

# cyrenians

Tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness

# Cyrenians

- Many routes into homelessness, and that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to supporting people towards more positive and stable futures. That's why all our work is values-led and relationship-based.
- Our Vision is an inclusive society in which we all have the opportunity to lead valued and fulfilled lives
- Over 50 projects focusing on the causes and consequences of homelessness: home, community, food, health, work, family
- Working in Edinburgh, Falkirk, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and 3 national projects our Keeping Families Together project in a national project

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Keeping Families Together is funded through Cashback for Communities:

- Today, at any one time in Scotland, up to 84 young people can be in secure accommodation - with 80% of them being there for 'wellbeing support'. Children in secure care are almost always those who have experienced childhood adversity and difficulties such as significant losses, trauma and disrupted home and school lives.
- Until now, there has been no national approach offering the same level of support to young people and their families upon entering and leaving secure care across all Scotland
- We Offer mediation and 1-to-1 support to all/any member of the family as a way to help successful transition back to family life.

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- **Mediation** – skilled mediators offer 1:1 meetings with individual family members before bringing family members together for facilitated conversations. They work with young people, parents/carers and siblings to encourage them to try new communication approaches which result in more positive relationships within families and in their wider interactions with others. Our service focuses on helping young people and families to communicate their needs positively to others.
- **Practical Support** – Family Outreach Workers develop individual support plans for each family member, on the issues they identify as causing additional strain on family relationships.
- **Conflict Resolution Workshops** – Interactive workshops for young people who have been identified by secure care staff as struggling with conflict. Our 'Fight or Flight' workshops skill up young people to better manage anger, build stronger relationships and limit the negative consequences of conflict.

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## Secure Care Standards and Keeping Families Together

- My family, and people I care about, are encouraged and supported to stay connected with me and are treated with dignity, compassion and respect. There is a welcoming, friendly and comfortable environment for us to meet. (Our service is rights respecting, Trauma informed and relationship based)
- If my time with my family and others I care about is supported, supervised or restricted, this happens sensitively and I fully understand the reasons for this and these are recorded. ( we offer whole family support enabling the young person to stay connected)
- My rights to safely access digital technology are upheld and actively supported. This encourages connection ( we have worked with Connecting Scotland to obtain Digital devices enabling families to stay connected to each other, additionally we have supported families to attend professional meetings online)

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## Secure Care Standards and 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 service – 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 others involved in the young person care, building on the support the young person has already received)
- 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)

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- Case Study
- This young person was referred to us as part of their support plan to return to the community after being in several different secure placements since 2018
- 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 two younger siblings) as he entered a new period in his life
- Since making contact in October 2021 the family have engaged incredibly well with us and both elements of mediation and support have proved helpful in helping each party think about ways in which to improve their relationship

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## Feedback

*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)*

*Without Cyrenians sustained involvement, it is likely the YP would have come accommodated again, as there would have not been this relationship based support to draw on and work alongside other key partners (Social worker)*

*"It's really good, we feel like we can breathe when we come along to the room with Alan. It's good to just get to talk about how you are feeling and he teaches us some good things to do when we're scared or upset!  
(Young person, attending our workshops)*

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Thank You

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