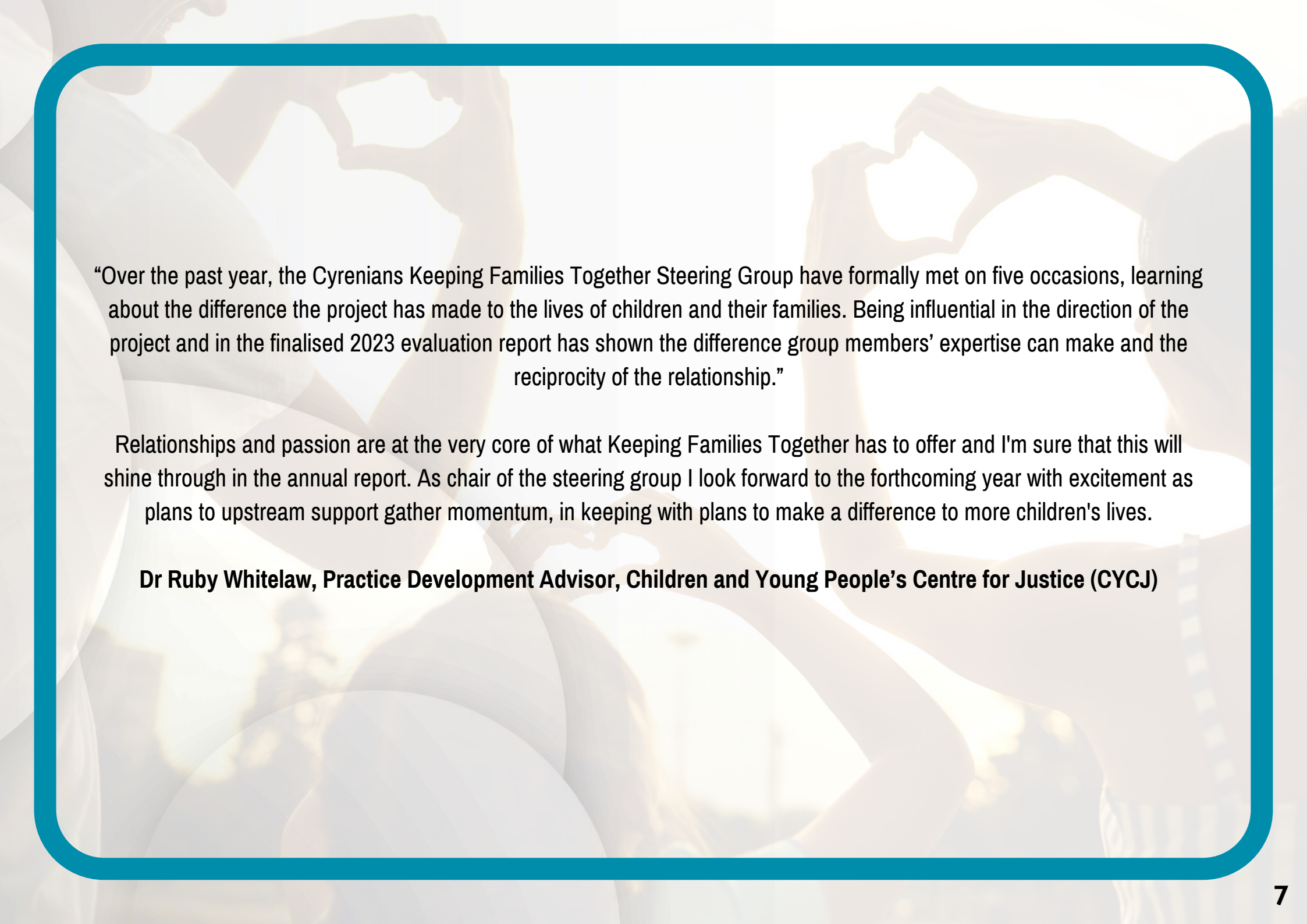
**Kevin Neary - Co-founder and Core Group Member - Aid & Abet**

**Lorette Nicol – Social Work Scotland representative, Service Manager Midlothian,**

**Rosie Thomson - Children's Services East Lothian Council**

**Scott Kennedy - Project Lead – Scottish Violence Reduction Unit**



The background of the slide features a soft-focus image of several hands reaching up to form a heart shape. The hands are in various shades of skin tones, and the overall lighting is warm and bright, creating a sense of unity and care. The entire content is framed by a thick teal border with rounded corners.

“Over the past year, the Cyrenians Keeping Families Together Steering Group have formally met on five occasions, learning about the difference the project has made to the lives of children and their families. Being influential in the direction of the project and in the finalised 2023 evaluation report has shown the difference group members’ expertise can make and the reciprocity of the relationship.”

Relationships and passion are at the very core of what Keeping Families Together has to offer and I'm sure that this will shine through in the annual report. As chair of the steering group I look forward to the forthcoming year with excitement as plans to upstream support gather momentum, in keeping with plans to make a difference to more children's lives.

**Dr Ruby Whitelaw, Practice Development Advisor, Children and Young People’s Centre for Justice (CYCJ)**

### 3. Whole Family Support

This year we offered Mediation and whole family support to **21** families, **11** of whom were new to working with our project this year and **10** families who began working with us last year and continued to take part in mediation and whole family support during this reporting year.

As a project we capture our work in a variety of ways in line with reporting requirements, however as a learning organisation we continuously reflect on what we have learnt from offering whole family support, and therefore have a wealth of evidence that has been collated and helps to steer our work.

In taking a whole system approach, our service strives to work collaboratively with not only the family but all professionals and services involved in the young person's care plan. Our support can often be to help liaise with relevant workers, and advocate for the needs of the family.

Recognising that relationship breakdown amongst family members can then impact on the ability of siblings to see each other and have positive time together, our project aims to deliver family mediation to strengthen relationships.

Mediation can be a valuable resource in supporting the transition process for a young person returning home and re-establishing relationships, negotiating boundaries etc.

“[The mediator] and [Family Outreach Worker] have developed meaningful relationships with the family and have advocated for both the young person and his Mum, bringing current issues to my attention for me to action. It is clear that they really care about them. I am really pleased at the work they have put in to this family and the very fact that the young person has engaged well with the service tells me that he has also found it helpful and meaningful. “

**Social Worker**

- Raise awareness of what it means to be care affected amongst young people and their families ensuring they know what they can expect going forward
- We are a rights respecting organisation that aims to uphold and inform the rights of the young person.
- We make families aware of the secure standards and pathway that enables families and young people to know what to expect in their 'journey of care.'

#### 4. Young person support in last year (KFT)

- Panel preparation, ensuring young person has access to their advocate. Letters written on behalf of young person to contribute positively to discussions at panel hearings.
- College support, liaising with lecturers and relevant supports to ensure a line of communication with young people being able to verbalise their needs and ensure any relevant circumstances were noted with college.
- Supported to attend meetings with TCAC and housing meetings ensuring young people understand what was discussed and what to expect.
- Supported to attend meetings with other third sector organisations and statutory services, liaise with professionals to clarify/understand bail conditions and court proceedings to support young people
- Job preparation and practice of interview skills + CV writing
- Got in touch with Edinburgh College for a young person to get information about reapplying for a course they were interested in. Also put them in touch with SDS worker
- Liaised with a Who Cares Advocate, explained what this meant, and encouraged young person to engage with them.
- Supported young person to correct some banking information when he was home from residential care, giving his primary carer some respite
- Attended Panels and LAAC reviews at the request of young people
- Supported to access recreation/leisure activities/interests and hobbies
- Used sporting activities to have support discussions, including playing badminton at the request of the young person
- Fast tracked young people to our in-house Counselling service

Four of the young people that we supported on a longer-term basis (up to two years support with the same staff) where we saw similar positive outcomes evidencing the need for long term whole family support.

- Moving on to college or employment
- Maintaining positive relationships with their family
- Taking up hobbies and interests
- Not coming into contact with the justice system (all of the young people had previously come to the attention of the police)
- Improvement in their general wellbeing and being hopeful for the future

# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – KEY THEMES FROM THIS YEAR

## 5. Taking a multi agency approach to support young people and families

Through taking a multi-agency approach it is clear that young people and families are getting more support when moving on from secure care. However, there are many frustrations by lots of professionals around planning support for transitions across different Local Authorities, Health Boards and Education settings when it comes to continuity of care.

“I know this has been a tough one and you have all did amazing so far. I did mention this case at a team meeting the other week and other people commented on similar experiences of a lack of support and planning when yp have returned home from secure. I am just not normally involved with this process. Unfortunately, this might become more common as the referrals to your service progress. However, it really highlights the need for what the Cyrenians are offering.”

**Secure care staff member**

At Cyrenians we recognise that we are not working in isolation and that to make positive changes within our communities we need strong partnerships built on respect, transparency and honest and open communication. We thank all of our partners for their support in achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – CASE STUDY

Harmony lived with her Auntie Karen and younger brother Luke. Harmony recently became a resident in one of Scotland's secure care centres due to challenges caused by inter-generational trauma. This transition exacerbated the strains and stresses in the family, and positive and healthy communication within the family became difficult, if not impossible.

Cyrenians' involvement:

“Easy, friendly and honest... your support isn't judgemental” - Harmony

Following a referral from the centre, Cyrenians immediately began collaborating with a number of services and agencies, across sectors, to ensure the family had all the support that was needed to move forward in a positive direction upon Harmony's return home.

## **Mediation**

Initially, Harmony found it challenging to engage in discussions, which was not unexpected, as past disappointments have made it difficult for her to trust and she exhibited presentations of childhood trauma. Harmony also has a neurodevelopmental disorder.



## KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER FEEDBACK

"I feel like I can be honest with my mum. Sometimes I used to just try and cover it up and act as if everything was alright when everything was absolutely not. I can actually sit there and be honest with my mum. I never used to really cry in front of my mum. I used to just get angry and not show any emotion – it came out in a different way – but now I can sit down and maybe have a cry with my mum if something is wrong. I feel that I can be vulnerable with my mum because she understands me better now."

### Young person

"Basically, just thank you because I think it's been a really good help for me and my mental health as well. Me and my mum have been through the same kind of stuff and that's probably how me and my mum understand each other better, is because of you guys and not because of anybody else, to be fair. You [FOW] and [mediator] were honest and you just knew how to help me and my mum. I don't think anybody else would have known how to help me and my mum, to be honest."

### Young person

I'm so thankful...for your constant care, love and determination for fighting our corner – from social work, housing, school – the list is endless. I always hear your voice cheering us on.

### Parent



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendations from the Phase 5 External Evaluation by Dr Briega Nugent, are now being incorporated into our Phase 6 work.**

The external evaluation findings, from a small sample, indicated that all of the intended outcomes for young people during Phase 5 were met, and the whole family benefited from KFT interventions. Families gave feedback that the whole family approach 'worked', with parents/carers reporting that they also needed and wanted support in their own right. Findings suggested that the project had a significant impact on the lives of those they worked with, improving confidence, physical health, and well-being, and supporting people into positive outcomes, such as going to college, back to work or getting access to legal representation to help access school.

## **Recommendations for Cyrenians:**

- Promote the KFT project to the Children's Hearings System so that it is accessible to families where any form of care is being considered, to promote earlier intervention, recognising this would require additional funding.
- Staff continue to be afforded opportunities in training in trauma-informed responses and neurodiversity, and to support families to also access this information.
- With a budget of this size, keep the target numbers of families with low and ensure staff are supported to manage boundaries and potential burn out.
- Cyrenians further explore a hybrid approach of in-person and online support for families living outside the Central Belt. This is due to constraints in the project budget. In the Central Belt, or more specifically the Lothians, Cyrenians can tailor their offer of support in those areas where they have most community connections, thus offering the most meaningful engagement.
- Collate data every six months from the young people based on the six outcomes outlined.
- Partnership working, between Cyrenians, secure care centres and referral agencies, continues with the shared aim of improving the lives of young people and their families.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS

This year we completely overhauled our Conflict Resolution Workshops in response to feedback to best support the small number of young people in secure care in Scotland. We worked with **27 young people** this year, delivering **31 workshops**.

Cyrenians conflict resolution workshops aim to increase young people's knowledge and understanding of conflict, their responses, and repairing relationships. As a relationship-based service, we understand that young people often struggle, or feel stuck in how they act around conflict, we aim to challenge this through games and conversations that get them thinking differently about conflict.

*All of our workshops gave lots of opportunity for the young people to draw on their own experience. A particularly great moment was when a young person brought up a conflict they had been in with the teacher who was also participating in the class. They spoke about how they acted in the conflict and afterwards, and reflected on what they could've done differently*

**Workshop lead**

## WEEK 1- RECOGNISE

Many young people feel like they 'explode' or 'see red'. In week 1, we look at what conflict is, and what it means to the young people. We then look at an example of conflict from 2 different perspectives and pick out the things going on in the background that have fuelled the conflict to escalate. We challenge the young people to recognise how it feels in their bodies in the lead up to a conflict, and some strategies to de-escalate from that point if possible.

## WEEK 2- RESPOND

In week 2, we explore what happens during a conflict, the different conflict response styles, and the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. Through this young people will be able to identify how they respond in conflicts, and how they change their response depending on the situation, and person. We will talk about how each of the conflict response styles is important and helpful in different ways, and we can use them to our advantage to get our needs met.

## WEEK 3- REPAIR

In week 3, we look at the aftermath of a conflict, how do the young people repair relationships and reconnect? We will look at effective apologies as a starting point to repair relationships after a conflict, and encourage the young people to practise the skills involved with this, including positive body language. We hope the young people will practise these skills further in the nurturing environment of secure care and will aid in their transition back to the community.



## KEY TO POTENTIAL - WHAT WE DO

Since August 2023, the Key to Potential (KTP) Falkirk keyworkers, in partnership with local High Schools, have offered a trauma-informed, outreach service to young people who are disengaged from education and are reaching their school leaving date. We have worked with **39 young people** from three different High Schools in the Falkirk area. This is support for some of the most disadvantaged young people in our communities. We aim to ultimately support young people to make well-informed, realistic decisions about their future.

For most young people this is an incredibly daunting time, particularly when they have been disengaged from education and all of the opportunities to socialise with peers, develop their communication skills and to attain qualifications to support their hopes for the future.

High-quality, holistic keywork has been crucial to ensure we develop a trusting relationship with each young person from the very first engagement. Our keyworkers project a sense of hope and aspiration, letting each young person realise that they will be listened to, understood and that we are not there to impose our thoughts on the way forward. Rather, that we work with the young person to empower them to express their needs and the type of support they feel will work best for them.

The outreach aspect of our work is vital and visiting young people in their homes is a great opportunity to meet them where they feel most comfortable. Our keyworkers can also assess if there is a need to signpost parents/carers or siblings to services which will support them to address any challenges or barriers they are facing.

Our keyworkers start the process of building a trusting relationship by giving each young person the opportunity to talk about their mental health, and how they feel about their current situation and the future. We try to meet young people in their local community with the hope that this positively affects their perception of where they live. We also encourage social activities, like going for lunch, walking in some of the local parks and encouraging young people to meet others. These young people have been seriously impacted by lockdowns which has further impacted on their mental health and social isolation. Our keyworkers have made a real impact on the lives of many young people in the Falkirk area.

# KEY TO POTENTIAL - WHAT WE DO

We continue with ongoing 1:1 engagement with each young person and offer a wide range of support. This includes listening and supporting young people with mental and physical health; helping them to re-engage with their local GP, often actually attending the appointment with them to advocate on their behalf; supporting independence by fast-tracking applications for their YoungScot card; opening bank accounts and getting National Insurance numbers. We also start the process of supporting young people to compile a CV appropriate to their experience and qualification level, work on their interview skills and support the young people to apply for jobs and training.

The feedback, particularly from parents, has given us confidence that our approach is working and that we're making a real difference to the lives of the young people we work with.

## **Partnership working**

Our Keyworkers continue to support young people to sustain post-school opportunities, and the network of support with a range of partners is vital to the success of this approach. We work closely with Skills Development Scotland, from school Careers Advisers, post school Advisors and other staff as appropriate. We have developed excellent relationships with Link Academy, Go Youth Trust, Falkirk Foundation, Forth Valley College and the Employment and Training Unit, Falkirk Council. All of these partners offer a range of support for young people, and we can provide advice on whichever might be the most suitable, ensuring that the final decision rests with that young person. Our Keyworkers have bridged the gap between young people who have been disengaged from school and making a positive progression.

## **Challenges**

It is clear that the nature of referrals for Key to Potential have been far more challenging than anticipated. There has been a high number of young people with neurodiversity and mental health issues. Our Keyworkers have had to adapt and develop as the project grows and through their ongoing support, have been able to have a major impact on the lives of young people.

## KEY TO POTENTIAL - WHAT WE DO

Our holistic approach has been evidenced by the development of a working relationship with GP practices, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Social Work. This year has been extremely challenging with a large number of young people with serious mental health issues and other neurodiversity challenges. The project has now linked in with these services to ensure that the delivery of mental health support is fully understood by parents, young people and our keyworkers.

We have regularly linked with mental health practitioners to discuss the approach they are undertaking. There has been a sense across partners that we are witnessing young people who have experienced the full impact of the pandemic, and have been extremely socially isolated, impacting further on their mental health and neurodiversity. Key to Potential continues to be a crucial support to many young people at this time, and without the support we have been able to offer their situation would be far more severe. Parents have actually said that they do not know what they would have done if it were not for our intervention.

“I do not know what we would have done without your help. We felt that no one cared and that our son would not have a life out of the house and tormented by his mental health. You have given him hope and he feels that someone really cares about him. Thank you so much”

““I wouldn't be in this college if it wasn't for your support.”

“KTP saved me when I felt that I was alone and felt I had no future.”

To address these barriers, Cyrenians' mediator focused on building rapport with Harmony's Auntie, recognising the positive impact her perspective could have on Harmony's communication.

Recognising the need for broader understanding, the mediator facilitated conversations between Harmony, her family, and external agencies to increase awareness of her diagnosis, ensuring adequate support and comprehension across all involved parties.

During a period of reduced engagement, Cyrenians continued supporting Harmony's brother, Luke, while ensuring Harmony's needs were not overlooked.

When Harmony returned to her Auntie's care, the necessity for mediation became more apparent. Through multiple pre-mediation sessions, key tension areas were identified, and agreements were established to improve communication and understanding between Harmony and her Auntie. Utilizing tools such as the WINA framework, Cyrenians continued to address communication barriers and fostered assertiveness and mutual respect within the family dynamic.

Harmony's increased communication, confidence, and resilience are evident outcomes, reflective of a patient and tailored approach.

### **Support**

Cyrenians' support was collaborative and comprehensive with outreach staff attending multiple Youth Participation and Partnership Meetings (YPPM) and multi-agency sessions, ensuring all aspects of Harmony's care were addressed. This collaboration spanned various sectors, with multi-agency partnership from the secure centre, local authority, NHS and third sector collaborators.

One of the key challenges Harmony faced was managing her transition to college, where she struggled greatly. Cyrenians took proactive steps, corresponding with college authorities on her behalf to accurately explain her situation and secure a place, should she wish to take this up. During a critical family crisis, Cyrenians assisted Harmony in relocating to homeless accommodation, ensuring she had immediate necessities and understood her circumstances, with access to relevant support workers. During this time Cyrenians also guided Harmony through the application process for her provisional driving licence and passport, fulfilling her aspirations for increased independence and access to resources.

Throughout our intervention, Harmony accessed essential mental health support, secured educational opportunities, and experienced improved family relationships, fostering a sense of nurture and respect within her familial environment. Additionally, by actively involving Harmony in decision-making processes and promoting her agency, she felt included and valued within her support network. Outcomes included:

**Increased confidence:** demonstrating improved communicative skills and confidence in expressing her needs and boundaries.

**Ability to do new things:** successfully navigating transitions, including education and adulthood milestones, with support and guidance.

**Increased resilience:** showing resilience in managing familial challenges and adapting to changing circumstances.

### **Conclusion**

By working in partnership, using a collaborative approach, centred on trust and empathy, Cyrenians facilitated a transformative journey for Harmony and her family. By addressing communication barriers, fostering understanding, and providing comprehensive support, The positive outcomes achieved underscore the importance of holistic intervention and personalised support in navigating complex family dynamics and promoting individual well-being. As Harmony continues her journey, she stands poised to embrace new opportunities and navigate life's challenges with new-found strength and resilience.



## KEY TO POTENTIAL - CASE STUDY

A young person was referred to Key to Potential at the beginning of this year by their High School as they were very concerned about them. They were completely disengaged from school and although they'd been referred to a training provider, due to the significant challenges they were facing, they weren't accepted on the course.

Right from the beginning of our engagement with this young person, it was evident to us the challenges they faced. In particular, they struggled greatly with controlling their anger.

**“Sometimes it feels like I go numb and then I get a very intense urge to be really violent.”**

Furthermore, the young person had discussed how they are worried about what the consequences of their outbursts of anger may be. We were also made very aware of the high levels of childhood trauma they had experienced. This led to significant mental health struggles and attempted suicides.

Following discussions within the team, and with their primary carers, we decided to focus on helping them with mental and emotional health prior to focusing on possible progressions post-school. We arranged for them to have an appointment with the GP to discuss these challenges and ultimately seek help.



## KEY TO POTENTIAL - CASE STUDY

In preparation for the appointment, our keyworker chatted with the carer, a consistent support over the years. She expressed how grateful she was that the keyworker was able to accompany the young person to the GP as she had been trying to encourage them to seek professional help for a while. She also mentioned that she feels they will share more and get more out of the appointment if they go with someone outside of the family.

Much time was spent preparing for the appointment so that they were able to express the severity of the situation and we met 15 minutes prior to the appointment to settle them.

The appointment went very well, they were able to describe how they were feeling and the GP made a referral to the Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN). After this appointment, our keyworker had another informal conversation, making it clear how proud they were of the young person being able to explain their feelings so clearly. Both the keyworker and the young person left the appointment feeling encouraged that their needs were taken seriously.

Since that initial appointment there has been a marked improvement. They now have a more positive outlook and are looking forward to making positive choices regarding the future. They're talking about joining the army and it is amazing to see how much more motivated they are to make positive changes in their life. They've been going to the gym regularly and making a conscious effort to surround themselves with helpful peers.



## KEY TO POTENTIAL - CASE STUDY

**“I don’t often talk about how I feel, but I feel comfortable sharing with you and the mental health nurse.”**

The school also recognises the transformative impact that has been made towards their motivation to progress. Now there is more support in place and a better network around them, we’re working with them towards a positive destination.

**“I am feeling really motivated and feel like I now have the inspiration to look towards the next step.”**

We have had ongoing conversations about the requirements for the Army programme that they are keen to join, but we have also had productive conversations around a Plan B. We are now in the process of looking into a training provider as a positive next step.

Their primary carers are relieved that they’re receiving this support. Relationships within the household have improved and they are much more hopeful about the future. They have more motivation and a sense of purpose.

This case study highlights what might appear as a very simple intervention, in fact, has made a huge impact on the young person, the family and their future hopes and aspirations. It shows that this type of holistic approach for young people that Key to Potential Falkirk with CashBack for Communities is delivering is truly transformational for many young people who could otherwise be left behind.





## KEY TO POTENTIAL FEEDBACK

"KTP saved me when I felt that I was alone and felt I had no future."

**Young person**

"Thanks so much for being so understanding and flexible."

**Young person**

"The support from my key worker has been good. He has always been very good at listening and it feels as though he truly wants the very best for me."

**Young person**

"I really appreciate the patience of your service and the fact that you have persisted despite numerous cancellations to meet'.

**Parent**

"It takes a special kind of person to do the job Key to Potential do, the keyworker has a great way of communicating with [name of young person]. From day one of the keyworker coming to our home he made a great connection with [name of young person]. The keyworker makes me feel hopeful about [name of young person's] future and I'm so grateful for the support he gives her."

**Parent**



## KEY TO POTENTIAL FEEDBACK

"If it wasn't for your support I would still be in bed not thinking about college, definitely not up at 9am sending an application."

**Young person**

"With your help getting me into College I am now in a much better frame of mind and feeling motivated, I also have a good group of friends around me too."

**Young person**

I appreciate the fact that u sat and waited for me, then still had a cheery happy smile once I'd arrived, and ty for the coffee too. I hope you got home at a half decent hour, I really do appreciate how far you came to meet me! Nobody's done anything like that for me before. It's the small things that make a big difference, to me anyway..."

**Parent**



# OUTCOMES

## **Outcome 1: Young people are diverted from antisocial, criminal behaviour and involvement with the criminal justice system**

- Young people report that their own participation in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour has reduced

**Target - 73 Actual - 24**

- Young people report that they feel less inclined to participate in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour

**Target – 73 Actual - 56**

## **Outcome 2: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)**

- Young people report an improved relationship with their school

**Target - 55 Actual - 39**

- Attendance at school improves

**Target -50 Actual - 37**

- No of participants taking up: Modern Apprenticeship/Employment

**Target - 5 Actual - 5**

- No of participants taking up: training/work experience –

**Target - 2 Actual - 6**

- No of participants taking up college/university placement

**Target - 20 Actual - 6**

- No of participants taking up volunteering

**Target - 2 Actual - 0**

### **Outcome 3: Young people's health, mental health and wellbeing improves**

- Young people report an increase in feelings against SHANARRI indicators: Safety, Health, Achievement, Nurture, Activity, Respect, Responsibility, Inclusion

**Target - 73 Actual - 70**

- Young people report their mental health has improved and they have a more positive outlook on life

**Target – 73 Actual - 65**

- Young people report they are more aware of the risks and impacts of harmful substance use

**Target – 13 Actual - 57**

- Young people report they are less inclined to engage in harmful drugs and/or alcohol use

**Target - 13 Actual - 46**

- Young people report their confidence has increased

**Target - 73 Actual - 73**

- Evidence of participation in physical and sporting activities

**Target - 10 Actual - 23**

### **Outcome 4: Young people contribute positively to their communities**

- Young people report their perception of their neighbourhood improves

**Target - 12 Actual - 25**

- Young people report a heightened sense of belonging to a community

**Target – 12 Actual - 32**

- Young people report feeling their contribution, links with communities and social interaction are improving

**Target - 73 Actual - 38**

- Young people report increased motivation to positively influence what happens in their community

**Target - 5 Actual - 23**

- Young people go on to volunteer, coach, mentor, support or take a leadership role in community organisations

**Target – 2 Actual – 0**

- Hours of volunteering contributed by participants

**Target - 25 Actual - 0**

**Outcome 5: Young people build their personal skills, resilience, and benefit from strengthened support networks and reduce risk taking behaviour**

- Young people report feeling more resilient (e.g. believing in yourself, taking things in your stride, being determined, being self-disciplined, being optimistic, adapting to different situations)

**Target - 73 Actual - 55**

- Young people report positive, supportive networks – including improved relationships with family, friends and peer mentors

**Target - 73 Actual - 64**

- Young people report increased access to appropriate services

**Target - 73 Actual - 60**

- Young people report positive changes in their behaviour (e.g. reduced risk taking/ increased understanding of risk/ better ability to make positive choices/ improved understanding of rights and responsibilities)

**Target – 73 Actual - 6**

# GOING FORWARD – PRIORITIES FOR YEAR TWO

## **Key to Potential Falkirk (KTP)**

This project started in August 2023 and we're currently mainly working with young people who will be leaving school in June 2024. Therefore, many of the outcomes for these clients will be fulfilled over the coming few months. Our priority will be to continue to support these young people towards their positive destinations and then help them to sustain them. We will also begin to receive referrals for projected winter leavers in December 2024 and will start to build those relationships and talk to them about what leaving school actually means.

We will continue to develop our relationships with wider stakeholders including secondary school referrers and potential training, volunteer and employment providers within the Falkirk area.

## **Keeping Families Together (KFT)**

As we continue to support young people into year two some of the outcomes outlined above are yet to be fulfilled. Building on our learning, it is important that we take account of the time-intensive nature of this work (up to two years for some families), which can mean it takes longer for some young people to achieve the goals they set out to achieve. We foresee these numbers increasing in year two which will bring us back in line with our target. We anticipate the new Care and Justice Act, removing young people from Young Offenders Institutions and prisons, will see a greater number of young people entering secure units, and this becoming eligible for referral to our service.

We are aware that we did not manage to meet the agreed targets in the first year. We now believe we had overestimated the number of young people that would be secured within Scotland's secure centres in the first year of the project, an average of 20% fewer young people than in previous years. Additionally, the process by which the secure centre staff could refer young people and families to our service was not as robust as was needed, leading to potentially appropriate referrals not being received. In order to remedy this situation going forward we have worked closely with each centre to create robust partnership agreements, outlining referral criteria, expectations of referral numbers, and clear partnership practices. We have strengthened our advisory board with the inclusion of Social Work Scotland representation, opening up a stronger referral pathway from within social care. We have also attempted to communicate more effectively with clients themselves by creating promotional materials, videos leaflets, etc, that are easily accessible to families, creating a direct referral avenue.

### Going forward in the year ahead we following priorities:

- Ensure young people living in secure accommodation have support to maintain strong, supportive relationships with their families and the people who are important to them.
- Work with our partners to reduce the risk of young people coming into contact with the justice system
- Maintain a "whole-family approach" that recognises the impact that relationship breakdown can have on all family members especially brother and sisters. We will use our learning to ensure brothers and sisters are offered support in their own right.
- Alongside our partners, support young people's transition when moving on from secure care back to their family home or new living arrangements.
- Continue our participation in the Secure Care Pathways and Standards National groups, sharing our knowledge and learning from families with the aim to highlight good practice and areas for improvement.
- We will continue maintain strong relationships with our partners from secure care centres combining our efforts with other professionals to achieve the very best outcomes for young people and their families, keeping young people and families at the heart of project development in line with our commitment to the UNCRC and Scotland's Promise.

# SECURE CHAMPS GROUP

## Cyrenians participate in the Secure Care Champions Group

The Standards Champions group is open to individuals from all agencies with roles and responsibilities in implementing the Standards. This is an implementation support group, where members can share their journey, learning, experiences, opportunities and challenges in implementing the Standards, as well collaboratively create, innovate and support practice and progress in meeting the Standards.

Some examples of how the Secure Care Standards are relevant within Keeping Families Together:

- I understand my rights when planning for my future and I have access to the legal advice, representation and high-quality independent advocacy I need - we have carried out a Children's Rights Wellbeing Impact Assessment on our project and all staff are trained in children's rights.
- My plans for moving on meet all my needs. They involve everyone who has responsibility to care for and support me - we work in partnership with secure care staff, the young person, family members and other professionals involved in the young person care, building on the support the young person has already received whilst living in secure care.
- I am fully prepared for making the transition from the service and this is taken at a pace which means I am completely ready - we can begin work with the family while the young person is in secure care, building relationships getting to know them, working with them on the things they would like to change/maintain upon returning home.



## CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES PRIORITY AREAS

- CLIMATE CHANGE
- FAIR WORK
- UNCRC, THE PROMISE & THE CARE AND JUSTICE BILL
- CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
- BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES

# CLIMATE CHANGE

Our vision is that everyone can live valued and fulfilling lives. Everyone deserves a healthy environment to live and work in, and access to nature and healthy food, it is only right that we commit to this as a responsible organisation.

Here at Cyrenians we try to lead by example, and one of the goals we set ourself is;

***“To promote environmental sustainability and to minimise waste”.***

Now, and continuing into the future, we are taking responsible steps to ensure we achieve this goal:

- Cyrenians runs FareShare Central and South East Scotland, which redistribute food that would otherwise go to landfill.
- Staff e-learning platform which includes a Sustainability learning pathway. All staff will complete this training, raising general awareness of climate change across the organisation.
- Enhanced bike to work scheme introduced to allow staff to purchase an electric bike for their daily commute.
- We have commenced an energy audit for all properties (owned and leased) with a view to reducing our energy consumption incrementally. Where possible, it is our intention to purchase electricity from the grid which comes from sustainable sources or carbon offset.

# FAIR WORK

Cyrenians is fully committed to Fair Work First. We have embraced a range of fair working principles/practices, including:

## **Payment of the Real Living Wage**

- We became an accredited Living Wage employer in 2015 and are committed to fair pay for all our staff.
- Our pay scales are based on job roles and our Board's Remuneration Committee reviews salaries on at least an annual basis. We pay staff expenses within seven days.

## **Provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition**

- All staff have a supportive manager who offers 6-weekly supervision sessions and weekly phone catch-ups. Our supervision template encourages staff to think about work-life balance and reflect upon what has worked well and what has been challenging for them.
- All staff have an annual workplan with clear objectives, to ensure they understand their responsibilities and are able to raise work-related issues. They also have access to wide-ranging policies (e.g. Complaints and Whistle-blowing).
- Speak Up posters (in offices and shared files) encourage staff to 'chat, call or email your line manager, or a member of the Leadership team, or contact the People team in confidence' if they wish to share an opportunity or raise a concern. We consult staff on organisational strategies and encourage feedback on new policies and practice (via SurveyMonkey, focus groups, team meetings).
- Our Leadership team model visible and values-based leadership by being present in our various locations, meeting regularly with all managers to 'listen and learn' and hosting cross-organisational lunches, which are open to all staff.
- Our Trustees carry out six annual service visits.
- Annually, we undertake a staff survey and a volunteer survey; host two all-staff in-person events (a festive celebration and a staff conference); and deliver a programme of regular All Staff Connect sessions (online and in person) to share key organisational information and gather staff feedback.

- We recognise the right of any staff member to join a trade union and be accompanied by a union representative during disciplinary or grievance procedures.

Our 2023 staff survey achieved an 82% return rate and confirmed:

- 97% of staff enjoy their job
- 99% are committed to our values
- 97% would recommend Cyrenians as a good place to work
- 90% had opportunities for learning/development
- 91% feel part of a team working to a shared goal

### **Investment in workforce development**

- One of our strategic priorities is a commitment to be “an organisation which nurtures its people...”. Since 2021 we have doubled investment in our People function with a clear remit, including analysing staff composition, skills gaps and potential pathways, to create a learning strategy which actively identifies and invests in workforce development at individual/team/organisational levels.
- Our eLearning system brings together all mandatory training, including compliance, health & safety, and child protection. Alongside training we require all staff to complete trauma-informed practice, healthy boundaries and management skills for managers. We also offer further skills training, from building relationships to IT literacy.
- Staff/volunteers are encouraged to apply for jobs across Cyrenians and to seek development opportunities. We offer a comprehensive Learning and Development programme (in person and online), and Succession Planning and Talent Management feature within our People Strategy. We have numerous examples of career progression.
- Particular attention is paid to supporting people from protected groups, and those with lived experience, who may have progressed from being a service-user to volunteering and are now working with us. Our five-year learning strategy is regularly evaluated and adapted to reflect emerging needs and regulatory updates.
- Our relationships with academic partners (e.g. University of Edinburgh, Queen Margaret University) provide opportunities for staff to undertake formal qualifications. Where possible, we strive to support external learning requests with either a financial contribution towards fees and/or study leave.

### **No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts**

- We do not issue zero hours contracts.

### **Action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace**

- Our standard terms of employment address the gender pay gap, and we employ more women than men at every level of our pay scale.
- We are pro-active in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace, and provide mandatory training on Inclusion and Diversity. We also promote and encourage participation in internal working groups such as Inclusion and Diversity (including LGBTQ+ and Neurodiversity sub-groups) and Trauma-informed Practice.
- Respect is one of our core values: 'We believe in tolerance, acceptance, valuing diversity and treating each other as equals.' We have strong policies addressing bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation in the workplace.
- We are a Disability Confident (level 2) employer and have held the LGBT Charter Mark since 2019. As a signatory to Ban the Box we aim to ensure fairer employment opportunities for people with convictions.

### **Offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment**

- We promote a healthy work-life balance and flexible family-friendly working practices. We are proactive in responding to staff requests for changes to working patterns, including compressed hours, and offer blending working arrangements where possible.
- Our Blended Working policy ensures staff under a blended working arrangement are treated equally to office-based staff, and that blended working is carried out safely and in accordance with our policies and current legislation.
- We have an attractive staff benefits package: competitive salaries, generous leave entitlement, a bike-to-work scheme, enhanced sickness absence, special leave to support sudden or immediate care needs, enhanced maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave, and a group pension scheme.
- We also offer a Staff Support package which includes regular Reflective Practice sessions (led by a clinical psychologist), and an Employee Assistance Programme to support staff wellbeing when they are facing problems at work or at home, including a 24/7 helpline and impartial, confidential advice from counsellors on issues such as Finances, Family Difficulties, Anxiety, Bereavement and Depression, and a Wellbeing platform offering discounts across the UK's major retailers to help reduce living costs.

**We strongly oppose the use of hire and rehire practices.**

# UNCRC, THE PROMISE & THE CARE AND JUSTICE BILL

As an organisation, we have committed to Keeping the Promise, upholding children's rights, employing a Youth Participation lead, carrying out Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments and embedding these approaches into all aspects of our services. In line with Scottish Government guidance we are further committed to providing age-appropriate supports which give due regard to trauma for young people who find themselves in the care and justice system. Echoing the UNCRC and The Promise, the Care and Justice Bill enables a consolidation of vital frameworks for young people designed to uphold their rights and ensure their needs are met.

The bill has various aspects that may have an impact on both Keeping Families Together (KFT) and Key to Potential (KTP) projects. Increasing the use of secure accommodations for young people as an alternative to Young Offender Institutes may see our KFT work responding to more complex needs and circumstances. With increasing populations of young people on 'offence grounds' accessing our service, rather than those on 'welfare grounds'. Moreover, expanding the definition of a 'child' from those under 16 to those under 18 may see our support being delivered to young people who are approaching the crucial juncture of transferring to adult services, while still being needing to access a myriad of young people's services and supports that enable their needs and capacities to be fully met.

Additionally, as a result of the bill enabling those young people under 18 rather than under 16 being able to access the Children's Hearing system, this offers renewed opportunities for our service to combine our efforts with others to engage with more families. Based on the recommendation within phase 5 of KFT's evaluation we will also concentrate our efforts to have more interactions with the Children's Hearing System, ultimately increasing the accessibility of our service and its related supports to families.

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Cyrenians provide direct and indirect support to children, young people and families through a range of services and provisions. Therefore organisationally we have created a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) in place for our organisation and overarching for all our service provision.

## Cyrenians CRWIA

Our services and projects also undergo training and complete their own CRWIA, which details how they ensure this in practice and in conjunction with policy and procedures.

In respect of Cyrenians' services that are not specifically for children and young people, all have the potential to be involved with families, and thus children and young people.

This work has been supported by our "The Promise Youth Engagement team" who have worked hard to develop training, a toolkit and other support for staff to help the organisation to embed children and young peoples' rights in all of our practices. In direct relation to this, the team will also identify internal systems to enable the ideas and feedback we get from young people to influence what we do and how we do it.

# BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES

Best Start, Bright Futures sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty. It is not solely a plan for the Scottish Government, it is a plan for all of Scotland, recognising the contribution all parts of society must make to deliver the change needed for children and families. Cyrenians is committed to supporting children, young people and families to flourish and access the support they need when they need it.

One of the main priorities for Best Start, Bright Futures is Post School Transitions and we're working everyday to help some of the hardest to reach young people to leave school in the most positive way possible. This includes:

- Support to apply for their Young Scot card so they can access free bus travel
- Support in applying for a bank account and a national insurance number
- For young people progressing to college, help to apply for Educational Maintenance Allowance and Care Experienced Bursary
- Helping families apply for grants to access white goods for their home and other items
- Funding family fun days as part of young people transition home from secure care
- Help with travel costs, childcare, food, removing the barriers to accessing support and attend meetings.
- Help with accessing government schemes for fuel costs, electronic devices and mi-fi
- Applying for leisure cards, cost of equipment to pursue hobbies and interests for the whole family to spend quality time together
- Linking in with services, both internal and external, to support the wider family of our young people, this can include income maximisation, help accessing services dealing with debt, substance abuse, gambling addiction etc.



# APPENDIX 1: OUR CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES GRANT SPEND BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local Authority	Spend	Number YP
Falkirk	£107,309	40
Renfrewshire	£64,387	24
Edinburgh	£21,462	8
Angus	£16,097	6
Glasgow	£13,414	5
East Lothian	£10,731	4
Scottish Borders	£5,366	2

Local authority	Spend	Number YP
West Lothian	£5,366	2
Aberdeen	£2,683	1
Fife	£2,683	1
West Dunbartonshire	£2,683	1
South Lanarkshire	£2,683	1
Dundee	£2,683	1

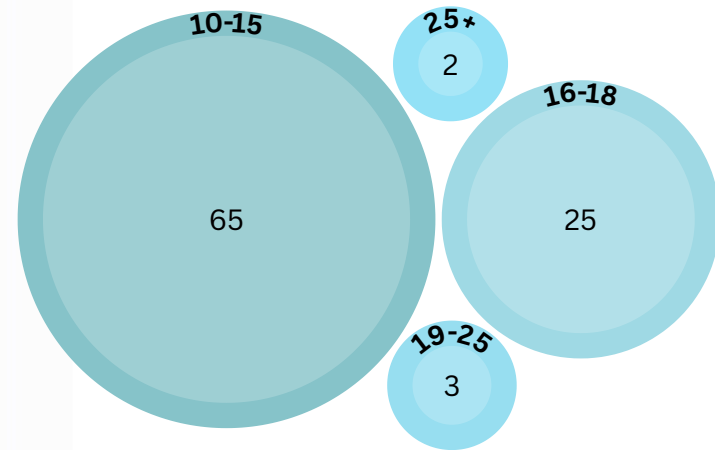
# APPENDIX 2: YOUNG PEOPLE SPLIT BY GENDER, AGE AND SIMD AREA

## GENDER

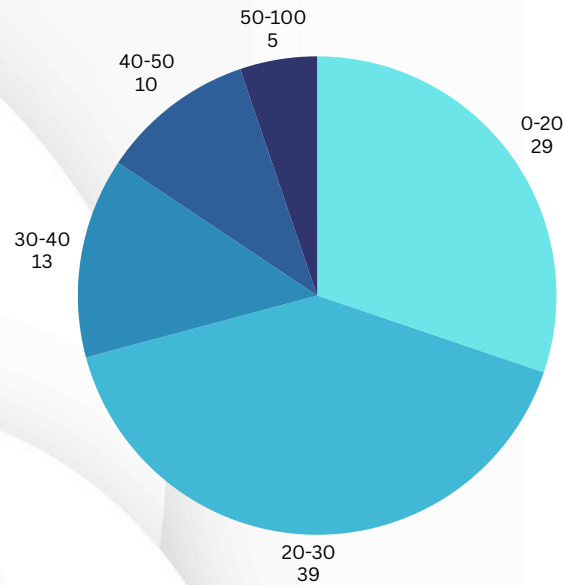


47 Female  
49 male

## AGE

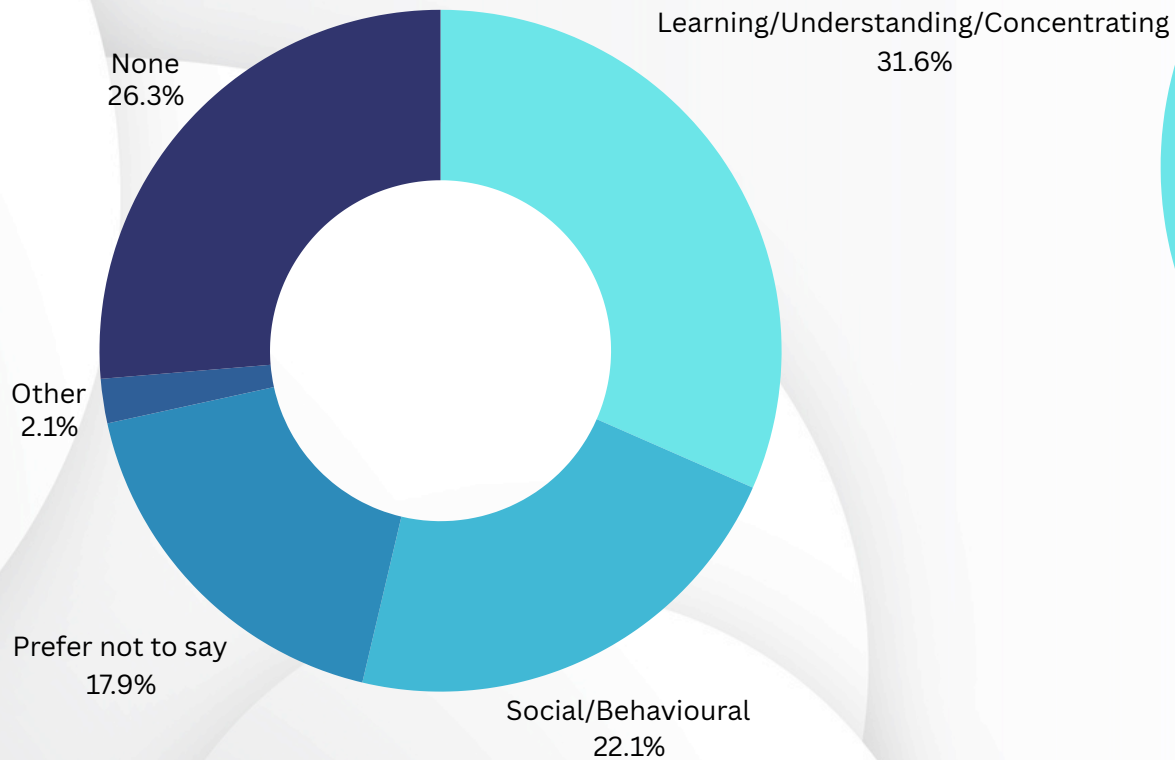


## SIMD

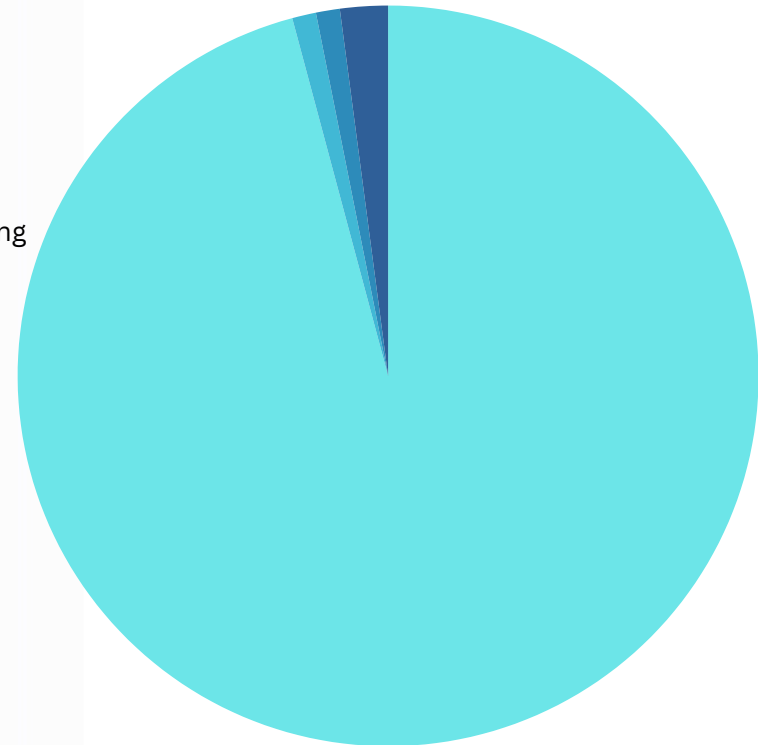


# APPENDIX 3: YOUNG PEOPLE SPLIT BY DISABILITY AND ETHNICITY

## DISABILITY



White other British  
2.1%



## ETHNICITY

White - other British  
2

White - English  
1

British African  
1

White Scottish  
96

## APPENDIX 4: FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

ITEM	ACTUAL	PLANNED	VARIANCE
Staff related	£227,075	£228,595	£1520
Client related	£4,448	£5,670	£1,222
Management	£26,024	£26,024	£0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£257,547</b>	<b>£260,289</b>	<b>£2,742*</b>

\*\*THE SMALL UNDERSPEND WILL BE CARRIED FORWARD INTO 24-25 AND BE USED TOWARDS CLIENT-RELATED EXPENSES HELPING US BREAK DOWN THE FINANCIAL BARRIERS SUCH AS HELP WITH TRAVEL COSTS, CHILDCARE, FAMILY DAYS OUT AND RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES