

CashBack for Communities to fund Police Scotland's VOW project

CashBack for Communities will be funding Police Scotland's VOW project from April 2021.

The VOW Project is a funded initiative which aims to reduce offending and harm to people in Edinburgh.



PC Graeme Buchan & Peer Mentor Kevin Neary

This is done by building positive relationships with those caught up in the cycle of offending and building a bespoke service for each person, to meet their individual needs.

The project is unique in that, in addition to plain clothes

police officers, it makes use of inspirational peer mentors who have lived experience of the Criminal Justice System.

The team engage with and empower young persons (aged 16-24 years) to break the cycle of re-offending and to pick up their shattered lives, by assisting them to make positive decisions and changes to their lives.

By having an open and frank conversation with the individual about their life, actions and choices, there is a much greater chance to break down barriers between the offender and the police and this greatly increases the possibility that the person will engage with the project and work towards reducing and hopefully ceasing their offending.

The peer mentors carry out initial interactions using their own life-experience and decide if the young persons are ready engage and to take the next step in moving away from their harm inducing behaviour.

Existing strengths, are gradually brought out, through the peer mentors building a rapport and a positive relationship with the young person in a safe environment.

They are then assisted in making positive choices and together, a plan of action is established around support, resilience building, signposting to partners, training and in some cases employment. The ultimate aim of the project is for the young person to be assisted in moving forward with their lives in a positive manner.

The VOW Project also deliver presentations within educational settings, to local youth groups, Care Experienced Young People and statutory and third sector partners, where they to talk about positive lifestyle choices and resilience.