

Scotland's Police Officer of the Year to receive international recognition



Scotland's Police Officer of the Year is to receive international recognition for the trailblazing work she is facilitating in the country's prison network.

PC Tracey Gunn was awarded Police Scotland's top honour in the force's Excellence Awards in January this year. She was then winner of the British Association for Women in Policing Police Officer of the Year on 13th June, before learning that she has been recognised as Officer of the Year by the International Association of Women Police.

She has been the driving force behind the creation of the Police Liaison Officer position at HMP Edinburgh. It was the first role of its kind in Scotland and the initiatives and ways of working she has introduced have been adopted at other prisons across the country.

Her flagship scheme, Meet the Police, sees events held both in prisons and local communities at courts, supermarkets, libraries and schools, to break down barriers between children and young people, their families and the police. They regularly run at four prisons and nearby areas.

A booklet that PC Gunn supported six prisoners to develop, helping the children of inmates understand what happens when their father is arrested and goes to jail, has seen 2000 copies produced so far. Tracey is currently finalising a short film made with prisoners that aims to steer young people who are involved in low level offending or those at risk of offending away from more serious crime, by showing them the

harsh realities of being involved in organised crime and prison life.

Tracey will be honoured for her international award at a ceremony in Cairns, Australia in September. She said: "This is the most amazing and rewarding work I have ever done – but I don't do it for me, I do it for the prisoners, their families and their friends. In fact, most of what I do is promoting what the inmates themselves have done, it's their work, their ideas, their initiative. I feel very humbled to have even been put forward for these awards, and I'm delighted that it gives the Prison Liaison Officer role such a platform to showcase these really inspiring projects.

"Every day I see the benefits of the work we all do together – whether it is children who are curious about what police do and want to come and speak to me and my colleagues rather than being fearful, or men who are currently serving sentences but are doing all they can to turn their lives around and make sure their sons and daughters do not follow in their footsteps. I am very grateful for all the support I have received to get this role off the ground and help me to in turn support those who really need it."

Deputy Chief Constable Rose Fitzpatrick said: "Tracey's innovative work as a Prison Liaison Officer is truly inspirational, and her dedication to it is exceptional. I'm delighted that her commitment to building bridges between prisoners, their families and the police has been recognised not only in Scotland – where she won a Scottish Policing Excellence Award 2017 – but also now across the UK and internationally. She absolutely deserves this world-wide recognition for the positive difference she is making to so many lives."

IAWP President Margaret Shorter said, "For the past 100 years, IAWP has promoted the role of women in policing. IAWP champions change to enable women to play their full part in

delivering an inclusive service to their local communities. Without our annual recognition programme many phenomenal women and men would go unrecognized for their efforts.”