



fearless

Part of Crimestoppers

Supporting positive dialogue around speaking up about crime.

**A Toolkit for Education & Youth Work
Practitioners in Scotland.**



With thanks to the young people and professionals who supported the creation of this resource through co-design sessions.





What is Fearless?	4
About this resource	5
Barriers to reporting crime	6
Grassing vs reporting	7
Using this resource	8
Activities	10
Next steps	16

Contents

What is Fearless?

Fearless.org is the dedicated youth service from the independent charity Crimestoppers.

Developed through consultation with young people, Fearless aims to break down any barriers that might prevent young people from reporting crime. Whether this is a fear of the process or a distrust of the police, we want to empower young people to speak up. We do this by promoting our unique service that gives anyone the opportunity to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

How does it work?

Young people can pass information about crime to Fearless 100% anonymously via an online form on the Fearless.org website or by calling our 0800 555 111 phone line, 24/7, 365 days a year.

After receiving the call or a completed anonymous online form, we create a report that brings together all the information given to us. Our specially trained contact centre staff make sure it doesn't contain any information that could identify who or where the information came from, protecting anonymity.

The sanitised report is then sent to the relevant authority with the legal responsibility to investigate crimes, make arrests and charge people in order to bring them to justice. This could be a local police force or an agency such as the UK Border Agency or HM Revenue & Customs.

Anonymity Promise

Anonymous means that your identity is completely unknown.

Our promise of anonymity is vital to us as it is what makes our charity unique.

We guarantee to young people, indeed everyone, that:

- They can give us information about crime without giving their name or any personal details.
- They will not be asked for their gender or age.
- We will not record any personal details they might mention.
- We physically cannot trace their phone number, email or IP address as our system is designed to protect their identity.

For more information:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/professionals/fearless-scotland>

About this resource

During the summer of 2024, we spoke to both young people and those who support them to explore young people's knowledge, understanding, views and relationship on reporting information about crime or potential crime.

This resource has been produced specifically for education and youth work practitioners in Scotland. It provides information about Fearless.org and discusses the barriers to reporting crime, including the myths around grassing. The designed activities aim to explore the who, why, what and how of speaking up about crime.

It has been co-produced with young people aged 13-21 in a variety of school, community and secure settings.

Our learning journey

Each group took part in three sessions.

The first session explored the young people's relationship with reporting crime and 'grass culture', what their view was of someone who reported crime, and under what circumstances they might chose to report a crime themselves.

The second session we trialled activities that would allow us to explore the subject further – diving deeper into previous comments and allowing space for new reflections. Participants evaluated the effectiveness of the activities – as well as analysing how much they enjoyed taking part – and decided which activities they felt were most appropriate. 13 activities in total were assessed, with five being decided by the groups as most appropriate and included within this resource.

The final session allowed space to create the flow of the toolkit and to ensure that the learning journey was comprehensive.

The adults supporting the young people from education, third sector and public sector organisations and social work also offered their insights and reflections as professionals supporting young people.



Breaking down the barriers to reporting crime

There can be many reasons why young people (and adults) don't report information about crime. These normally fall into the following categories:

Fear of repercussions

Distrust of police/authority figures, or they don't have a safe place/person to report this information to

They experience higher rates of crime so become desensitised to it

They are not sure if what they have seen constitutes a crime

Joint enterprise: concerns around if they share too much information they may be associated with the crime/incident

Our findings

The young people we spoke to:

- Overwhelmingly, denied that they would 'grass' when first asked.
- Had never been asked why they felt this way, they just knew it to be true.
- Reflected that the stigma of reporting a crime is often worse than that of committing a crime.
- Explored societal pressures to conform, and being labelled a 'grass' was a hard thing to shift and made them stand out negatively.
- Admitted there was a line where they would always report – likely this would be murder or serious sexual offences.
- Would consider reporting if they felt a close friend or relative was in danger.

Adults reported that young people often disclosed things as gossip, rather than outright reporting. They recognised young people understood that adults have a duty of care, and used this as a vehicle to report things indirectly. They also identified that young people report more than they let on to peers. Young people will often disclose incidents to trusted adults, but seek out confidentiality in doing so.



Grassing

- To get someone else into trouble.
- To stop yourself getting into trouble.
- To gain something from it.
- To hurt or upset someone you don't like.

Reporting

- To keep yourself safe.
- To keep someone else/others safe.
- The problem is serious.
- You may need an adult's help.
- Speaking up because you know something is wrong.



Grassing vs Reporting

For young people, reporting crime can be a difficult decision. One way you can assist is to help the young person to detach themselves from the information – it's not about them but about the information they have.

When someone reports something to keep others safe, whether to a trusted adult, the police or Fearless.org, they are being an active bystander.

It is important to change the narrative of crime reporting when talking to young people about passing on information they may have about a crime. They are not being a 'grass'; they are helping make their community, friends and family safe.

They are creating a safer place for everyone.

The word 'grassing' carries a lot of negativity. No young person wants to be called a grass or to be known as a grass. It's helpful to explore with young people the differences between 'grassing' and 'reporting'.

Reporting crime has positive outcomes and is done for positive reasons.

It's vital to remember that some young people may feel the decision to report is out of their control. They may be incredibly fearful of the consequence of reporting.

As professionals, we need to accept and acknowledge their experience and feelings. They may not feel able to make the same decisions and choices as their peers for a variety of reasons and past experiences.

For those reasons, and despite having trusted adults in their lives that they should be encouraged to go to when faced with crime, many young people feel that they can't speak up.

This is great opportunity to speak to the young person about Fearless.org and the opportunity to report what they know about crime 100% anonymously. They will not have to give any details about themselves, they will not have to speak to the police and they will not have to go to court.



Using this resource

The activities included in this resource were chosen by the young participants as the most engaging and relevant of those that they tried. Young people were asked to not only focus on the fun aspects of the activities, but how they created a learning journey that encouraged participants to be critical, analytical and reflective throughout the process.

The activities outlined in this resource will support participants to:

- Explore basic dialogue and deliberation techniques to think critically, respond to information and make informed decisions.
- Explore attitudes around reporting of offences, without influence.
- Support young people to understand offending in their area, their relationship to reporting and the correlation between the two.
- Help young people to see how socio-economic conditions might encourage offending behaviour, and how the culture of not 'grassing' aids those wishing to cause harm in communities.
- Support young people to understand what change is required and encourage them to take ownership of those changes by creating a mandate for action.
- Explore what the ideal reporting service might look like, then introduce Fearless Scotland and explain how this might meet many of the stipulations young people have set.

These activities are best delivered as a whole suite and are designed to be delivered over 5x 50 minute sessions to accommodate school timetabling . They will also work well in a longer, stand alone workshop.

Preparation

Prior to introducing the activities to young people, you can learn more about our service by downloading our 'Be Fearless Guide' here: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/professionals/fearless-scotland>

You will also find a short video that you can watch that outlines our service. This can also be shared with young people.

Experiences & Outcomes

The activities in this toolkit support the following Experiences and Outcomes:

I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a / HWB 4-01a

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

HWB 2-03a / HWB 3-03a / HWB 4-03a

I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible.

HWB 2-16a / HWB 3-16a / HWB 4-16a

UNCRC

The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (under 18) a comprehensive set of rights.

Its aim is ensure that children grow up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

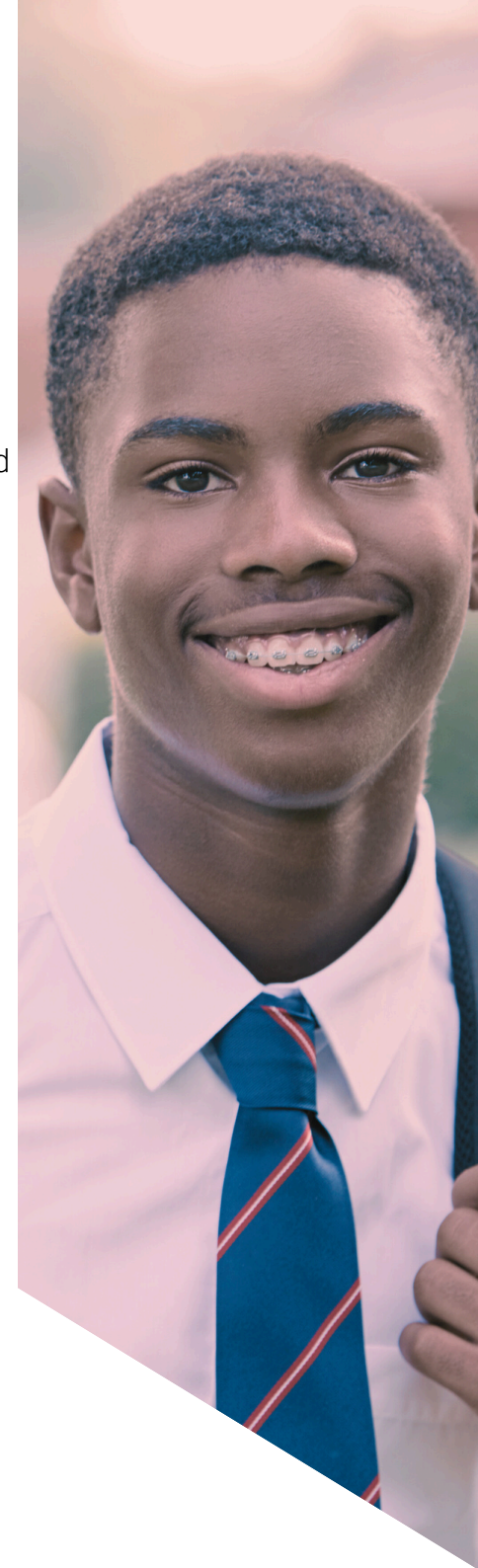
The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Scotland Act 2024 was enacted on 16 July 2024.

The Act will ensure that children's rights are respected and protected in Scotland.

The activities set out in this toolkit supports the following Rights of the Child:

Article 12 – Children have a right to be listened to.

Article 13 – Children and young people must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it's within the law.



Activities

Activity 1: This... or that...?

Objective To gain confidence in forming & expressing opinions.

Resources Group work – no physical resources needed,



Description

Round 1

Activity starts by simply providing two opposing stimuli. Participants then have to pick a side of the room that represents their view/preference. This will be repeated 3-4 times in this most basic form.

Round 2

After a few of these, the questions become slightly more provocative. Rather than simply picking a side, participants must now justify their choice. After selecting a side, facilitator will introduce basic dialogue and deliberation skills by stating that all participants on that side have 2 minutes to come up with their top 3 arguments for why their chosen side is correct. After hearing both – and while remaining completely objective – the facilitator then chooses which side they believe made the most comprehensive argument.

Round 3

The facilitators introduce the issue they want to explore. This time participants will follow the same process of coming up with their three strongest arguments for their view, however, after the three arguments have been presented, participants now return to their groups for a further 3 minutes to come up with counter-arguments to the other groups. At the end of each question, participants are now afforded the chance to swap sides.

Round 1 question examples:

- Chinese food or Italian food?
- Cats or dogs?
- Sweets or crisps?

Round 2 question examples:

- If you could, would you: see the future or change the past?
- There has been a natural disaster. Do you save: 1 loved one, or 200 strangers?
- Would you rather eat: a pizza flavoured poo, or a poo flavoured pizza?

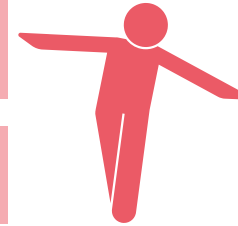
Round 3 question examples:

- There are situations where I think speaking up about crime is ok. Yes or no?
- An adult speaking up and a young person speaking up have the same implications for the person reporting. Yes or no?
- I believe if more people spoke about crime, our communities would be safer. Yes or no?

Activity 2: Where's your line?

Objective To explore the links between crime severity, prevalence and reporting decisions.

Resources Paper, pens



Description

1. Participants are encouraged to write down all the crimes that are happening in their local area. This should be things they 'know' are happening, either from witnessing, news reports or reliable friends/family. They should try to avoid things they have heard on social media or through gossip.

All of these individual offence types will be written down on individual paper/notes. A second set of identical offence types should be written down and sat to one side.

2. Using the first set of offences, participants are going to rank these in order of perceived severity. Facilitators should randomly pull one out from the pile and place in the middle as a starting reference point. As each subsequent offence type is drawn, the group must decide whether the offence is higher/lower or in-between those already mapped out.

Once all offence types have been placed to the satisfaction of the group, you should be left with a list of offences, known to happen in their local area, in order of perceived severity.

3. Facilitators should then ask the group to identify where their common 'line' is – the point where anything before the line they wouldn't report, and the point where after they would report.
4. Once the line has been identified, facilitator will bring the second set of identical offences, but this time rather than ordering them by individual severity, they should be ranked by frequency of occurrence. This should leave the participants with a second map which shows which crimes are most rare, and what happens most frequently in their area.
5. Assuming the most prevalent crimes in the local area are also ones in which young people determined they would not report, facilitators should revisit the 'grassing line' – asking participants to explore possible connections between lack of reporting and prevalence of crime in the community.

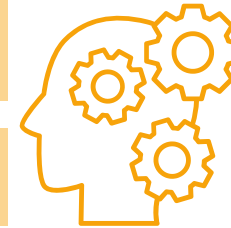
Possible crimes:

Murder, Serious Assault, Common Assault, Robbery, Weapon Possession, Theft of a Car, Housebreaking, Shoplifting, Drug supply, Drug possession, Fraud, Fire-raising, Vandalism

Activity 3: What's to gain?

Objective To explore the factors that influence crime reporting.

Resources Paper, pens



Description

1. With three large flipchart sheets (or a4 paper if preferred) facilitator will lead three 'compare and contrast' questions. The questions will encourage participants to explore the factors that influence the culture around reporting crime:

Question 1: if no-one reports crime, what does each gain?
Criminal vs Community

Question 2: How will people be affected if crime goes unreported?
Adults' vs young people

Question 3: if we woke up tomorrow and reporting was now the norm, how would this look for: Criminals vs Community.

Additional Notes

Often young people have never considered how those committing offences benefit from people's compliance. Having a list side by side of how one is benefitting more than the other helped them to understand that this problem of not reporting is created by, and benefits those likely to commit offences the most. Envisioning a future with more reporting makes them realise how much the trend to underreport is negatively affecting their community.

Young people are often not asked to consider the motives or causes of cultures/information/decisions etc, and this exercise allows them to think critically and reflectively on real world issues.

Activity 4: Changing the narrative

Objective To address negative stereotypes & show positive alternatives.

Resources Paper, pens
Creative materials to support part 5.



Description

1. Facilitators provide the outlines of two people (young people can draw these if preferred).
2. On the first outline, YP attach all of the negative stereotypes and connotations associated with 'grassing'.
3. On the second drawing, YP attach all the real intentions of someone reporting an offence: their motives, the affect on community etc.
4. Once the two have been populated, young people explore how they might change the narrative, from someone reporting an offence to being seen negatively, to being seen positively. The group will then work on their own campaign manifesto for 'changing the narrative' around grassing.
5. The group will be asked to present their campaign materials back. This can be a poster, poem, film etc – get creative.

Additional Notes

Going against the grain and against cultural norms, can feel uncomfortable – even when the young people know what they're saying is right. Being asked to consider what changes have to happen and how many people are needed to help with that makes them think deeply about possible solutions, and how complex they might be.

This task is not simply providing answers, but instead forces young people to design their own solutions. This will help embed the learning and hopefully will encourage the young people to take action as it was identified by themselves.

Points to consider in part 4:

- Who needs to change?
- Who needs to support the change?
- Why does the culture exist?
- How can we prove that change works?
- What is the impact on the community?

Activity 5: Speaking Up

Objective To identify key features of an ideal reporting service & learn about Fearless.

Resources Be Fearless Guide (facilitator)
What is Fearless? video (optional)



Description

1. Participants are asked to imagine they have been commissioned to create a reporting service that will encourage people to break the mould and report more. They should be asked to consider the key features, why they are important, and what difference they might make to peoples attitude towards reporting offences.
2. Assuming that two of the key features will be anonymity and no follow ups, the facilitator can then introduce Fearless Scotland. Using the resources supplied or at [Fearless Scotland](https://fearless-scotland.org) | [Crimestoppers](https://crimestoppers-uk.org) (crimestoppers-uk.org) the facilitator should draw parallels between what young people designed, and how Fearless Scotland operates.

Optional add-on activity

By projecting on to a screen, demonstrate how easy it is to use Fearless by going to [Fearless.org](https://fearless.org) and navigating to the reporting page by clicking the blue box in the top lefthand corner 'Give information'
Look at the online form and highlight how quick it is to complete.

Remind young people that Fearless operates across the UK therefore it's important to put the city that the crime is happening in, not just the street name etc.

Additional Notes

It's useful to understand and explore the difference between 'confidential' and 'anonymous'.

Anonymous means that you're unidentifiable, untraceable and therefore unreachable.

Confidential means that your identity is known but others are prevented from sharing it widely. For example – A GP. A doctor knows your name, address, age, medical history but they're not allowed to share that information to strangers.

Fearless provides 100% anonymity. Always.
Fearless can't track IP addresses, contact details etc therefore they can never share the details.

Fearless lets young people speak up without:
stigma, reprisal, police involvement, court/witness statement

Often young people are surprised that a service offering 100% anonymity already exists. Letting them come to that realisation on their own helps them consolidate the learning and means they are more likely to remember, and therefore use, the service in the future.

Further steps you can take

For such a big topic which provokes strong opinions, it's important to revisit and embed Fearless within your setting's overall culture.

These are just some of the other ways you can do this:

1

Order FREE posters to display in your setting at [Fearless.org](https://fearless.org)

2

Follow us & share our posts on X & Instagram @Fearless_Scot

3

Include information about our service within community updates or events.

4

Add our homepage as an icon to all computer desktops/tablets.

5

Remind young people of our service when talking about all crime topics.

6

Repeat our promise: 100% anonymous ALWAYS

Please get in touch with us to share ideas and examples of best practice.

 fearless@crimestoppers-uk.org





Crimestoppers Trust is a charity

Registered charity: No. 1108687 (England & Wales)
No. SC037960 (Scotland)