



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report: LOIP Project 9.1 Reduce the number of 16/17 year olds with higher support needs offending by 2022 and \ Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023
Lead Officer	Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children’s Services Board
Report Author	Julia Milne – WSA Coordinator
Date of Report	January 2023
Governance Group	CPA Board – 19 April 2023

Purpose of the Report	
This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project 9.1 Aims to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce the number of 16/17 year olds with higher support needs offending by 2022 and 2. Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023 	
and seeks approval to end the project.	

Summary of Key Information	
1	BACKGROUND
1.1	<p>We know from a range of evidence, research, case review and local data that some young people’s journey to conflict with the law starts pre-birth. Exploration of the cases of the young people in the city accruing the highest number of charges shows high incidents of domestic abuse, parental separation, problematic parental alcohol, and substance use. Most of these young people were known to social work pre-birth or in their first 2 years. It is recognised that young people in conflict with the law are displaying behaviour that is a result of unmet need. There is a range of evidence on the levels of loss, trauma and bereavement experienced by young people in conflict with the law, particularly those in custody, secure care or accruing high numbers of offences that mirrors the local picture. The pre inspection survey of Polmont YOI - HMIPS Year of Childhood Survey (cycj.org.uk) – gives an indication of the exposure to abusive of adverse childhood experiences the children in Polmont have experienced. This survey shows high levels of close bereavement, parental separation, physical and emotions abuse, familiar mental health, alcohol, and substance use, again similar to the local picture.</p>

- 1.2 The impact of trauma, loss and bereavement on a child's development can be significant. The recent [sentencing young people guidelines](#) were developed based on extensive research on brain maturation and the impact of trauma - [The development of cognitive and emotional maturity in adolescents and its relevance in judicial contexts \(scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk\)](#). This gives renewed focus on understanding of how we support our children and young people who have been impacted by trauma, loss, and bereavement.
- 1.3 We must also have cognisance of care experienced young people who are disproportionately criminalised compared to their non-care experienced peers. Children in residential care are most at risk, being around ten times more likely to be criminalised than other children (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2019). The pre-inspection survey of Polmont ([2021](#)) highlights the issue of care experienced young people being overrepresented in youth offenders' institutions. Of the 16/17-year-olds in Polmont on one day in 2021 41.7% were care experienced and 38.5% had previous experience of custody.
- 1.4 The aims in this charter mirrors the Promise Plan [21-24](#) (page 23) which states that
- the disproportionate criminalisation of care experienced children and young people will end.
 - 16- and 17-year-olds will no longer be placed in Young Offenders Institutes for sentence or on remand. There will be sufficient community-based alternatives so that detention is a last resort.
 - Children who do need to have their liberty restricted will be cared for in small, secure, safe, trauma-informed environments that uphold their rights.

2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

- 2.1 Against this background, the CPA Board in Dec 2020 approved the [project charter](#) for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to "increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023" and thereafter in February 2022 agreed a charter which aimed to "Reduce the number of 16/17 year olds with higher support needs offending by 2022".
- 2.2 Higher support needs young people were identified as an aim from a combination of national policy and local data demonstrating that there is a small but significant number of young people who required the model of high vigilance and support which reflects their expression of emotional and mental health distress characteristically linked to their experiences of developmental trauma.
- 2.3 Research tells us that children in conflict with the law experience high rates of bereavement, loss and trauma, this is confirmed in our local profile of children in conflict with the law. Studies of children and young people in Polmont YOI show that they are more likely to have experienced traumatic or multiple bereavements and the impact of ambiguous and other losses on this group is significant.

3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 A range of work was undertaken as part of this charter group culminating in the main change ideas below:

1. Developing and embedding localised training, procedures and guidance documents on both of the following for a local multi agency audience
 - new [Framework for Risk Assessment Management and Evaluation](#) (FRAME) guidance.
 - new Care and Risk Management (CARM) local policy/process to be delivered.

The localised training aimed to embed on a multi-agency basis a consistent undertaking of evidence-based risk assessment assists us to understand the harmful behaviour and reduce the likelihood of it occurring, with a particular focus on Higher Support Needs Young people (12-18).

In addition, development of joint working practices with a consistency of understanding and application of the assessments and processes allows multi-agency professionals to support young people develop strengths/positive behaviour, and learn, practice and apply their skills and understanding to encourage them to realise their full potential, whilst providing protection to them and others from the impact of potential harm. Multi agency pre-recorded webinars were produced and are available via Aberdeen Protects to ensure all agencies have access. These offer a comprehensive baseline knowledge of FRAME and local CARM processes. These are accompanied by updated guidance, Higher Support Needs Young people (12-18) incorporating FRAME & Care and Risk Management and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Procedures..

2. Developing and embedding local training on bereavement, loss and trauma to increase understanding of the needs of young people in conflict with the law.

The needs of young people in conflict with the law are complex and we must consistently see them through a needs focused and trauma informed lens. Training on bereavement, loss and trauma and children in conflict with the law was delivered by CYCJ (Centre for Child and Youth Justice) and thereafter the project developed local training, called Needs not Deeds. This training offers a comprehensive baseline knowledge on children in conflict with the law and therefore includes up to date information on bereavement, loss and trauma.

The project wanted to ensure it was testing training in different settings to ensure that children and young people could be supported in a wide variety of settings and could access this at the right time and place for them and as such as well as the above training was provided to education and housing staff.

3. Develop leaflets on the Fit Like Hubs to be given to those receiving a written warning from Police Scotland

It was hoped this would increase self-referral to the hubs for those who didn't meet a threshold for police direct measure referral to other services where there

was self-recognition that support in relations to bereavement loss and trauma would be beneficial. This would involve the Youth Justice Management Unit (YJMU) sharing a leaflet with letters they send however following agreement being sought on who would pay for the leaflets to be printed there was a hold up with the template being provided therefore no leaflets have been shared with warning letters.

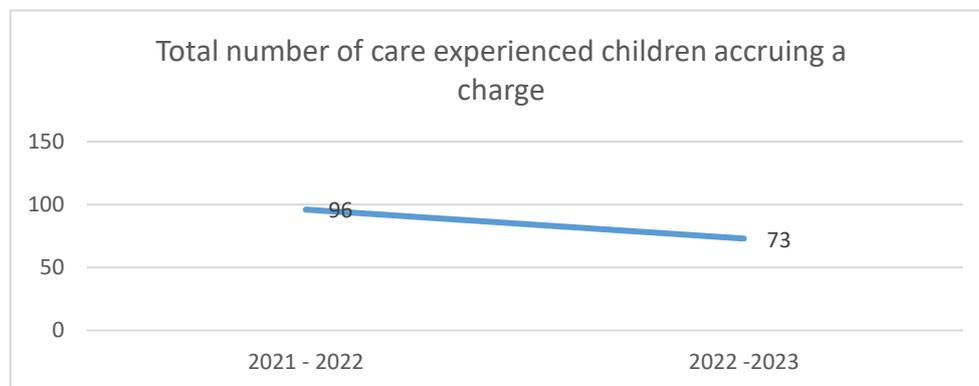
3. Test Seasons for Growth (SfG), an educational group work programme supporting children and young people who have experienced significant loss and change in their lives.

It is an internationally proven programme, with a wide evidence base. Specially trained group facilitators or *Companions* work in pairs to deliver an eight-session programme with two follow up reconnector sessions for the pupils. This also ensured early intervention and that young people were not only being offered support at the point in which they came into conflict with the law.

4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 Aim 1

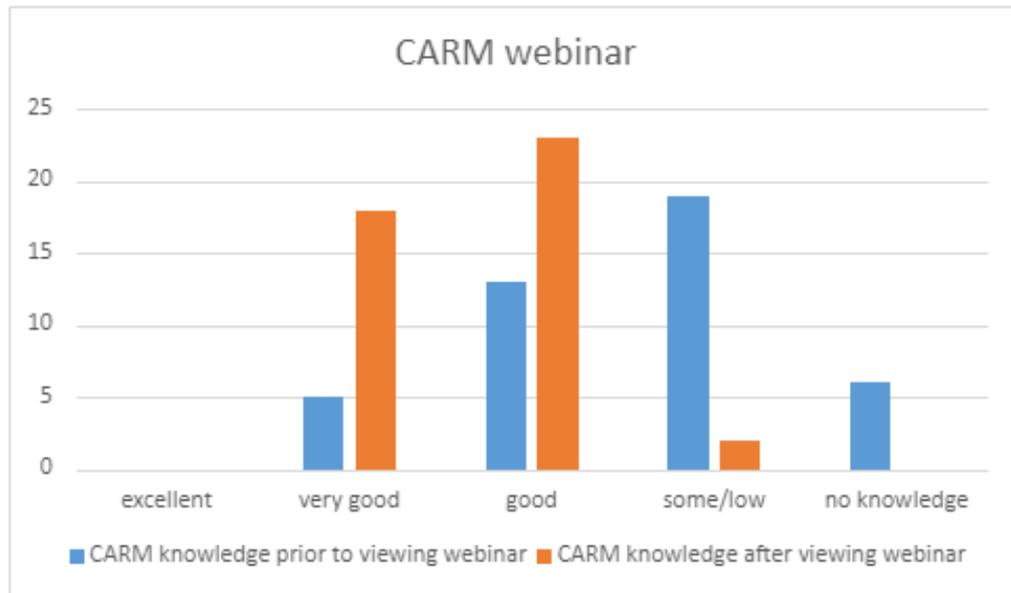
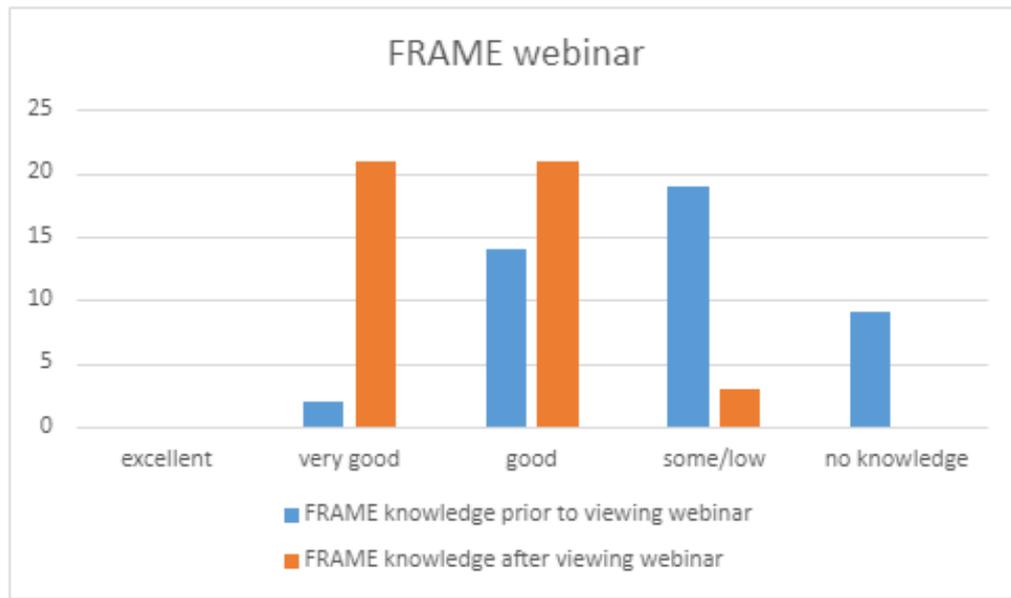
Yes, in relation to our aim to reduce by 5% the number of 16/17 year olds with higher support needs offending by 2022 has been achieved with a 23.9% reduction (96 to 73) to date (While the data for 22/23 doesn't yet have the full final quarter included, we can see that if the trend continues, we will see a significant reduction in the number of care experienced young people accruing a charge)



- Please note that the definition of care experience is limited to children who have historically been, or currently are, subject to CSO.
- Please note that the data for 2022-2023 is up to and including 24/02/2022 therefore isn't a full financial year.
- This data is for all CEYP accruing a charge age 12- 17.

4.2 We gathered data to measure the impact of the changes we tested for aim 1. The webinars were tested across the multiagency workforce and all those who viewed them showed increased knowledge and understanding of FRAME and local CARM processes. Those who were part of the test group commented:

- *“It has widened my knowledge around this”*
- *“It was good to have a refresher and to now have a video that can be referred to if need be. Great video, clearly explained what is expected”*
- *“It has increased [my knowledge] significantly and look forward to seeing more of these meetings practice in this way”*
- *“The video was thorough and went through each section in detail.”*

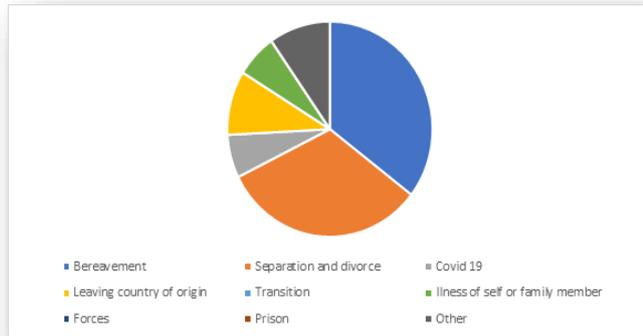


4.3 All the pre-recorded webinars are available on Aberdeen Protects and have been viewed by 62 workers.

Aim 2 – Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.

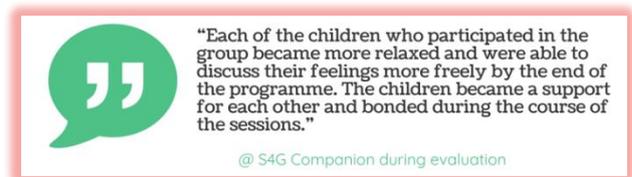
- 4.4 Although it is recognised as one of the vulnerabilities for families being referred to the Fit Like? Family Wellbeing Team, it is likely that bereavement is under reported due to historical loss or perceived impact on current presentation/family's needs both from professionals and families directly. When starting, data available for 2020 (collected from 28 October 2020 onwards) from the Fitlike Hub showed that 8 young people which represents 11% of all requests for assistance and evidenced that improvement was required. The project wanted to ensure that there were multiple opportunities for children and young people to receive trauma and bereavement support and as result since the project started 138 children and young people have been supported via two routes and therefore the aim of a 50% increase from the baseline data that was available has been achieved. Between 2021 and 2022, bereavement was reported at the point of referral to the FitLike Hubs for 68 young people representing 6% of all Requests for Assistance. This is broken down by 38 referrals in 2021 and 30 in 2022. In addition, as result of our Seasons for Growth test 70 pupils received support over a recent 5 month period in 2022.
- 4.5 We gathered data to measure the impact of the changes we tested for aim 2
- 4.6 Through our local training 45 staff have completed the Needs not Deeds training, this is in addition to other trauma informed training provided to children's social work education and housing staff detailed below. This training was delivered 5 times in 2022 and will be delivered on 4 occasions to the multiagency workforce in 2023.
- 4.7 Feedback from staff who have completed the Needs not Deeds training has been ***“the training has been very informative and thought provoking”, the info was very interesting but the specifics were especially helpful”, “This training was very comprehensive and well delivered”***.
- 4.8 As above, the project wanted to ensure that it was testing in different settings so that there were multiple mechanisms for children and young people to access the support they required. As such within education setting we tested Seasons for Growth.

4.9 The Educational Psychology team have trained 51 Seasons for Growth teacher and support staff *Companions* across 23 schools. Our *Companions* provide education and peer support for children in our schools with two companions currently work within the Fit Like Hubs. The training will continue to be offered across the city for those working with Aberdeen’s children and young people.



4.10 The latest data shows that 70 pupils received support via the Seasons for Growth programme over a recent 5 month period with bereavement and parental separation the focus in most cases.

4.11 There is clear evidence that the impact of support received in school, usually transfers into the home environment. The training of Companions will be maintained.



4.12 Training has also been rolled out to all of our Housing & Support Officers around care experienced young people and trauma informed practice and this is being embedded within the service. An evaluation on the impact of this role will be undertaken in 2023.

5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

5.1 The change ideas tested have now been embedded as business as usual. The suite of training on Care and Risk Management along with other training on children in conflict with the law will continue to be delivered throughout 2023 and beyond. This will equip the workforce with the knowledge required to best support our children, and crucially, the families of children in conflict with the law. The training will continue to be reviewed and promoted on a regular basis to ensure it is fit for purpose. Assessments will be regularly reviewed through auditing process to ensure that the process is being applied consistently.

5.2 Relationships with partners are well established and the Youth Justice Improvement Group is well attended by partners, this allows different forums to raise any concerns as well as share successes and what is going well.

5.3 Live practitioners training is being developed following attendance at Centre for Child and Youth Justice (CYCJ) train the trainer training and will be rolled out as part of the suite of ongoing CARM training which incorporates the webinars mentioned and a pre-recorded session on formulation.

6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 6.1 Data will continue to be scrutinised to determine any changes and track impact of ongoing workforce development. All training delivered will be evaluated to assess the impact of the training as well as its quality to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the workforce and therefore our children and young people. This includes evaluation of the pre-recorded webinars as well as the live training. Also, as above assessments will be regularly reviewed through auditing process to ensure that the process is being applied consistently.
- 6.2 Workforce development is a standing item on the agenda for the Youth Justice Improvement Group and will address any issues that arise.
- 6.3 Members of the Youth Justice Improvement Group are required to provide relevant data to the forum, this is analysed for any significant changes/trends. Appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place where there are changes/trends that require action out with the Youth Justice improvement Group.
- 6.4 Data is held by the Fit Like Hub in relation to the no. of young people referred for trauma and bereavement support. This data will be reported to the Group on an ongoing basis to reflect whether other improvement is required.
- 6.5 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will also continue to be monitored and reported to the Youth Justice Sub Group of the Children's Services Board, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement Programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

- 7.1 Our changes have been impactful, however as above we recognise it is likely that bereavement is under reported due to historical loss or perceived impact on current presentation/family's needs both from professionals and families directly. As such, it is also recognised that we require to have a trauma informed workforce to ensure our support for children and young people, in particular in relation towards care experienced children and families and those on the edge of care, is delivered with a trauma informed lens. Trauma training is required across all organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and families and those on the edge of care, therefore spreading the training available has been added as key delivery of the enabling systems section of the revised Children's Services Plan. In light of this, the training will be part of a new framework of support for staff to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision. This will also enable organisations to demonstrate that they are embedding trauma informed practice across their work and within their workforce and specifically by 2024 Multi Agency partners will review/amend/ update/their local practice and processes on physical restraint of young people with experience of care to align these with trauma informed practices.

7.2 Areas for improvement in relation to our children in conflict with the law have been identified during the development of the revised Children's Services Plan 2023-26. Subject to approval of the revised Plan, the learning from the changes successfully embedded through this project will be considered for when taking forward the new improvement project aims.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that both aims have been achieved;
- ii) Note that in relation to aim 2 it is recognised that bereavement is likely under reported and that we require to have a trauma informed workforces to ensure our support for children and young people, in particular in relation towards care experienced children and families and those on the edge of care, is delivered with a trauma informed lens as such spreading and further developing trauma training available has been added as key delivery of the enabling systems section of the revised Children's Services Plan;
- iii) Note that the data set for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the improvement programme dashboard to ensure progress is monitored; and
- iv) Note the plans to scale up and spread the changes tested.

Opportunities and Risks

Include a summary of the key opportunities and risks highlighted by this report.

Opportunities

- Delivery of workforce development to multi agency workforce.
- Work on implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill will, along with the YJIG, maintain focus on this area.

Risks

- The changes Children's Care and Justice Bill will impose require careful planning for and currently we have no timescale for when the act will be implemented.

Consultation

Youth Justice Improvement Group; Charter Team
Children's Services Board
CPA Management Group

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.

[Charter-9.1](#)
[Final-Draft-LOIP-Refresh-21.pdf \(communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk\)](#)

Contact details:

Julia Milne – WSA Co-ordinator – author