

## **Inquiry into mental health support for young people in Scotland**

**December 2018**

### **Submission from Corra Foundation**

Corra Foundation is developing insights and learning around young people's mental health and wellbeing. Along with funding partners Corra Foundation are exploring current approaches to support for children and young people in Scotland. Roundtable conversations with independent funders and third sector organisations during 2017 highlighted the importance of supporting conversations, kindness and connections. For example, the role of charitable local youth groups who do not have specific remits but provide a consistent presence for young people to speak about emotions or mental health at the right time and pace for young people.

Corra Foundation has funded youth organisations through its Henry Duncan Grants and Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI), when reporting have recognised the importance of third sector community health and youth services, making it more accessible for young people to speak about support.

By working closely with third sector organisations and partners Corra Foundation have been able to identify key factors that can support the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland.

- **Relationships:** Corra Foundation's action learning project [\*Everyone Has a Story\* \(2016\)](#)<sup>1</sup> highlighted the value of positive role models and trusting relationships to support positive outcomes for children and young people affected by parental drug and alcohol use.

The research reinforced the importance of providing children and young people with consistent, safe spaces where they feel listened to and involved in the decisions that affect them. Children and young people need to be feel safe to talk about their concerns and wellbeing.

- **Trust & Listening:**

*Everyone Has a Story* also highlighted the need to allow time and space to reflect on what and how children and young people share their stories. The research project

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.corra.scot/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Everyone-Has-a-Story-Overview-Report.pdf>

worked closely with children and young people's practitioners, who [developed guidance](#) to support practitioners to practice active listening.

The practitioners reflected on the importance of listening before taking action or making assumptions about what a young person needs. This also illustrated factors that may prevent children and young people speaking out about how they feel such as a fear of what will happen if they disclose, and that saying something out loud might mean something will change. The findings recommended the time and space needed to help give practitioners the confidence to actively listen.

The learning from *Everyone Has a Story* showed that we need create opportunities to hear from children and young people, as well as practitioners, to understand what is important to them.

- **Accessibility of support:**

Finally, children and young people's [involvement in Everyone Has a Story](#) indicated that any support must be accessible. Children and young people told us that digital methods should 'communicate with us using tools and methods based on how we talk and share information in plain language'

Although digital methods of engaging with children and young people can be useful tools, it is important we remain mindful that not all children and young people will have equal access to online resources and advice.

The careful consideration of digital as an accessible resource was highlighted further at a third sector roundtable Corra Foundation held in November 2017. "We cannot assume that every young person feels digitally competent and we need to support and help them to navigate, feel safe, understand their rights and connect in an online world.

Corra Foundation continues to support the involvement of children and young people in the development of services ([The Listening Fund](#)). The Listening Fund is a partnership with Corra Foundation, Big Lottery Fund, Comic Relief, Gannochy Trust and William Grant. The aim is work with small – medium sized charities in Scotland to improve approaches that will embed the involvement of children and young people in their own design and decision -- making approaches. The learning from this work will be shared, but also highlights the importance of involving children and young people in processes that will impact them.