

# cyrenians

KEEPING FAMILIES  
TOGETHER  
WITH CASHBACK FOR  
COMMUNITIES  
2021/2022



The past year has been another challenge in adaptability and resilience for us all. The long-term ripple effects of Covid can still be felt across our nation, but more keenly still in those communities who face the uncertainty and indignity of poverty and homelessness. Despite a concerted effort across sectors to safeguard the homeless community and those at risk of homelessness during the pandemic, we are sadly seeing those figures creeping back up, with devastating impacts for those in our community trying to navigate the reality of homelessness. By April 2022 there were over 14,000 people in temporary accommodation, and the length of time it takes to get them into stable housing is getting longer. On average a family with children can now expect to be in temporary accommodation for almost a year before finding a permanent home. Now, with a cost-of-living crisis looming on the horizon, it feels like we are hurtling into yet another 'unknown'. In February 2022 our annual survey found 1 in 5 people in Scotland were skipping meals to cut costs. That was before eye watering energy price rises came in to effect heaping more pressure on household budgets. All of these factors are combining to make the year ahead feel more uncertain than ever. If we have learnt anything from our work over the past 50+ years, it's that our values-led, trusted-relationship-based approach matters and works, even in the toughest of times. We will continue working with partners across all sectors, bringing our talents and resources together to provide support to those who need us most. We will continue sharing our knowledge, representing those of us who are often underrepresented, and champion the causes that benefit the many, not the few.



Ewan Aitken CEO

# Keeping Families Together &



the  
promise

At Cyrenians we are committed to playing our part in Keeping the Promise which we have embedded in the delivery of our Keeping Families Together Project. Our CEO Ewan Aitken is a member of the Promise Oversight Board and is passionate about bringing about change for some of Scotland's most vulnerable children and their families.

CHILDREN IN SECURE CARE MUST BE GIVEN ALL THE SUPPORT  
REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND  
CARERS (THE PROMISE)

Working alongside Scotland's Secure Care Centres and building on the support they provide for young people, Keeping Families Together (KFT) supports children in secure care to rebuild family relationships and, where possible, return to the family home. KFT delivers a rights-based, trauma informed, integrated and intergenerational service which focuses on reducing conflict and promoting positive interactions within families. Keeping Families Together supports young people in secure care at two key points; the point of admission, and those who are in the process of returning home. It is closely aligned with the UNCRC, particularly articles 3,6 ,7, 12, 18.

# OUR AWARD-WINNING WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH, OFFERS:

**Mediation** - A skilled mediator works with children, parents/carers and siblings to encourage them to test new approaches resulting in positive communication within the family and in their interactions with others.

**Practical support** – Our family outreach workers offer whole family support working with family members with things such as increasing young people's confidence in communicating their needs to others in a positive way, practical support around education, work, community engagement, developing skills to manage emotions (i.e. anger, emotional regulation) and understanding how relationships work. Our family outreach workers can offer support to both young people and parents/carers. Outreach workers listen to the young person, build trusted relationships and use a variety of skills-building tools to improve self-esteem and reduce insecurities.

We support parents with issues which can influence parenting; such as health, emotional wellbeing, employment, housing, finance, and preparing to attend meetings relating to their child, i.e. Child Planning Meetings or Children's Hearings with the aim of increasing their confidence to communicate their needs within these meetings. Where appropriate, we discuss underlying family issues such as relationships problems, family dynamics and emotional wellbeing, helping families to explore and find ways to manage the effects of trauma successfully in their family. As a result, parents/carers report they feel better able to care for their children without the costly interventions of the state.



## Conflict resolution workshops

These are interactive workshops for young people in secure care who are 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, thereby reducing the number of incidents occurring within the secure care centres/home/community that might have previously required a police response and, in some cases, resulted in alternative care.

Lisa Millar at Howdenhall noticed an improvement in all young people's behaviour after they participated in workshops. Some of them talked more openly about their feelings following them and it was also fed back that during the workshops it was the most engaged that staff had ever seen the young people.

To ensure a caring response, there must be a curiosity about the reasons behind challenging behaviour, recognising that all behaviour is communication. (The Promise)

Anger, aggression and the inability to communicate effectively within the home can have a disastrous impact on children, families and communities. The relationship skills children gain from participating in our project have a lifelong impact, equipping them to develop/maintain positive relationships beyond their family long after the actual intervention, and make more confident future decisions.

Children and families report they feel better able to communicate their needs and emotions with others, resulting in more positive interactions with each other, care centre staff, social work and others involved in their care. Young people regularly report that in working with Cyrenians it is the first-time they feel listened to "Just having someone there to listen without judgment and to make you feel you're not crazy after all. It is the first time I have felt that someone has really listened to me."

In short, our approach directly addresses disadvantages faced by care-affected young people, builds resilience, increases self-confidence and assists positive transition into adulthood.



# WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH

If children are removed from the care of their parents, Scotland must not abandon those families. Families must continue to be provided with therapeutic support, advocacy and engagement in line with 10 family support principles of intensive family support. (The Promise)

Our work is closely aligned to the Promise and embeds the 10 principles of intensive family support in line with Scottish Governments aspiration for all families.

- Holistic and relational
  - Therapeutic
    - Non-stigmatising
- Patient and persistent
- Underpinned by children's rights
  - Community Based
- Responsive and timely
- Work with family assets
- Empowerment and agency
  - Flexible



# SECURE CARE CHAMPIONS

This year we joined the Secure Care Champions Group and the Secure Care Practitioners Group to ensure we keep families at the heart of strategic decision making, working alongside Dr Ruby Whitelaw from The Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) and other partners.

Over the next year we will play our part in helping with the implementation of the Secure Care Pathways and Standards. Joining these groups has helped our team develop relationships with colleagues across secure care centres, local authorities, CELCIS and CYCJ and others working to get the best possible outcomes for children and families. This has enabled us to develop a better understanding about each other's work, processes and procedures, which will be of great benefit in year 3 of the project as we combine our efforts to build on best practice and create more effective pathways for young people's transition back to family life. We would like to give special thanks to Ruby who has played a fundamental role in facilitating introductions to key people, giving advice and ensuring that we are involved in strategic groups to drive the project forward.

Everyone involved in The Children's Hearing System must be properly trained in the impact of trauma, childhood development, neuro-diversity and children's rights. That training must be comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Those training requirements must also be required for all the different and various professionals who appear at Hearings, including legal representatives. (The Promise)



# TEST OF CHANGE

As Keeping Families Together is a test of change project we have been building a training programme that ensures project staff have the skills they need to support the children, young people and family members we are working with. We pride ourselves on being a rights respecting, trauma informed and relationships-based project. All staff involved in the delivery of Keeping Families Together are trained in Trauma Skilled Practice level 2, working with Neurodivergent Children and Children's Rights. This year we have shared our learning relating to the emerging needs of young people and their parents and carers and extended the offer of joint training to some of the centres that we have been working with. We have also recognised that training should be extended to parents and carers so that they feel better equipped to understand the needs of their children enabling them to adapt their approaches to meet these needs, we will work towards this in year 3 of the project.

We believe that all children and young people in secure care should have the right to support for the whole family, so that where possible, they can return home with the support they need to stay in their family home. The implementation of the secure care standards is a welcome resource in ensuring the rights of young people are upheld before, during and after being placed in secure care.



# CASE STUDY

The young person was referred to us as part of his wider support plan to return to the community after being in several different secure unit placements. Before entering care, the young person was suffering with low mood and chose to take excessive amounts of substances to make himself feel better. He needed to enter secure care to keep himself safe.

It was hoped that the referral would allow the young person and his Mum to focus on working on their relationship (as well as reconnecting with his siblings) as he entered a new period in his life. Although he wouldn't be returning to the family home it was felt that family would be an important part of his support network and that our work would focus on re-establishing and strengthening their connections.

The family have engaged incredibly well. At first, the young person's Mum expressed that she wanted "nothing to do with her son" if he continued with substance misuse as her focus was on protecting her two younger children. However, through pre-mediation and support meetings we helped young person and Mum explore what they might do or say differently to have a conversation about these concerns in a calm way. We have also started working with the young person's younger sibling.

At one mediation meeting with young person and Mum we reflected that she seems increasingly able to support her son while regulating her own emotions and anxieties about some of his behaviours and choices. Mum offered, "I want you to know I'm trying hard not to judge but to be supportive and be there for you whatever you decide." We also worked with the young person in terms of feeling able to reach out to his family when he would like to spend time with them, when he needs support, or simply letting them know he's 'doing okay'. They are now in touch more regularly and Mum and his siblings have been to his flat to help out with shopping and cleaning.



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In terms of support, we have worked with Mum who has frequently expressed finding it difficult to cope with anxiety, managing her emotions and finding time for herself to relax. We provided a 'self-care and wellbeing pack' which included a weighted blanket and self-help guides on emotional regulation and cognitive behavioural techniques. We also linked in with another organisation to provide gifts at Christmas as Mum expressed worries about affording things for her children.

The young person and his Mum had spoken about wanting to spend quality time together so we were able to provide the family with tickets for a day out where they (young pe.əd səm wed hə Mh e g t

access to the local health

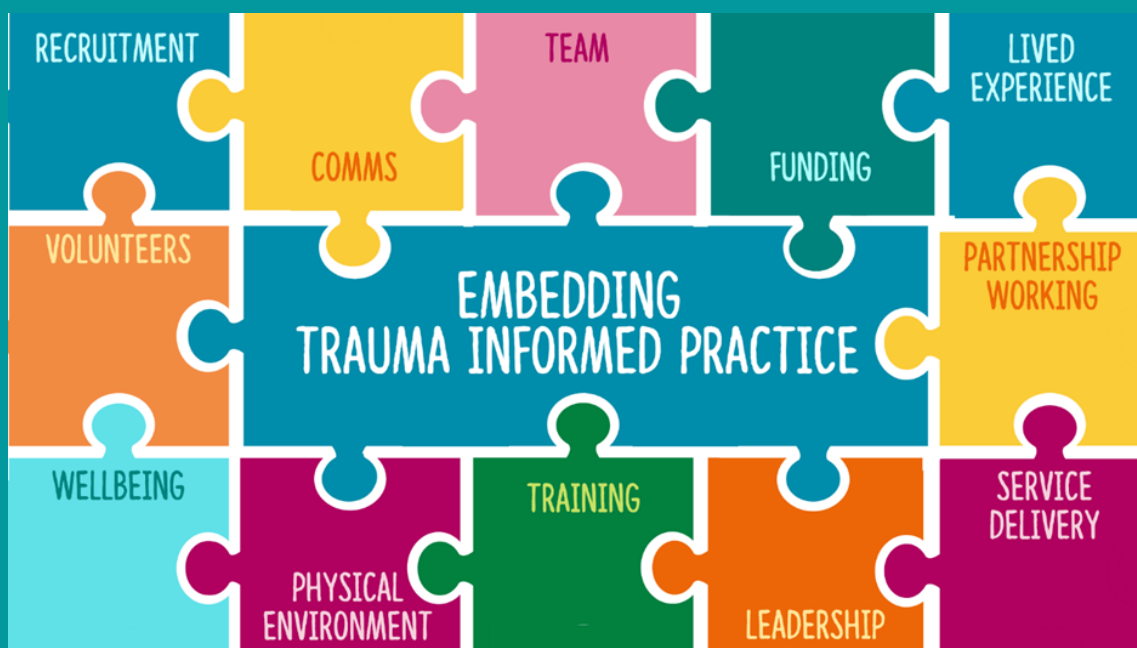
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# TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE



The workforce must be supported to care for children who may have had deeply troubling experiences and life stories. The management of the various risks and traumas can only be met by a confident, well-supported, trained and nurtured workforce who are able to step up for young people. (the Promise)

Cyrenians are part of the roll-out of the National Trauma training programme in Lothian with the objective to:- 'develop the use of trauma informed practice across the organisation'. Our first training session was delivered October 2020 and to date 150 staff and 45 volunteers have been trained to Level 1 or 2, sometimes both (all staff involved in Keeping Families Together are trained to level 2). Cyrenians are embedding trauma informed practice across the organisation which includes staff support, development of trauma informed services and much more. NHS Lothian cited Cyrenians as an example of good practice in their Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Coordinator's Annual Report to NHS Education for Scotland.

This year our team carried out a trauma audit of Keeping Families Together using the TICPOT Audit tool to gather baseline data and develop an action plan. TIP audit tool is an organisational toolkit used to audit mental health services in terms of trauma informed care and practice (inspired by Australian document). Following our audit, we looked at how we could best embed trauma informed practice across our service, and made some changes to our service delivery.

- We have embedded the 5 principles of trauma informed practice into our service delivery (safety, choice, empowerment, trust and collaboration)
- We are offering a service to young people and their families/carers which entails building relationships and rapport before considering with them what is working well and what they would like to change, in their communication and, ultimately, in their relationships with each other.
- All of the families we support have experienced the trauma of being separated from each other. We want to recognise this and not exacerbate the effects of this in any way. We are aware and sensitive to the impact of trauma and how it may affect family relationships.
- In discussing their relationships and communication, as well as in identifying their support needs, we are creating opportunities for people to rebuild a sense of control, choice and empowerment.
- We believe trauma should be seen as the expectation, not the exception, and we recognise that by integrating trauma-informed practice into our work, that it is personal, holistic, safe and responsive. We make our service relevant and beneficial to everyone, whatever their life experiences.
- Use of Traffic Light system to 'check in' with colleagues during team meetings
- Inclusion of TIP discussions during service planning days
- Collation of resources and promotion of trauma-informed leadership

Learning to date has shown that some of the young people we work with have benefited from art therapy especially when they struggle to express themselves and communicate their needs to others which can be a barrier to participate in mediation. As not all secure care centres have art therapists, in year three of the project we will employ an Art Therapist. This will allow us to work with young people who need support around communication but who are not yet ready for mediation. We will also be offering groupwork sessions in partnership with the Good Shepherd Centre.

In addition, we are partnering with the University of Edinburgh School of Health in Social Science and will host student placements for those undertaking the post graduate diploma in counselling. This will allow us to offer counselling sessions to family members and siblings involved in the project.

We also took part in a learning session with Inspiring Scotland and shared our learning with the other cashback partners.



# SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN

In nearly all of the referrals that we received for Mediation and Support, the young person had a diagnosis of a neurodivergent condition or was in the process of being assessed for one, or the young person themselves or family members has suspicions that young person had additional support needs. In response our team undertook training with the Salvesen Mindroom Centre, a Scottish charity that supports, informs and empowers children and young people living with learning difficulties. Their vision is to become an internationally recognised centre of excellence in neurodiversity to help create a world in which no mind is left behind.

As neurodiversity causes differences in individual's behaviours and experiences, this can result in young people finding it difficult to understand what others around them are asking of them, and can also have implications on how young people communicate their needs to others. As behaviours are a form of communication it is important that we understand this and adjust our practice to meet the individual needs of the young people we support. For example if a young person has an outburst, we understand that they are not able to manage the situation and don't interpret this as disruptive but recognise it as distressed behaviour.



In response to the emerging needs of young people and the training we received, we adapted the way in which we describe our project and our approach to working with young people. For example, how long our workshops run, how we communicate with young people based on their individual needs, how we present information and more importantly connecting parents/ carers to additional support and information so they can adapt their approaches and methods of communication with their children based on their individual differences.

# SALVESEN MINDROOM CENTRE

Neurodiversity means there is a wide variation in brain processes. Neurodiversity causes differences in individuals' experiences and behaviours. Sometimes this creates a big enough difference to correspond with a label such as autism or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). One person cannot be neurodiverse, but a group of people may be neurodiverse if they differ in their neurotype. If you experience a barrier to learning, you may be neurodivergent. Someone with autism, dyslexia, ADHD, developmental coordination disorder or Tourette syndrome could be described as neurodivergent.

The Salvesen Mindroom Centre uses the following definitions:

**Learning difficulty,** A problem of understanding or an emotional difficulty that affects a person's ability to learn, get along with others and follow convention.

**Learning disability,** A significant, lifelong, condition that starts before adulthood and affects development to the extent that the person requires support to understand information, learn skills and to cope independently. Listed below are some of the more common conditions associated with learning difficulties. Often an individual will be affected by more than one condition.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD),** People with ADHD are inattentive, easily distracted, impulsive and hyperactive. These characteristics are usually combined in varying degrees of severity. ADD has the same characteristics as ADHD except that individuals do not have hyperactive or impulsive symptoms.

**Autism** Autism affects how individuals communicate, process information, and experience the world around them. People with autism will often have difficulties with social interaction, coping with change and sensory stimuli.

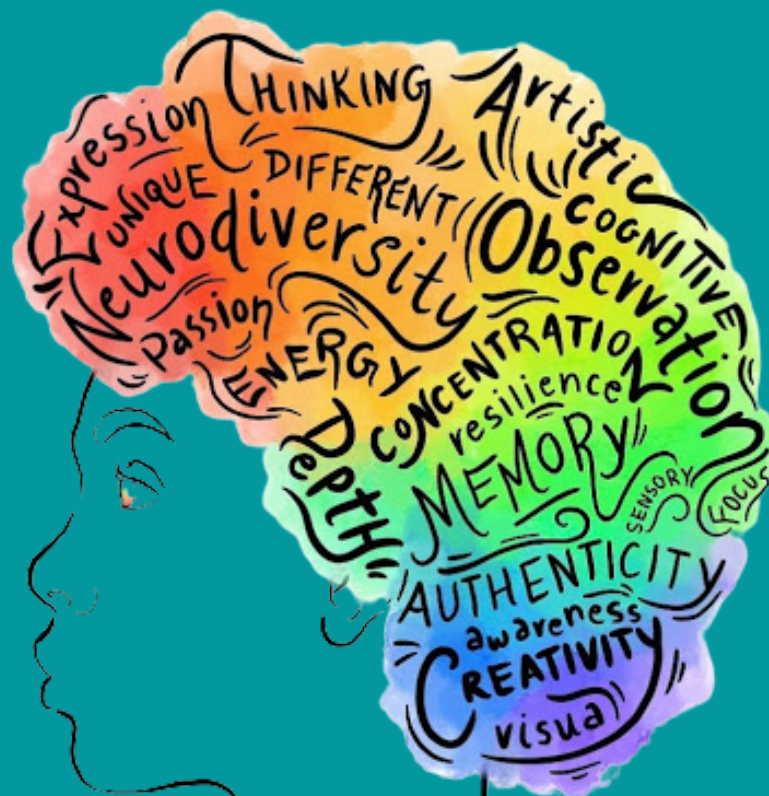
**Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)** DCD is characterised by impairments in coordination, motor control and planning, affecting any or all movements. Associated difficulties with memory, perception and organisation can impact everyday life. DCD is still sometimes referred to as 'Dyspraxia'.

Dyslexia Specific difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. •  
Dyscalculia - difficulties with maths. • Dysgraphia - difficulties with handwriting.

Tourette syndrome Involuntary movements or sounds which may come and go and vary in severity. These actions are known as 'tics'.

We believe that working with us will better equip young people with neurodivergent conditions to communicate their needs positively to others. Family members and people working with them will also gain a better understanding of the communication difficulties associated with these differences. In year three of the project we will be expanding our learning around neurodiversity and it's connections with care plans, especially around transitions back to family and community life.

As we journey with families we are already beginning to see gaps in knowledge and provision to meet the needs of these young people.




# CASE STUDY

The initial referral was made by the secure care centre as the young person was moving to an open unit near family and staff felt some mediation between them would be helpful.

Our focus was on the young person's relationship with her aunt who she had lived with for large portions of her life. Due to her Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis which made understanding our work and seeing its benefit a challenge, it proved very difficult for her to engage with mediation and support, and as a result, the majority of work has been undertaken with her aunt.

We also began work with the young person's sibling as they were getting involved in anti-social behaviour in the community and being excluded from school due to difficulties managing anger. The Mediator and Family Outreach Worker have supported him in regulating emotions and in conversations with family members. His ability to maintain links with us becomes stronger or more fragile depending on what else is going on for him within and outside the family. He is currently in a residential unit due to a breakdown in relationships at home a few months ago.

The mediator has built up a trusting relationship with the aunt and they have spent time discussing things which have an impact on her relationship with the niece and nephew and their communication together. This has included understanding the impact of past trauma on relationships; regulation and dysregulation of emotions; how ASD/FASD affect behaviour and communication; the teenage brain; the central nervous system and how it operates and affects behaviour.



They have also talked about strategies regarding communication – the importance of non-verbal communication; responding rather than reacting to young people; enabling our young people to find their own voice; giving praise and positive regard without caveats.


Part of the Keeping Families Together service involves liaising with other professionals and organisations who support the families we work with. In this case, it has involved conversations with social workers, I workers, care unit staff, school staff and community police. Both young person and aunt have benefited from 1-1 sessions with a specialist in ASD and other neuro-diverse conditions to help improve their understanding of and ability to manage the challenges that the young person's ASD brings and how it affects her.

Support has been provided to both young people around school and college and this will continue. We are continuing to support aunt to consider her own needs to improve her wellbeing and resilience.

We have helped the family to have some days out to enhance relationships – to the zoo, bowling and to football matches as these are a family favourite. Aunt was provided with a tablet through Connecting Scotland so that she could attend school and unit meetings when these were online; we have provided some food when meeting with the young people, a weighted blanket for one of the young people and flowers on a few occasions to Aunt.

SW feedback - Jo has been supporting the family for a good few months now. Aunt has told me several times that she finds Jo's support very helpful in managing her own thoughts and feelings. When I suggested that she contacted her GP and ask for some counselling, she said she did not feel the need of it because of her discussions with Jo. I have also noticed a positive shift in mood and the way she is talking about her niece and nephew since she has been having discussions with Jo.

The aunt has told us that in all the time she has been involved with children's services she has never had any support in her own right, as the support on offer was always for the children.




# CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS

This year saw the return of our conflict resolution workshops for young people...in person!

Face to face work with young people allows us to explore how young people respond to conflict, nurture their meaningful relationships and limit the impact of anger and aggression. These workshops continue to be a vital early intervention approach to reducing conflict at home, school, within Secure care centres and when young people return to community, ensuring young people have the tools to avoid the most devastating potential consequences of conflict.

Development of negotiation, collaboration, teamwork, anger management and active listening skills were encouraged through fun and approachable activities and games, catering to the needs of individual young people with a variety of needs. One young person remarked "I really enjoyed it, it made a lot of sense and I am going to try to be less angry". Another refreshingly honest young person said "I thought this was going to be rubbish...but it's actually minted!".

Getting back to in person workshops has been fundamental in letting us build relationships across Scotland's secure units. In these settings we offer workshops that speak directly to some of our most challenged young people. We tailor the workshop delivery to meet their needs and best support our partners, ensuring the young people have developed their skills to manage conflict positively enabling them have a successful return home, to their family and community when that opportunity comes. One young person, secured at Howdenhall centre in Edinburgh spoke fondly of the workshops, noting that having the space to discuss their situation was vital: 'When we come down here and we are doing things like this that we enjoy, it is like you can breathe'



Staff members have also been keen to share how the workshops have been received by the young people with one saying; "I am pretty sure everyone left with the sensation of having been heard and inspired" and another partner offered "I think these sessions are important as they help young people understand and know how to approach and deal with different situations moving forward in life."

We are particularly proud that this year, through the support of City of Edinburgh Council, we have welcomed a young person to the workshop team, TJ who will be working with us for the next 6 months, helping to deliver workshops to young people and develop the project further with his youthful insights!

"ALAN HAS A FANTASTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEY LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HIM EVERY WEEK, THEY ARE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE WORK THEY DO WITH HIM AND HAVE BEEN USING IT AS STRATEGIES TO HELP MANAGE BEHAVIOUR"

LISA MILLER, HOWDENHALL CENTRE



# PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

We had a 20 new young people taking part in the project in year 2 which included 5 new mediation and support cases and 15 young people taking part in our workshops.



**7 FEMALE**

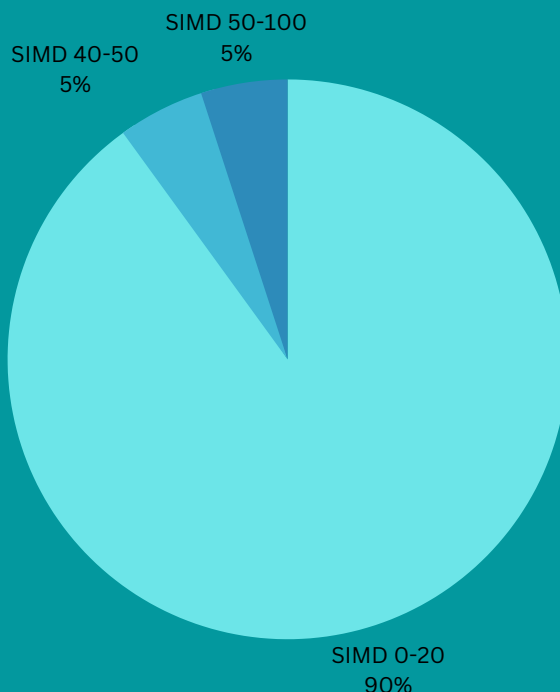


**13 MALE**



**10-15 YRS**

**15-18 YRS**



**SIMD BREAKDOWN**

# OUTCOMES

Outcomes achieved are based on 12 young people for the period the remaining young people who have taken part in the project will have their outcomes recorded in year 3 of the project.

Cyrenians have achieved a very high standard of outcomes for the young people and their families being supported, specifically:

**Outcome 1:** Young people build their confidence and resilience, benefit from strengthened support networks and reduce risk-taking behaviour.

Young people and the families interviewed felt that their confidence had grown as a result of their engagement. All 12 young people self-reported that over the past year they have improved levels of self-confidence.

**Outcome 2:** Young people develop their physical and personal skills.

Through the Conflict Resolution Workshops young people report being more aware of how to react less and think more in situations and of having improved personal skills.

**Outcome 3:** Young people's health and well-being improves.

Young people said they felt calmer as a result of the workshops. All 12 participants have improved wellbeing scores self-reported over the past year using the SHANARRI indicators used by the service.

**Outcome 4:** Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability, and employment options (positive destinations).

Both young people felt that the workshops helped them to better cope with difficult situations. The service does not have any quantitative data yet on this outcome and it will be important to track this over the next year, collating data on school attendance and progression into education.

**Outcome 5:** Young people contribute positively to their communities.

9 participants (75%) self-reported scores to the service show they felt their contribution, links with communities and social interactions are improving.

**Outcome 6:** Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

10 participants (83%) self-reported they felt less inclined to participate in anti-social and or criminal behaviour.

# UNCRC



Cyrenians is committed to ensuring we meet our legal duties and international obligations in respect of human rights. In terms of our work with children and young people this requires respect for, and the promotion of children's human rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

This year Cyrenians undertook an organisational Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) which will assist us to fulfil existing UNCRC international obligations and specific duties under the 2014 Act. We will also promote the wellbeing of children and young people through our policies and services.

A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) has also been carried out on our Keeping Families Together project to ensure that it is rights respecting.

Information on children's rights and parental rights and responsibilities will be offered and promoted to all children and young people, families and professionals involved in the project.

Through engaging in mediation and support parents / carers and young people explore ages and stages of child development and the child's capacity to express their views.

Through engaging in conflict resolution workshops young people explore how they react to different situations and how they can positively communicate their needs to others.

Parents/carers are offered support in their own right in areas they identify they need help with in caring for their child. As a result, parents/carers report they feel better able to care for their children.

To ensure we are embedding Children's rights into our work all project staff undertook Children's Rights training and were taken through our service level CRWIA to ensure they know where the touch points are and that we are upholding children's rights through our project delivery.

Positive family relationships as well as positive mental health rely on fun, playful activities. We ensure our support is categorised by experiences both with families and individually where play and relaxation are a primary focus. Our conflict resolution workshops comprise of games and activities, whilst family support sees families engaging in fun activities together where possible. We can provide financial support for families to take part in meaningful activities where needed.

To ensure children and young people deprived of their liberty maintain their right to contact with their families whilst they are in secure care, our project offers additional support to help children and young people with this. We have been able to help with travel, childcare, provide electronic equipment for virtual visits along with support to use this equipment, and additionally we can help with family activities when young people are returning home.

Who Cares? Scotland, June 2019: "The most common issues children and young people ask for help with are; spending time with parents & seeing brothers and sisters ... as such we offer the above additional support to help siblings maintain contact. One of the families that we are supporting had stated that they wished to visit their child more often but did not have the finance to do so. Our staff were able to provide some funding for the family to visit more often and are working with the family to explore how to resolve this going forward.



This year we got involved in the 2021 UN Day of General Discussion on, Children's Rights and Alternative Care and called for the following:

- Implementation of the UNCRC into domestic legislation and wider promotion of age-specific resources so all children learn about their rights at home, in schools and alternative care settings
- Embed and action 'The Promise' principles and recommendation
- Adoption of a national and unified 'whole systems' approach to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time, including destigmatising 'asking for help' and normalising the issues that can escalate out of control within families if left unchecked, such as free access to training/resources for parents/carers.
- Expansion of early intervention initiatives which offer a trauma-informed and rights-based approaches at the earliest opportunity, to prevent family separation in the first place.
- The right to family strengthening and reintegration for all children in alternative care, so that, where possible, they can return to the family home with the required support.
- Full implementation and monitoring of Scotland's Secure Care Pathway and Standards to ensure children's rights are upheld before, during and after being placed



# NEW TEAM MEMBERS

This year we welcomed three new Family Outreach Workers to the team one of which is Lauren who was keen to talk about her experience of the project.



My role as a Family Outreach Worker is to listen to families and personalise my support to them. This is something I particularly love about my job because every day is different. Being able to offer tailored support can reduce any external stressors and allow families to work towards stronger relationships. In doing so, families can communicate their needs, in a way that wasn't possible before engaging with The Keeping Families Together Service and be heard, seen and appreciated.

I have always been interested in the way the criminal justice system functions and how sentences and justice are translated into practice. Working for The Cyrenians enables my interests and values to be put into action, through supporting individuals most marginalised by a 'I am really interested in system change and feel I can play my part through journeying with families and identifying the gaps through my work on the project. In being able to provide resources to families to communicate in a positive way where their needs and concerns are heard, we can empower families to be more informed about their rights and areas of the care / criminal justice system they find themselves in.

My hopes for the future are to be able to positively intervene in the lives of young people and their families, to be able to contribute towards long term change enabled by healthier and stronger relationships. Being part of the Keeping Families Together service makes these interventions tangible, contributing to the future practice of rights based and trauma informed family support.

# FINANCE YEAR 2

PROJECT ACTIVITY	ACTUAL COSTS	FORECAST	OTHER PROJECT COSTS		
Staff related	£83,944	£142,290			
Client related	£234	£10,782	Management and marketing	£13,508	£13,507
Total project activity	£84,178	£153,072	External evaluation	£4,710	£7,850
			Total project costs	£102,396	£174,429

LOCAL AUTHORITY ANALYSIS		
Argyle and Bute	1 yp	£5,120
East Dunbartonshire	3 yp	£15,360
East Lothian	1 yp	£5,120
Edinburgh	7 yp	£35,840
Highlands	1 yp	£5,120
Glasgow	2 yp	£10,240
Renfrewshire	5 yp	£25,600

# EVALUATION

External evaluation of the project is being carried out by Dr Briega Nugent and

MEDIA EDUCATION



Kvale (1996) describes research using a 'traveller metaphor', a journey whereby knowledge is constructed and negotiated between both parties and co-produced. The main focus in this evaluation is to capture the lived experience and journey 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. Building on recent research of Creative Scotland's Cashback for Creativity (Nugent and Deacon, forthcoming) the young people reported that evaluation shouldn't begin 'at the start', because they often are not sure what projects are fully about and do not have expectations about what they want to achieve. Therefore, taking the advice of young people on board, the researcher will meet young people after they have been engaging with the service for at least three months, and therefore hopefully also should have built good trust for them to act as appropriate gatekeepers.

As well as one off interviews, it was hoped that a group of around ten young people and their families would engage in a longitudinal study enabling the opportunity to capture long-term outcomes, transitions out of secure care and barriers encountered. This should also show how over time, and as participants gain perspective, a reflection of what has made the difference to them, and how their aspirations have changed. In order to retain the sample, the best means of communication will be deduced based on what participants report.

The qualitative study will be supported by the data that is being collated by the Cyrenians and which will be focused around the six different outcomes in the outcome tracking evaluation framework. These will now be taken in turn with the processes around how they will be tracked outlined.

The key findings from the mid point of the project, drew on repeated interviews with a mother, daughter and grandmother from two different families who have been supported by the service over the past year; a focus group session with young people who participated in a conflict resolution workshop; focus group sessions with Cyrenians staff and interviews with staff from one secure unit. The main limitation of the research at this stage is the lack of engagement with families and secure care staff. All families Cyrenians have supported through this project were asked to take part, and an additional secure unit was approached, but did not agree to be interviewed.

### Key Findings from Family Members


key themes that emerged, focusing on the impact of the service, drawing from interviews with two women, a mother and grandmother who have been supported by the service for around a year.

- Importance of direct consistent support to build trusting relationships
- Learning to deal with and make sense of complex emotions and issues
- Improved Mental and Physical Health
- Improved Relationships with the whole Family
- Importance of practical Support

The main suggestion for improvement from the families was that they all felt they would have benefitted from this support earlier.

### Key Findings from Staff at Cyrenians and a Secure Centre

What is working well

- The model of support to build trust and connections with families
  - Follow on Support and Linking Families locally
  - Partnership working with Secure Unit Staff
  - Building Connections with Social Work Services and Providing Early Intervention
  - Staff Reflexivity and ongoing Training and Development
- 

## Challenges

### ·The Pandemic

·Time taken for staff across all secure care centres to understand the 'offer' made by the project

### ·Lack of Referrals

As a result of the pandemic it was still difficult to access the secure care centres to have meetings with both centre staff and families, which in turn impacted on the number of referrals to the service.

Internally Cyrenians has been gathering outcomes and impact of the project using a variety of methods.

We gathered feedback directly from the young people through their individual support plan which gathers information on the current difficulties they are facing based on each area of the SHANARRI Framework using the Wellbeing Wheel and My World Triangle (this is in line with the National Performance Framework and Getting in Right for Every Child)

As well as using SHANNARI indicators, we use a variety of methods to collect information at key points before, during and after the intervention in order to measure the difference achieved, including:

- On going feedback from young people and their parents/carers and siblings regularly, including case studies giving greater detail and context;
- Feedback from others involved in the young persons care, including secure care staff, social work and Cyrenians staff
- Case notes record the work undertaken with young people, including specific exercises they have completed
- Initial family assessments and initial young people's assessments
- For workshops we use pre and post evaluation questionnaires to measure the impact.

In addition to the support we offered around relationships and emotional resilience, which in turn increases the likelihood of participating in education, gaining employment and being diverted from coming into contact with the justice system, young people have expressed that they would like to spend quality time together as a family. This year we supported families to spend quality fun time together encouraging them to plan a fun day out, where we funded the activity, we also helped with travel and refreshments. Feedback from refers has been positive



"THE MEDIATOR MANAGED TO ENGAGE PARENTS AND YP IN THIS RELATIONSHIPS-BASED WORK AND SUPPORTED ME AS THE SOCIAL WORKER TO MANAGE HOME RELATIONSHIPS AND MITIGATE RISKS OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME."

**SOCIAL WORKER**

"I HAVE BEEN DELIGHTED THAT LAUREN AND JO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRING ABOUT SOME POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE FAMILY'S LIFE. THROUGH THEIR GUIDANCE, THE YOUNG PERSON AND HIS MUM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE SOME QUITE MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS TOGETHER, AND THEY BOTH SEEM TO HAVE FELT SAFE ENOUGH IN THOSE MEETINGS TO SHARE THEIR FEELINGS AND LISTEN TO EACH OTHER. CYRENIANS HAVE ALSO FACILITATED POSITIVE FAMILY TIME FOR ALL THE CHILDREN WITH THEIR MUM, SOMETHING WHICH DOESN'T HAPPEN OFTEN FOR THEM, AND THIS WAS EXPERIENCED AS A NICE TREAT BY EVERYONE. JO AND LAUREN 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**

# HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Whilst young people are in secure care they have a schedule of activities which includes attending school and taking part in activities in the evenings. We have found that some young people are apprehensive about returning to the community as their days will not have the same level of structure. As a result of this we are adapting our support to identify hobbies and interests and how these can be financed upon return to the community.

We are encouraging young people to try new things which they may enjoy, Through case reviews (mediation and support) and pre and post evaluation (workshops) young people are encouraged to explore and reflect as follows; Young people recognise, reflect and report:

- Increased understanding of anger and anxiety
- Increased capacity to form positive relationships
- Increased ability to communicate want / needs
- Improved learning, understanding and self – knowledge
- Improved listening skills and increase confidence in communication
- Increased ability to learn from challenges and awareness of continued learning
- Increased understanding of how conflict can affect relationships and how to respond
- Increased confidence and self-esteem through awareness of growing emotional intelligence, emotional literacy and resilience

Our learning this year led to us reviewing how we capture information within the project as outcomes were not always being captured in real time. As a result, we have now developed new project paperwork which captures information in a more timely way. Reporting in year three will reflect this. Originally we had envisioned that we would have the most impact taking referrals directly from the secure care centres, who would be well placed to explain the service to families directly. Following this young people and family members could self-refer. Our learning from the first 2 years of the project has evidenced that we have greater impact extending the referral routes through Local Authority Children and Families Social Work and to others working with children in secure care.

Working with Local Authorities will enable us to identify families at an earlier stage, we have evidence from families stating that they would have liked to have received our help before their child entered secure care.

# ADVISORY GROUP INPUT

## Purpose of the group


- 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.

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

We were delighted to host (online) our first meeting in September 2021 and the group met on two subsequent occasions this year - in December 2021 and March 2022.

Meetings have focussed on the challenges in building trusted relationships with not only the young people and families but the secure care centres themselves; when and how best to introduce the project to families; ways to encourage engagement and ongoing learning about the issues which are being faced by the families.

Emerging themes coming out of the Advisory Group meetings include the complexity of the work being carried out; the importance of training for all (especially trauma informed practice); the need for the voices of families to be heard and how crucial whole family support is. The choice to participate and voluntary nature of the Keeping Families Together service has been highlighted as a particular positive.



# THE FUTURE

Over the next year, the group will continue to advise and focus on collaboration and connections with other organisations to improve the outcomes for young people and families. We also plan to invite guest speakers with experience of the sector to meetings to share relevant information and promote discussion. It was also a recommendation of the group that we diversify the referral routes to include Local Authority Social Work Children's Services.

## Plans and priorities for the year ahead

- Recruit an art therapist to provide support to young people and their siblings
- Continue our involvement in the secure care Champions group
- Expand our referral routes to local authority children's services
- Continue to gather the views of children, young people, parents, carers and other stakeholders through our internal and external evaluation
- Doing further research into Neurodiversity and support for young people and families
- Expand our learning in processes and procedures of the secure care system and how these impact on families, supporting families to attend meetings and helping them to navigate the system
- Running art therapy sessions in the Good Shepherd centre

