

Background

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) is committed to becoming a trauma informed organisation. As part of this, the service has asked all senior leaders to attend Trauma Informed Leadership training. A Trauma Informed steering group also meets to develop several projects across the estate.

Within this national approach, HMP Edinburgh started working towards becoming a trauma informed prison in October 2021. A multi-agency steering group formed, co-chaired by the Governor and NHS Consultant Clinical Psychologist. The group includes representatives from SPS, the local health board, local authority and third sector colleagues. External partners also attend as critical friends.

The first task of the steering group was to approve a vision for a trauma informed prison considering the needs of both residents and staff. Sub-groups for related topics including research, lived experience and implementation were also developed.

Impact

The group circulated its vision to all staff working within HMP Edinburgh with a commitment from the Governor of at least a 5 year programme. Steering group members attended a trauma informed leadership training session to help inform next steps. To improve outcomes for prison residents, the group agreed to initially focus on staff's knowledge and understanding of trauma informed practice. This also included their own wellbeing and experiences of trauma within the workplace.

The group designed a staff survey including information on experiences of trauma at work, job satisfaction, vicarious trauma and burn out, overall psychological wellbeing, attitudes, knowledge and experience of trauma informed practice. They circulated the survey to around 650 staff who worked within HMP Edinburgh. Analysis of the results is currently taking place.

Learning

Sustainable, long term trauma informed change takes time. Particularly when working across multiple partner agencies. A clear strategy formed by senior leaders from representative stakeholders is key.

Top Tips

- Form a steering group senior leaders with decision making power to steer change.
- Develop a vision, long term strategy and take a phased approach.
- Focus on staff and cultural change first.
- Review research and gather baseline data before starting on change.

Next Steps

HMP Edinburgh will develop a strategy for improving staff wellbeing following analysis of the staff survey data. The data will also feed into the national SPS staff training needs analysis and will inform the national strategy for trauma informed organisational change. A prison-wide, multiagency programme of staff training and post-training support will be delivered in conjunction with the SPS National Trauma Training Strategy and the NES Psychological Trauma Training Plan.