

## **Keeping People Safe: Next Chapter Scotland Outreach Services**

### **Who we are**

Next Chapter Scotland (NCS) exists to help anyone navigate the consequences for them or their family members of having a criminal record or of being under investigation for a crime.

We offer honest, non-judgemental help to anyone who - or whose family member - is involved in the criminal justice system. We help people understand the personal, financial, emotional and social consequences for them or their loved ones and address the stigma and discrimination they can face as a result.

We do this because we have a vision of a future society in which everyone is treated equally for who they are in the present and no one's future is defined by their past.

### **Our services**

As an organisation, we have six strategic priorities:

1. Providing clear and accessible information, signposting and advocacy to support people to navigate stigma and discrimination and defend their rights.
2. Promoting wellbeing by fostering hope and tackling isolation.
3. Bringing people together to amplify their voices.
4. Undertaking research that places the human experience at its centre.
5. Challenging stigma through influencing and advocacy.
6. Developing the charity into a sustainable, resilient organisation.

### **Why we want to offer outreach within your service**

Fundamentally, we believe that the best way to support people is to meet them where they are – both metaphorically and literally. We know that accessing multiple services, across multiple locations can be incredibly challenging for people who are already struggling with the trauma that many experience whilst on their journey through the criminal justice system. We are therefore keen to attend your service to give people the opportunity to access our support services without having to reach out to us separately.

Our outreach services most notably provide:

- Information and Signposting - to support people to navigate the stigma and discrimination they are facing as a result of involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Advocacy - to support people to challenge rights violations.
- Speaking Up and Speaking Out Opportunities – where decision makers have commissioned us to provide opportunities for people to contribute their lived experience to policy / programme development.
- Referral into NCS Wraparound Support – including our Listening Ear service, our sexual offences peer support group and our employability services.

### **Safeguarding**

At NCS, keeping people safe is our top priority. This includes both the people who access our services and our team members.



We have comprehensive Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures and these are publicly available on our [website](#).

Should anyone wish to communicate directly with our Safeguarding Lead, please contact: [kalpana@nextchapterscotlad.org.uk](mailto:kalpana@nextchapterscotlad.org.uk).

It is also worth noting that we operate an Alias Policy within NCS. This policy enables team members to use a different name where this will help to ensure their safety as they are delivering services on behalf of NCS. We have an organisation wide policy that asks that none of our outreach staff take part in external photographs. We ask partners to respect this approach to supporting our team's safety. A copy of our Alias Policy is available on our [website](#).

As a learning organisation, we are regularly updating and reviewing our policies and procedures and we are always open to constructive feedback from our partners as part of this process.

### **Vetting of volunteers and staff**

As a lived experience-led organisation, we actively encourage people with experience of the criminal justice system to apply for roles within our team. This lived experience allows us to draw on the unique and widely evidenced benefits that peer support brings.

The [Disclosure Scotland Act 2020](#) made amendments to the [Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scotland Act 2007](#), in particular the activities and definition of Protected Adults see Schedule 3 of the 2007 Act. Under this legislation, people who have been involved with the criminal justice system do not meet the definition of Protected Adults. Roles within our outreach services are therefore not considered Regulated Roles and therefore do not require membership of the PVG scheme. It is worth noting that this is still the case where our staff are interacting with people who, in other situations, could be considered Protected Adults as our service is not designed to provide a service directly to Protected Adults.

As per our Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy, we ask team members to complete a Criminal Record Self-Disclosure as part of our recruitment processes. Where an individual discloses an unspent conviction, the CEO and Safeguarding Lead undertake a role specific risk assessment to ascertain whether any appropriate risk mitigations need to be implemented.

### **Child Protection**

Next Chapter Scotland is a service for people over the age of 18. However, we understand that a child may be in the family or network of those we support and are committed to the safety and protection of children recognising that the safeguarding of children is different from that of adults. Our Child Protection Policy outlines how we will adhere to child safeguarding practice that aligns with legal obligations, adheres to government guidance and meets best practice standards.

Should anyone want to discuss any element of our approach to keeping people safe, please contact Eppie Sprung, Next Chapter Scotland CEO: [eppie@nextchapterscotland.org.uk](mailto:eppie@nextchapterscotland.org.uk)