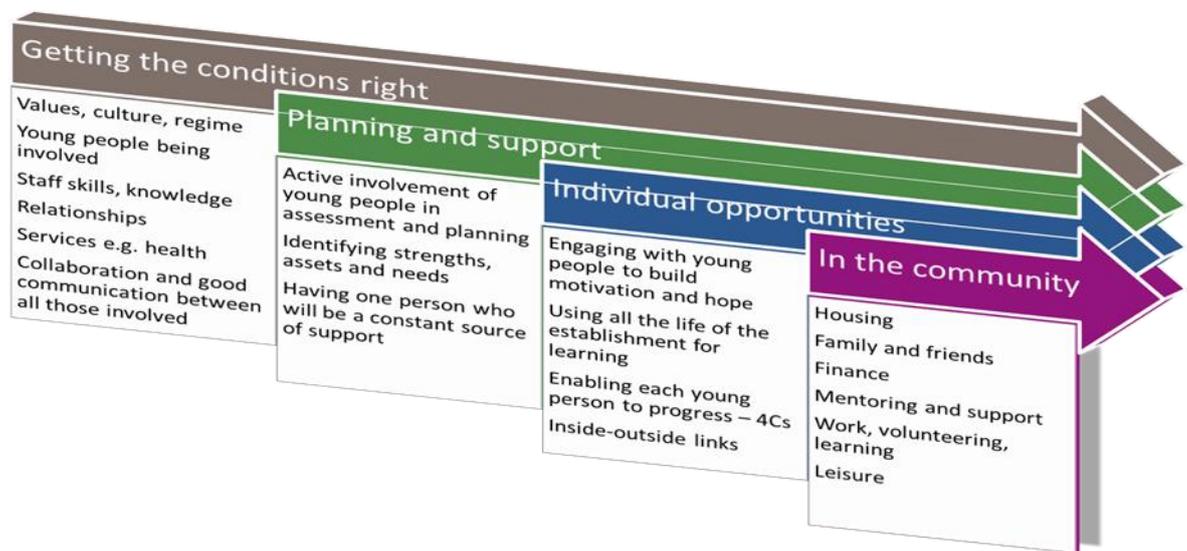


Scottish Prison Service Vision for Young People in Custody

The [Scottish Prison Service \(SPS\) Vision for Young People in Custody](#), launched on 4th December 2014, seeks to mitigate the negative aspects of custody and support young people to use the period in custody to prepare for a positive future. The Vision applies to all young people aged between 16 and 21 detained in custody, be these young people on remand or having been sentenced to short or long term sentences. The approach is situated within the wider SPS and Scottish Government priorities and strategies and is premised upon the recognition of young people's unique needs and vulnerabilities as well as potential. The approach is summarised as:



Young people have had a critical role in the development of the Vision and a co-produced version of this document for young people currently being constructed. The Vision acknowledges that while each young person's individual decisions will affect their future, it is the responsibility of the Scottish Prison Service and its partners to do all that they can to support all young people to achieve their potential.

Integral in achieving this Vision is the role of all SPS staff members, particularly Personal Officers ([SPS, 2013](#)). This role is being accredited renewed priority, training and support as a "core role" of Prison Officers. The Personal Officer role will include providing a single point of contact, forming and sustaining relationships, engaging young people in assessment and co-producing planning for their time in custody and beyond, signposting to services, advocacy and supporting the process of change. The development of the role of SPS Throughcare Support Officers, building on the evaluation of the pilot at HMP Greenock, as an additional resource to provide transitional support for a period pre- and post-release remains ongoing.

The Vision represents a significant change of approach, practice, values and principles and is the foundation for a long-term strategy, which will require:

- Comprehensive professional development for SPS staff and support to implement this in practice;
- Establishing Standards for Young People in Custody in partnership with young people, staff and partners which will be used for self-evaluation;
- Gathering evidence and measuring outcomes;
- Ensuring necessary infrastructure to support the implementation of the Vision is in place.

The role of community-based services

In achieving this Vision, partnership working between SPS and community-based services is crucial. The roles of community-based services in supporting continuity, transitions and reintegration, building upon current research and guidance ([Malloch, 2013](#); [Scottish Government, 2011](#)), include:

- Having a designated individual who can coordinate supports both within and outside custody and maintain the Child's Plan. This role should be fulfilled by the Lead professional, with Scottish Government (2011, p.16) specifying "In prison setting, the.... Personal Officer should act as the Named Person....with the local authority where the child resides maintaining the role as Lead Professional";
- Involvement in preparing for a young person's release from the start of any sentence and maintaining contact with the young person prior to release;
- Involving and engaging young people and their family throughout the process and providing family work and support in recognition that most young people will return to reside with their family of origin post-release and supportive family relationships are crucial in successful reintegration;
- Supporting young people to reintegrate to their community by providing continuing, holistic support based on individual strengths and needs and at least one positive continuing relationship;
- Continuing to utilise diversion from prosecution and alternatives to custody where possible to ensure prison is utilised as option of last resort, keeping the numbers of young people entering custody low;
- Ensuring the availability of comparable services to young people whether in custody or in the community;
- Supporting the developing of "inside-out" links with employment, learning, family and community;
- Supporting communities to understand "...today's "young offender" is more likely to become tomorrow's "new father" than tomorrow's "habitual criminal"" ([McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler, and Maruna, 2012, p.4](#)) and their role in successful reintegration and desistance.