

## **Police Scotland**

### **Not At Home Protocol**

Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Police Division has been working with key partners in the local authority to develop the Not At Home Protocol which launches locally on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Police Scotland and Partners recognise the importance of their roles as 'Corporate Parents' and are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and support of care experienced young people. We also recognise that care experienced young people should be listened to and supported to prevent them being unnecessarily criminalised and from being exposed to risk and harm. Some children may be 'not at home' for a short period of time before returning. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or accidentally, and may be testing boundaries. This kind of boundary testing is well within the range of normal teenage behaviour and is not necessarily considered a risk. Police Scotland receive a number of calls relating to missing persons, often relating to care experienced young people who have not returned home, however their whereabouts are known by their care provider and they are believed to be safe and well.

The Not At Home Protocol has the following aims:

- To meet the needs of our care experienced children and young persons
- To ensure a proportionate and risk assessed response to missing episodes
- To reduce the likelihood of escalation of behaviour with unnecessary police contact

Where there are good grounds to believe that a child's absence is careless or deliberate, and there is no apparent risk to the child and/or public it is permissible to have a single agency response and there is no need for the police to be contacted. If that risk becomes intolerable to the carer, consideration should be given to reporting the child missing to Police Scotland, generating a multi-agency response.

Local Authorities, care providers and Police all play a vital role in the prevention, response, support and protection of children when they are missing. It is recognised that looked after children who go missing from care homes are particularly vulnerable as they can be targeted and may lack direct support or supervision from close family members.

### **Distress Brief Intervention**

Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) is an innovative way of supporting people in distress. The DBI approach emerged from the Scottish Government's work on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health strategies. The aim of the DBI programme is to provide a framework for improved inter[1]agency working, collaboration and co-operation across a wide range of care settings, interventions and community supports, working towards the shared goal of providing a compassionate and effective response to people in distress. This makes it more likely that individuals in distress will engage with

and stay connected to services or support that may benefit them over time. Most importantly, DBI provides the opportunity to do the right thing and help people get access to early and effective support at a time when they need it most. Early and effective interventions by trained professionals go such a long way to improving a person's quality of life and those of their families, friends and the wider community.

Scottish Health Award Winner 2019



DBI affords police officers a further tactical option (not previously available) to consider when dealing with people presenting in distress. It will not replace / duplicate any current arrangements for anyone who requires further medical treatment and will complement existing local arrangements such as contact with the Emergency Crisis Mental Health Team. Within Argyll and Bute, referrals for Distress Brief Intervention can be sent to Support In Mind Scotland who provide follow up with the person in distress within 24 hours of the referral. Support in Mind Scotland are then able to offer up to 14 days of time limited support to the individual and can link in with the GP for localised/further support.

There are now over 50 police officers trained to make DBI referrals including officers on our islands including Mull, Tiree, Islay and Rothesay ensuring this support is available regardless of where in Argyll and Bute you live.


### **Rural Watch Scotland**

Scotland is renowned for its great natural beauty and the rural communities of Scotland are safe places in which to live, work and visit. However, the nature of the environment and way of life means there are some crime prevention tips particularly relevant to rural life. Police Scotland would like to encourage people within Argyll and Bute to get involved with Rural Watch Scotland and to sign up and receive FREE alerts.

'Rural Watch Scotland' is an extension of the Neighbourhood Watch Scotland movement and a product of the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) aimed specifically at the rural community of Scotland and aims to bring all the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch to your community irrespective of its location, size or demographics. The objectives of Rural Watch Scotland mirror that of Neighbourhood Watch, namely to:

- Reduce crime and the fear of crime by providing the right information, to the right people, at the right time
- Encourage people to think about safety and security for themselves, their neighbours and their community
- Improve community cohesion and well-being by supporting communities to develop 'their watch, their way'
- Work in partnership with national and local service providers to develop more resilient communities that are better prepared against threats, intentional or unintentional, such as crime or extreme weather

By joining Rural Watch Scotland you can receive alerts and advice by phone, text or email. By keeping you informed about crime and other threats in your area, we help prevent crime, keep your community and its residents safe, and your response to these alerts can help us catch criminals or be better prepared to deal with other threats to your community. To join Rural Watch Scotland simply click the green JOIN button at the top of the internet page found here <https://www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk/#SignUp>

 This image cannot currently be displayed.