

Positive Changes (Scotland) CIC

grace
Chocolates changing lives

POSITIVE CHANGES (SCOTLAND) CIC
MAKERS OF GRACE CHOCOLATES
CHANGING LIVES

Social Impact Report

2022

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Message from the CEO and Founder, Joyce Murray

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"I've got a daft idea." That is how I began some conversations about 6 years ago with those so much wiser than I in all things Scottish criminal justice. I thought I might receive the smile and accompanying pat on the arm followed by the response "That'll never work." To my enduring surprise, that response never came. Belief in the idea, encouragement, support and help followed and here we are on the cusp of our 5th birthday. A time for celebration and to be grateful indeed. Celebration for the difference in the lives of women with convictions in Scotland who took the opportunity of another chance. Gratitude for the practical, financial, moral and the general got-your-back, in-your-corner support from family, friends, staff, volunteers, Board members, interns, advocates, funders, customers and clients that have brought us from a one-day-a-week in a church kitchen operation to the organisation we are today able to support more and more women who have touched the justice system and are on their journey to making positive changes in their lives.

As we approach autumn of 2022 the landscape for women in the justice system in Scotland has, and continues, to change. COVID has undoubtedly left its mark. We have noticed the women prefer to stay close to home and the current, almost daily, headlines of industrial action and travel disruption do nothing to encourage venturing out. We know also that criminal justice service provision in both the statutory and voluntary sectors have been affected with staff working hard to manage their heavier than usual workloads due to staff shortages and sickness. The opening of the Bella and Lilies Centres in Dundee and Glasgow respectively are revolutionary landmarks in the justice system for women.

The approach of these Community Custody Units is founded on the principle that all aspects of the care of women in custody should be designed for women and take account of their likely experience of trauma and adversities. The approach will therefore be both gender-specific and trauma-informed. The last few years have also left their mark on the other side of the organisation: the making and selling of our chocolate products. We have noticed customers are more discerning about the sustainability, provenance and social impact of the products they purchase and we are so grateful for their loyalty and dedicated support. We have responded to their needs by extending our range of products suitable for those with specific dietary requirements, introducing more products with longer shelf-life and increasing our seasonal ranges. We have reduced our environmental impact by moving to more sustainable and eco-friendly packaging and continually reviewing our products, purchases and processes making further improvements where we can. In the last year, we have moved operations to a dedicated office space resulting in lower heating bills thereby saving energy and money while improving staff working conditions.

So, to quote Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" It continues to be our honour and privilege to journey with the women who access our services. Our role is to keep creating opportunities for their voices to be heard, to tell us what they need and want from the services we provide. We need to keep responding and adapting to those needs to enable them to make positive changes in their lives as they journey to reaching their potential.

Joyce

Joyce Murray
Founder + CEO



Women and the criminal justice system

Women and the criminal justice system

Historically, women in Scotland experience a criminal justice system that is “designed by men, for men” and has “deep-rooted women’s inequality” (Keith Brown, quoted in The National, 2022). Due to this, women’s distinct characteristics and experiences, which are important considerations for the care they receive, are frequently neglected (Jackie Turton, 2018) and the support they receive after touching the criminal justice system is often limited and unstable (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012).

Recently, there have been positive developments for women in the justice system in Scotland. Community Custody Units have been introduced in Glasgow and Dundee; HMP Stirling is undergoing developments; and a National Strategy for Community Justice was published by the Scottish Government in June 2022 as a roadmap detailing how, and where, the criminal justice system can be improved. However, there is still a need for improved representation and support for women within the criminal justice system, which is crucial to prevent reoffending and help them make meaningful, positive changes in their lives (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012).

Positive Changes supports women in some of the most important areas that prevent reoffending and encourages them to make this positive change. We aim to provide a holistic service, appropriate for each woman which supports her to achieve her goals and fulfil her potential.

According to the Commission on Women Offenders (2012) report, the factors that prevent reoffending in women include:

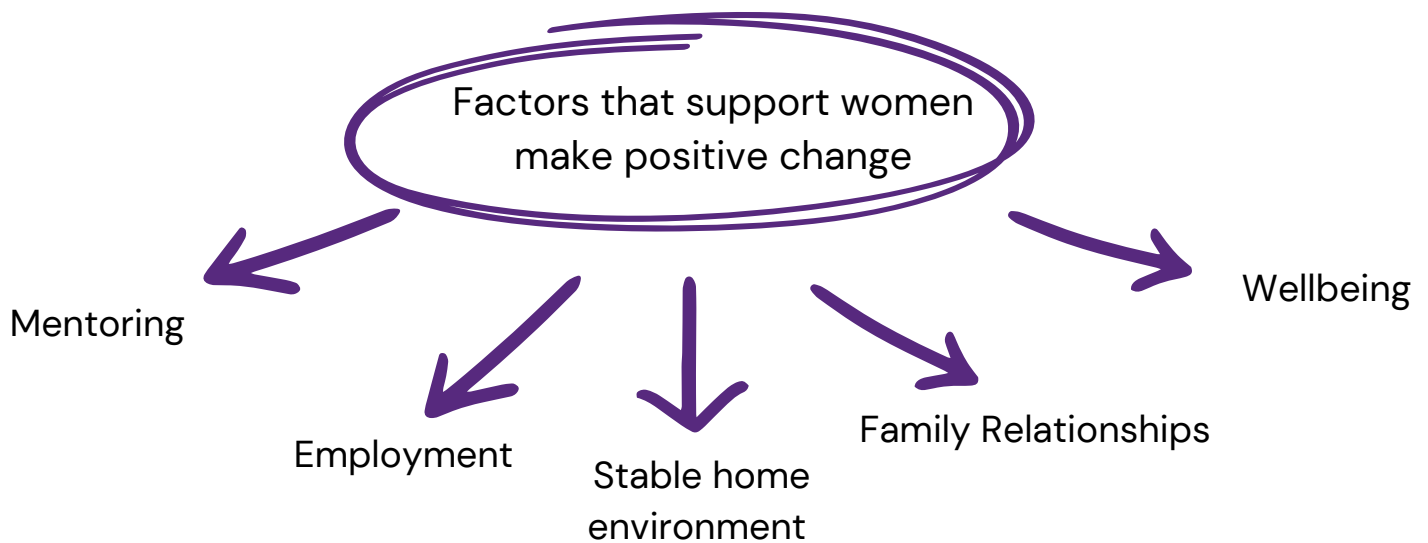
- Support which motivates women to make positive change and enables them to gain the confidence and skills to do so
- Support from people who are empathetic, caring, and with who the women can develop positive relationships with
- Participation in mentoring programs alongside other support systems
- Support for women to develop and maintain positive social relationships with their family members
- Support to develop a positive mindset which challenges antisocial attitudes
- Support which targets a range of different areas

Compared to men, women who have touched the criminal justice system are...

- A minority of those with convictions or in prison in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2022)
- More likely to have a history of trauma relating to sexual or physical abuse (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012)
- More likely to have mental health issues (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012)
- More likely to be responsible for dependent children (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012)



Making an Impact



Making Positive Changes

The Making Positive Changes programme brings together various elements, which support the women as they journey towards employment. The programme provides workplace and team working skills, information and resources to support the women in reaching their potential.

Grace Chocolates Work Experience

Producing the chocolates provides the women with valuable work experience. By giving the women the opportunity to gain qualifications and work producing high quality products, the women enrich their CV and ready themselves for the world of work and volunteering.

RISE Mentoring

Through the mentoring programme, the women gain a valuable relationship with their mentor. This is somebody in whom the women can build trust and supports them to identify and prioritize their personal goals. Regular catch-ups brings accountability, encouragement and an opportunity to celebrate successes.

Health & Wellbeing Workshops

The online wellbeing sessions were initially created to help combat feelings of isolation and loneliness during the pandemic. These sessions inform the women about mental wellbeing and self-care to help them understand their own thoughts and feelings and well as providing them with an online support network.

The main objective of Positive Changes is to support the women towards achieving their potential by providing a wrap around service tailored to match each woman's needs. Mistakes are an opportunity for learning in a positive, safe environment where the services we provide recognise the factors known to break the cycle of reoffending.

Who are Positive Changes and what do they do?

"[Positive Changes] gives a voice to a lot of women who feel like they don't have a voice"

- Katie Kyrousis, Mentor Coordinator

From the women themselves...

"Positive Changes is a non-judgemental, understanding and nurturing environment, where I am listened to, believed in, and seen as more than just a number."

"Positive Changes gave me the tools I needed to make positive change in my life, and has supported me during and after this journey."

Working in partnership with, and receiving referrals from a range of organisations such as the Scottish Prison Service, local authority criminal justice teams, the DWP, APEX and SHINE, Positive Changes supports women who have touched the criminal justice system. We provide women with the help and encouragement they need to work towards a new future.

Initially starting by providing women with support through the Positive Changes programme and work experience in the form of making chocolates, Positive Changes has continued to evolve, and now also provides mentoring and wellbeing workshops. Positive Changes looks to provide a holistic service to support each women's unique needs.

By providing a safe environment in which the women and their boundaries are respected, and where they can learn and grow, Positive Changes is offering much needed support to some of the most vulnerable women in society.

68 Women Supported

10 Women in Employment

26 Food Industry Qualifications Achieved

1534 Hours Paid Employment at Grace Chocolates

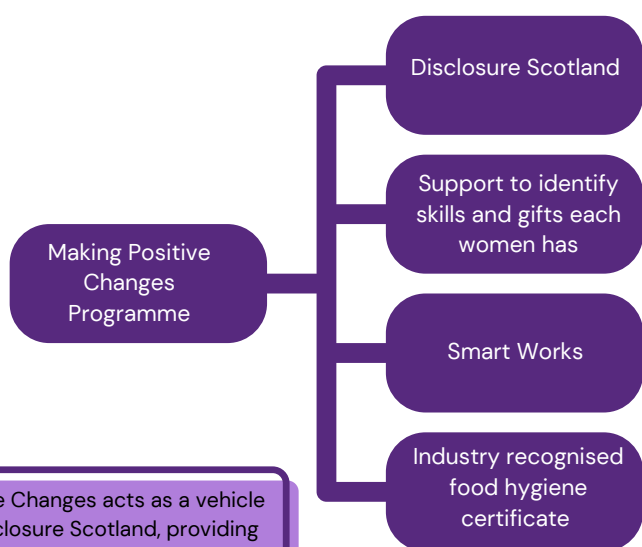
Caring Empathy Safe Environment
Respect Inclusive Compassion
Trust Understanding
Kindness
Challenging Patience Second Chances Supportive
Grace Integrity
Openness Person Centric

The values of Positive Changes described by board members and staff

Making Positive Changes

"Even though they may have a conviction, that shouldn't stop them from gaining employment"
- Customer Engagement Manager at Disclosure Scotland

Running over a 6-week period, the Making Positive Changes programme provides the women with a positive learning environment where they gain valuable transferable skills and information. From help in creating a CV to learning about boundary setting, the aim of the programme is to equip the women with the mindset, skills and support network to enable them to make meaningful changes in their lives and work towards fulfilling their potential. Not only this, but the women also have the opportunity to celebrate their success at a graduation ceremony which marks just how far the women have come in their journey to making positive changes.



"Positive Changes acts as a vehicle for Disclosure Scotland, providing them with the chance to work with those individuals they will likely be coming into contact with."
- Customer Engagement Manager for Disclosure Scotland

Over the course of 6-weeks, Positive Changes brings in a number of organisations, each running a different session to help the women work towards finding employment.

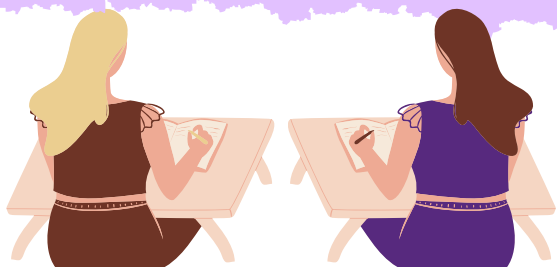
- **Disclosure Scotland** run a session informing the women about the 'Scotland Works For You' initiative and explaining their rights when it comes to finding employment.
- **Barclays** provides tools and techniques to support the women identify their transferable skills and gifts.
- **Smart Works Scotland** provides opportunities and support for women ready for the workplace.

Speaking with the Customer Engagement Manager at Disclosure Scotland, he said that by getting to work with the women, they have the opportunity to explain what rights the women have when applying for jobs, for example, what they do and do not have to disclose, alongside showing them Disclosure Scotland is not there to prevent them from gaining employment.

His team have witnessed the benefits of the programme, saying they watch the women go from being reluctant to engage to becoming quite willing to discuss their circumstances.

"My ambition at the beginning of the program was to get back to work, and I felt that the Positive Changes program was geared to help me do so. Through Disclosure's information sessions, I learned about my workplace rights and what I am required to disclose, which prepared me for getting back to work."

- One woman on what support from Positive Changes was most important to her



Grace Chocolates Changing Lives



The women gain work experience through participating in chocolate production. This allows them to not only expand their skill set but also build their confidence and self-esteem by proving to themselves they are capable of producing something they can and should be proud of.

To be involved in the making of the chocolates the women are required to achieve a Food Hygiene certificate. We support the women achieve this industry recognised qualification, which, for some, is the first qualification they have achieved in a very long time, or ever.

100% of profits made from chocolate sales are reinvested into the organisation

How chocolates change lives...

One of Grace Chocolates talented chocolatiers expressed that through chocolate making, she has...

Developed valuable skills

Through teaching the art of chocolate making to others, and using an effective hands-on approach in her demonstrations, she has developed her leadership skills and ability to support and supervise the learning of others.

Gained confidence to use her own initiative

By becoming more confident through chocolate making, she used her own initiative and expanded her social network by reaching out to another chocolatier to enquire about their classes, as she is eager to further advance her skills in chocolate making.

Recognised her achievements

By successfully gaining her Food Hygiene certificate to participate in chocolate making, she was awarded a certificate for her accomplishment, which gave her a sense of achievement and improved her self-esteem.

RISE Mentoring Programme

RISE mentoring is a mentee-orientated program that connects the women with highly trained mentors who support them to identify, work towards and achieve their goals and be the best version of themselves.



What do the women gain?

RISE mentoring enables the women to develop a consistent, supportive and meaningful relationship with their mentor and expand their positive social network.

By evaluating how they rate different parts of their lives, such as employment, education and health, the women can work with their mentors to determine which areas they would like to focus on and be supported to make progress in.

Mentors work in partnership with the women and help them achieve the ambitions they set for themselves, while also supporting the women to develop a mindset where they do not feel defined by their past.

We asked the RISE mentors what kind of support they provide their mentee...

"I provide a positive, caring but professional relationship; reflection of self-development, practical skill suggestions; and signposting to other services for more specific needs."

"I provide listening skills, some challenge, some ideas about different approaches, a safe place to practice skills for example, preparing for interviews"

What do the mentors gain?

“Watching my mentee progress throughout our mentorship has made me feel a range of positive emotions: happiness, proud of them, emotionally moved by their own realisations of strength, resilience and ability in coping with issues that arise for them. Mentees will always emphasise that mentors do so much for them, but I think they do just as much for us. Grateful too, to have been able to give a person, who has faced more adversity than myself, a sense of their own value back, without pitying them. Honoured to be part of their journey” - RISE mentor

Our mentors at Positive Changes described their experience as **privileged, uplifting, positive, fun, friendship, compassionate, understanding, and empowering.**

Additionally, Positive Changes values the importance of representing women with lived experience in every part of their organisation, and the RISE mentors are no exception. There are currently two mentors with lived experience, and an aim to increase this number by over 50% to 10 out of 15 over the course of the next two years. In the positive environment of mentoring, mentors with lived experience are positive role models and can choose to share their story of the meaningful changes they have made in their lives. As well as being an inspiration to their mentees, this can help the mentor gain a different perspective of their experiences, gaining confidence and building self-esteem.

Health & Wellbeing



Health & Wellbeing Workshops

Positive Changes introduced our Health & Wellbeing workshops during the COVID-19 pandemic with national lockdowns leaving many of the women struggling with isolation and loneliness. The Health & Wellbeing workshops support the women to improve their wellbeing by teaching them mindfulness, selfcare, and techniques in relaxation, such as meditation, which the women can use to support their wellbeing at home. The women are welcome to attend single workshops, or regularly attend multiple workshops, where as well as learning about their health and wellbeing, they have the opportunity to meet with other women, share their stories and reduce feelings of isolation.

How Positive Changes has Improved Wellbeing

"I became involved with the organisation during lockdown, and Positive Changes supported me by sending out things I might need, helping me to better deal with my anxiety, and generally making me feel better."

"Positive Changes supported my wellbeing by connecting me with women who have shared experiences and by helping me develop my confidence throughout the program. Because of this support, I don't feel as low as I was before."

"Positive Changes has been there for me, has made me feel wanted and important, and has been someone to get advice from. The mental health struggles I had before, like anxiety and feeling low, have improved since becoming involved with Positive Changes."

From women, Positive Changes have supported, when asked how the organisation has supported their wellbeing.

The World Opening up again...



An example of an activity from a Health & Wellbeing workshop

From the women themselves...

What kind of impact has Positive Changes had on the women it supports and those close to them?

"I noticed positive changes in myself like having more self-confidence and feeling less stressed about work. I feel my family have noticed these changes, and have noticed I'm more back to myself."

"I noticed that I had improved self-esteem and open up more to others. My self-confidence has improved, and I feel more confident to go out and do things. My family have also noticed that I'm more confident to go out and do things, as this was something I struggled with before."

"My self-esteem has improved and I'm now more focused on my accomplishments than my past. My self-confidence is better and I feel that I can achieve whatever I put my mind to. My mental health has improved and I feel I have a better understanding of where I went wrong in the past and how I can keep making positive change in the future. Before Positive Changes, my main goal was to have my children back in my care and Positive Changes helped me work towards and achieve this. My children and a close friend have noticed a huge difference in where I was before becoming involved with Positive Changes to where I am now, and they are extremely proud of my achievements and the positive change I have made in my life."

Ongoing support

Even once the women have finished their journey with Positive Changes, they are still able to receive support and guidance if they wish to do so.

Speaking with the founder of Positive Changes, Joyce Murray, she explained that while some may continue with the work experience and chocolate production, Positive Changes has also continued to support others outwith the programme. She told us Positive Changes is more than happy to help with applications for further education or providing references for those looking to find employment as well as introducing the women to potential employers.

As one member of staff said "the door is always open", and Positive Changes demonstrates this through our ongoing support so that the women can continue to work towards a new future.

What words would the women use to describe their experience with Positive Changes?

Improved self-esteem
 Everyday a learning day
 Changes lives
 Amazing
 Empowering
 Loved it
 Wonderful
 Supportive people
 Positive
 Ongoing support
 Important
 Character building
 Helped her and other women
 Enlightening

Sustainability



With the need and demand for sustainable products increasing, Grace Chocolates has been continually looking for ways in which we can conduct our chocolate production in a more sustainable way. Research suggests that consumers are becoming increasingly conscious about ways in which they can change their behaviour to become more sustainable, with this increase during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kachaner et al., 2020).

In line with this, at Grace Chocolates we have made changes to meet the needs of our customers as well as fulfilling our desire to decrease our environmental impact.

One change we have made to improve our carbon footprint has been moving our operations to a dedicated office space, resulting in lower heating requirements, reduced energy use, and improved staff working conditions.

As well as this, the packaging in which the chocolates are presented is compostable, biodegradable, recyclable or reusable. From the boxes of chocolates which contain cardboard dividers rather than plastic trays to the biodegradable bags used to replace single-use plastic. On top of this, the packing peanuts, used to ensure the chocolates arrive with the customer in perfect condition, are plant based and dissolvable in water, further reducing waste.

We spoke with Fiona Jamieson, venue manager for the Robertson Trust at the Barracks, Stirling, who has supported Grace Chocolates personally - including for a birthday party and relative's wedding - and professionally by purchasing on behalf of the Robertson Trust. Fiona told us that her experience as a customer has been extremely positive: the quality of chocolates, service provided, and staff members have all been excellent. In addition, she enjoys being a customer of Grace Chocolates because of the admirable cause they support and their sustainability efforts, which are in line with the Robertson Trust's ambitions of decreasing their carbon footprint.

Dissolvable packing peanuts



Biodegradable boxes



Biodegradable bags



Cardboard dividers

Looking Forward

“Positive Changes is evolving”
- Members of the Board

The Journey So Far...

Now approaching our 5th anniversary, Positive Changes has come a long way since its establishment in 2017.

Not only this, we have also evolved in regards to the services we provide. Now providing mentoring and wellbeing sessions, Positive Changes has doubled the number of services we deliver.

From starting out in a church kitchen to now running our own production facility, Positive Changes has been able to advance our chocolate production.

What Next?

We spoke with the CEO of Positive Changes to discuss what is next for the organisation.

She explained to us how the vision of Positive Changes has always been to support the women. With the continuous changes happening in the world, for example as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Positive Changes will continue to assess and listen to the needs of the women we work with, ensuring they have access to the relevant support and help they need.

Over the past 5 years, Positive Changes' landscape has been changing, and it will continue developing as the organisation grows. Not only have our chocolate making premises progressed, but we have increased our partnership and collaborate working with other organisations to help the women who use our services as best as we can and support them in making meaningful change in their lives.

Challenges to Overcome

When speaking to some of the women, we found some felt that due to the pandemic they struggled to expand their social network.

With restrictions eased, Positive Changes can now work towards helping the women expand their social network and make connections in a way which makes them feel at ease.



We thank you for your ongoing support of our organisation

Acknowledgements

The writers behind this impact report, Erin Walls and Stephanie Blyth, would like to acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to and made this report possible.

Thank you to...

The women who shared their experiences of Positive Changes with us;

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Disclosure Scotland;

The customers of Grace Chocolates;

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