

# Guest blog: Police Scotland Youth Volunteers helping keep communities safe

✖ This festive season Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) in West Dunbartonshire have been working tirelessly to build strong, friendly relationships with their vulnerable neighbours, to help keep them safe and secure.

The PSYV programme aims to strengthen the relationship with the police and young people, breaking down barriers and promoting positive role models.

John from Police Scotland Youth Volunteers tells us more about the work they have been undertaking this year to help keep our communities safe.

*The youth volunteers fully understand that in this modern age the elderly population are challenged on a daily basis with health, technology and modern living where they grew up in 'simpler' times with no internet, online banking or mobile phones.*

*The youth volunteers are fully aware that because our vulnerable neighbours struggle with a life of fake news, online fraud and telephone scams they are more likely to become a victim of such despicable crimes. As a result, the PSYV groups have commenced a program to support as many vulnerable residents as they can.*

*This program started a few months ago where a leaflet drop was coordinated by the police in order to raise the awareness surrounding bogus callers, while highlighting the latest tactics used to swindle cash from a potential victim.*

*Police find that these criminals tend to befriend the victim by stating that they are there to help with a problem that is not there in the first place. Once the deception has been committed and the criminal has their trust, it often ends up in heartache and misery which is difficult to overcome.*

*During this leaflet drop, our advice was simple. We informed residents to think before committing and to speak to a trusted friend before any decisions were made.*

*During the last couple of weeks, the youth volunteers had been on their travels where they spent some 'festive' time with local residents of independent living.*

*This was a valuable opportunity for the youths to provide positive community spirit given that loneliness and poor mental health can be a major factor for many, especially at this time of year.*

*"We wanted to provide some cheer, especially around this time of year," one of the volunteers observed, while another said "I know that some of the residents might be feeling lonely and I just wanted to come along and provide some company".*

*As a result, the volunteers came along in their numbers and sang carols with the residents, served tea and mince pies, listened to music and chatted about life in general whilst providing that all important safety message.*

*One of the residents stated that she "loved the visit and it was great to see so many energetic, enthusiastic and considerate youths come along and spend some time with them".*

*The next step on this journey for the PSYV youths in West Dunbartonshire is to provide a simple gardening service to vulnerable residents during the spring time.*

*The coordinator and his team know that this is a time when rogue traders tend to start plying their 'incredible offers' upon the unsuspecting public. We want to show the community that these offers tend to be a rip-off and that maintaining someone's lawn, needn't cost a great deal of money.*

Read more about the PSYV, including information for anyone interested in becoming a Youth or Adult Volunteer, on the [Police Scotland website](#).

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## [Guest blog: Susannah Drury from Missing People](#)

As Christmas Day approaches, we welcome a guest blog from Missing People's Director of Policy and Development Susannah Drury.

Susannah joined Missing People in 2013 and leads the Policy and Research Team who help missing people and their families get the support they need from UK governments, the police and other agencies.

She talks us through the support that Missing People provide.



This is a difficult time of year for anyone with a missing relative.

It feels as if everybody is getting together with their loved ones, and it makes families even more aware of the empty place at the table.

It is also a hard time for people who are missing or thinking of going missing, with many struggling with financial problems or mental health issues, who will also be feeling lost and isolated.

At this time of year, people need support more than ever. In Scotland in 2017/2018, the police undertook 22,966 missing investigations, and more than 12,462 people went missing, an increase of 922 on 2016/2017.

The Scottish Government helps to fund our helplines in Scotland to make sure our team is there day or night.

This year Missing People has been part of the team implementing the National Missing Persons Framework (NMPF) with the Scottish Government.

The Framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of agencies, so that they can work effectively together to provide appropriate help for vulnerable missing people and their families.

Emma Simpson-Faichney, Missing People's National Coordinator, is responsible for mapping and sharing good practice in responding to missing people across Scotland, to help ensure the Framework is implemented.

The year finished with the annual Missing People carol service at St Andrews and St George's Church West in Edinburgh – where we were grateful for the support of Community Safety Minister, Ash Denham MP and representatives of Police Scotland.


***Missing People provides 24/7 advice and support for children and adults who are missing, or are thinking about going missing, and for the families left behind.***

***Support is free to access by phone or text on 116 000, and online via [www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk)***

[.@ashtenRD](#) has announced £70,000 of funding to establish a national development coordinator and independent working group for missing people.

This takes [@scotgov](http://scotgov) total investment in support for missing people

to more than £360,000 since 2016.

Read 

more <https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20220419012405/https://t.co/NAZuHCqR9x> [pic.twitter.com/TH3UHLDX95](https://pic.twitter.com/TH3UHLDX95)

– ScotGov Justice (@ScotGovJustice) [May 27, 2019](#)

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## **[Christmas in Secure Care – guest blog from young people at Good Shepherd Centre, Bishopton](#)**

**Guest blog from young people at the [Good Shepherd Centre, Bishopton](#).**

<https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20220419012405/https://twitter.com/GSCBi-shopton/status/1207674651121520645>

The festive season is such a happy time of year, where families and friends enjoy spending time together. However, for some it can also be one of the most difficult times. This is especially true for young people living in secure care. The reality for most of the young people living at the Good Shepherd Centre is that they do not get to spend Christmas day with their families. The majority of the young people living with us have had to deal with huge challenges and have faced trauma in their lives, so for some Christmas time itself may hold unhappy memories.

We asked all our young people what their Christmas wish would be and almost everyone said, 'to be at home for Christmas'. Blake\* said he loves and misses his Gran's cooking at Christmas including the sprouts! So, here at the Good Shepherd Centre it's important that every year we really work hard together to offer festive events and experiences which children and young people can enjoy, just like many other families do.



This year, the staff team who support young people across our care houses, Education and support departments, has been blown away by the kindness, talent and effort that young people have shown during the preparations.

In the Media class students designed their own digital Christmas cards. They did a fantastic job and the results are really professional. Young people and staff also worked together to choose and plan the decorations in the care houses which all look very Festive.



Digital Christmas cards created by residents of Good Shepherd, Bishopton

We also got involved in one of the newest traditions 'Elf on the Shelf'. We had a naughty elf in the Home Economics class, he tried to 'tap dance' but he kept falling in the sink!



Young people were really keen to support *Save the Children* and took part in the annual Christmas Jumper Day, which was an opportunity to be silly and raise money for charity at the same time.



Staff of Good Shepherd Bishopton show off their Christmas jumpers

We have a really good relationship with Erskine Care Home for Veterans. We invited them to our Big Soup Share in October, which involved young people choosing recipes and making 3 different soups to serve to our guests from Erskine, made from vegetables grown in our garden. It was such a success, the young people loved hearing the stories as much as the older guests loved telling them their stories. Two young people wanted to invite Erskine guests back for Christmas and came up with the idea of staging a Vintage Christmas Party.



Residents of Good Shepherd had the idea of hosting a Vintage Christmas for residents of Erskine Care Home for Veterans

Goodies were baked and setting the table and decorating the room was an opportunity to get creative and festive. We also created a choir; they rehearsed before and after school for two weeks solid. Their hard work and dedication paid off as the veterans thoroughly enjoyed the singing and the intergenerational respect and affection was lovely to see. In fact, our



'Vintage Christmas' was such a huge success that it may now become an annual event in the GSC calendar.



Getting Ready for the 'Vintage Christmas celebrations



The hall all set up to welcome the Veterans for their Vintage Christmas

Our Christmas Party is such a fantastic day, it is a worthy event to end the year. This year the celebration involved 140 guests including young people living here, their important people, professionals and partners involved in the work that we do at Good Shepherd Centre.

The staff all work tirelessly to make sure the day is as magical as it can be for the young people. Getting dressed up for the Christmas party is an event in itself, some young people had been planning their outfits for weeks. Maisie\* bought her outfit online and looked fabulous, as did everyone.

The games hall is transformed into a dining area filled with Christmas lights, a fireplace for Santa and his Elf to give out presents to the young children and of course a Real Christmas Tree. We watched a film showcasing all our highlights of 2019. We had an awards ceremony celebrating all our achievements and of course we had our Christmas dinner with all the trimmings served by our staff!

Insert picture named 'hall transformed'

As our guests arrived they were treated to Christmas songs sung by the choir from St Fillan's primary school.



**\*not young people's real names**

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