



"I DON'T WANT IDEAS WRITTEN DOWN ON
A BIT OF PAPER AND FORGOTTEN ABOUT"

INCLUSION AS PREVENTION
UPDATE NOVEMBER 2022

FROM TRAPPED IN THE SYSTEM TO
CHANGING THE SYSTEM



What is IAP?

Inclusion as Prevention (IAP) is a five-year initiative funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. IAP is a partnership between South Lanarkshire Council, Action for Children, Dartington Service Design Lab and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ).

The focus of IAP is on co-production and collaboration with young people, communities and partners, testing out ways to improve how services can be provided to better meet the needs of children, young people and families.

In 2021, IAP worked together with South Lanarkshire Council and Action for Children to support a group of ten justice experienced young people in attending 'Something to Say' Workshops provided by Street Cones. From a blank sheet of paper, via a recommendation from one of the group to watch a documentary about a rapper dealing with the justice system, a theme, that of the reality and impact of police custody, was identified and this group of young people created a script during the course of 16 weekly online workshops.

The method adopted by Street Cones with this group involved what they describe as 'the privileged environment', or 'the protection of fiction'. This enables the group to discuss issues and identify themes of interest without identifying what relates to themselves or the fictional character they have chosen as the protagonist in the script, allowing exploration of issues in a safe environment.

The script relates to the experience of a character named Paul who is placed in police custody for 24 hours before attending court. It talks about his feelings and anxieties as well as various practical issues experienced by someone held in police custody as a young person. The script also explores the impact of police custody, a court appearance and the possibility of a criminal record on the chances of a young person just starting out in life. One of the key messages related to the importance of supports being available for young people before they come into contact with the police and not after. As one young person pointed out: **'supports need to be in place before you do the crime instead of being branded'**.

The final result was performed online in summer 2021 by several of the young people and shared with a group of friends and family, as well as professionals in youth justice services in South Lanarkshire and beyond.

A further Q&A with a panel (including representatives from South Lanarkshire Council Justice Services, Action for Children, Street Cones and Inclusion as Prevention, as well as one of the young people who created the script) was held to reflect on the work and answer questions from the public.

When asked why he had taken part, the young person pointed out that for him it was **'...important being voluntary and by choice'**, going on to say he **'wanted to get my point across'**. One of the benefits identified by the participant was that the themes of the creative output are **'... going to their bosses and they can help ... I don't want ideas written down on a bit of paper and forgotten about'**.

Despite not having previously been involved in anything creative like this the participant explained why he had continued to attend the workshops with Street Cones, initially pointing out **'I was promised a munch every Tuesday'** (this refers to one of the ways the group were supported by the IAP engagement coordinator, who as well as being there for the sessions also organised for food to be delivered to the participants). On a more serious note he continued, **'It was something I had never tried before, it was lockdown ... I didn't have much options so I thought well if I've never tried it I may as well gie it a bash, what's the worst that could happen, and it turned out alright didn't it!'**

Access to support via a social worker was identified as sometimes problematic as it could depend on the young person being available, either emotionally or physically, to have that conversation, as the participant pointed out: **'I wasn't ready to talk ... I missed that appointment and you're thinking ... it's a trust thing going on to phone them and say 'aye I had something going on and I couldn't make it''**

Paul Carberry from Action for Children said: **'Inclusion as Prevention is really important ... this is about system change and the system still needs changed. It's about co-production, it's about listening to young people and their experiences. Over a period of time in Scotland we have made improvements to the justice system but not nearly enough ... we need to listen and we need to keep listening'**.

Claire Borden, Justice Operations Manager in South Lanarkshire described that, as a result of this work **'... we are in the process of looking at how we engage with people in a range of different ways'**.

'People have highlighted it is often quite difficult to come in for office based appointments and environments that can sometimes be quite daunting for people [...] it was mentioned earlier on about social media, I don't think we as a service are very good at interacting via social media but it's what a lot of young people use as a form of communication'.





Claire continued: **'We hope in the future we'll be able to offer a range of different options to allow a range of young people to engage with us in a way that best suits their needs, what do you need from us to help you engage with us?'**

Several of the young people expressed an interest in continuing to work together. From their initial discussions at the start of this work, of feeling **'trapped in the system'** to now taking their first steps towards **'changing the system'**.

As a result, three different actions were identified for a Justice Experienced Justice Champs Board to focus on in the medium to long-term.

1. A peer support workshop, aimed at two different age groups. The group were keen to involve a younger group from first or second year of secondary school **'before they grow up and already made mistakes'**. It is intended that the script play a role in helping to explore themes within small groups of young people, hopefully before they start to come to the attention of the police. As one young person described **'hopefully set them on the right path ... or at least give them a bit of hope that it's not all bad, something good can come'**.

This action was put on hold as many of the young people involved in writing 'The Script' have moved on in their lives now, but as of winter 2022 there are plans for this to finally go ahead, with the support of a partner organisation and other young people from a justice experienced background.

2. Working with practitioners to help co-design social work training. Justice experienced young people co-designed and co-produced social work training focused on relationship-based practice. The trainers will be ready to run sessions from November 2022.

3. A justice experienced champions group. It is intended that justice experienced young people from the South Lanarkshire Whole System Approach team will come together to further communicate the experiences and needs of young people encountering the justice system.

To find out more about the work of IAP visit our website or social media.

Website: www.inclusionasprevention.org.uk

Twitter: @IAPSouthLan

Instagram: [instagram.com/iapsouthlan](https://www.instagram.com/iapsouthlan)

