



Community Justice Outcome Activity Annual Report

2022-2023

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Consultation draft

2. Foreword

[To be inserted following consultation]

3. Executive Summary

[To be inserted once report content is finalised]

Consultation draft

4. Introduction

This report describes progress towards the achievement of national outcomes for community justice across Scotland between April 2022 and March 2023. This is the final report aligned to the 2016 National Strategy for Community Justice, and the associated Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (OPIF). Future reports will be aligned to the National Strategy for Community Justice published in summer 2022 and the associated Community Justice Performance Framework (CJPF) published in March 2023.

In developing the report we have drawn on the available evidence curated over the first five years of the present model of community justice, and used the new National Strategy to consider implications for the future.

The report includes a recommendation for Community Justice Scotland (CJS), Scottish Government and the community justice partners.

Recommendation

Shifting the balance on funding

Community justice is a preventative process which reduces crime and victimisation. In doing so, community justice creates savings for other parts of the justice system, and more widely in the longer term. Despite this, the proportion of investment in community justice has declined in comparison to investment in justice infrastructure. In 2022-23, community justice accounted for 1.53% of the total Justice and Veterans Budget. In 2023-24 it fell to 1.47%¹. Although there are significant structural pressures on all parts of the justice system, a lack of funding flexibility can drive decisions based on “*what can be cut*” rather than “*what should be cut*”. The result is that preventative work in the public sector and third sector provision has been under-emphasised in funding decisions.

We recommend that Community Justice Scotland (CJS), the Scottish Government and all statutory partners work together to shift the balance of justice funding to align with the preventative aspirations of [The Vision for Justice in Scotland](#).

¹ [CJS submission of written evidence to Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2024-25](#)

Talking points

Last year, we introduced Talking Points to our annual reporting. These are used where evidence has highlighted issues that require further development with the stakeholders involved with community justice, locally and nationally. CJS used the Talking Points from last year as the basis for knowledge exchange forums and discussions with a range of community justice partners. CJ partners found this approach highly effective in developing understanding, identifying barriers and begin to generate solutions within these collaborative sessions. The products of this engagement will continue to develop and inform community justice.

CJS intends to use this year's Talking Points in the same way throughout the year following publication. As before, we will also encourage stakeholders to use these Talking Points as prompts for their own considerations about community justice.

This year we raise three new Talking Points.

National levers for local issues

Local partners solve problems at a local level by identifying and overcoming barriers or by implementing workarounds. However, some challenges require decision making and influence which are inaccessible to local partners, relating to regionally and nationally set policy and practice. How can local and national partners work with Scottish Government and others to support overcoming barriers and bring forward developments without compromising local autonomy?

Equality in the justice system

People in contact with the justice system are a diverse group, experiencing the justice system in different ways and all with distinct needs. The focus on the needs of women and young people in the justice system is comparatively well developed, however there is little evidence of a strategic consideration of the needs of other groups, or on where different aspects of identity may intersect and contribute to additional complexity and experience of marginalisation. How can local and national partners promote and contribute to equality in justice for people who have distinct experiences as a result of their disability, race, sex, religion, sexuality, or other aspect of their lived experience and identity?

Scope and Synergy

Scottish Ministers have defined the direction for community justice partners through priority actions in the National Strategy for Community Justice and in the outcomes

defined in the Community Justice Performance Framework (CJPF). Policy is also in place for other activity such as community safety, violence against women and girls, alcohol and drugs, employability, poverty, homelessness, health inequalities, education etc. Much of this work overlaps with community justice and provides space for partners to work together, however it can be unclear how some of the work across various local area partnerships contributes to the overarching community justice outcomes. How can partners better identify opportunities for alignment between policy areas to greatest impact without losing the focus on community justice outcomes?

Consultation draft

5. The year in context – change and challenge.

The period between April 2022 and March 2023 included significant policy developments, challenging economic pressures on people, systems and resources, but also opportunities for community justice partners to refocus. There were no further Covid restrictions in operation, though the ongoing impact of the pandemic and post-pandemic years is evident.

The justice context

[Relevant contextual statistical community justice data for the reporting period will be published end of January 2024 and will be inserted here with budget information]

Community justice and imprisonment

There are multiple drivers of the high level of imprisonment in Scotland. These include, shifts in behaviour, social attitudes, sentencing practice, capacity of the courts, capacity of wider public services as well as national legislative and policy decisions. Taken together, the consequences of these factors have produced an excessive rate of imprisonment in Scotland. While imprisonment can temporarily remove someone who may otherwise reoffend the consequences of imprisonment which can include disruption of family life, the loss of employment and accommodation, damage to social capacity, and exposure to trauma can be profoundly harmful for individuals, communities, and Scotland as a whole.

The best evidence available internationally indicates that desistance from offending comes from addressing needs, building social capital, helping people build empowered lives with agency and resilience. In Scotland, these principles underpin approaches to community justice, from justice social work through to community-based organisations.

Community justice approaches alone cannot solve the prison population problem; however, community justice partners can make contributions that not only help individuals but can also be part of shifting the balance from custodial responses to community approaches first.

These contributions are well represented in the new National Strategy for Community Justice, which has been formative in many partnerships' development activity since its publication in June 2022. The most powerful contribution that

community justice can make to addressing the excessive use of imprisonment in Scotland is through focusing on improving and increasing the use of community-based solutions, ensuring that provision matches need and that services are truly accessible.

The policy context

The National Strategy for Community Justice was published in June 2022. The associated Community Justice Performance Framework (CJPF) was not published until March 2023. The publication of these documents required community justice partners to revise their Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plans (CJOIPs) taking both the new strategy and the framework into consideration.

Many local partners reported that this gap between publication of the documents created a sense of uncertainty that hindered their ability to engage and progress their strategic planning. Nonetheless, progress was made – partners took cognisance of the new national strategy and engaged with each other and their local communities to identify their priorities for development.

Concurrently, local partners were engaging nationally with CJS, Scottish Government and others in relation to significant policy developments which would ultimately have implications for local planning and delivery of community justice. These included:

- The development stage of key community justice performance and improvement products were undertaken that were published outwith the reporting period, including;
 - [Community Justice Performance Framework](#) (31 March 2023),
 - CJS [Community Justice Improvement Tool](#) (31 March 2023),
 - the [Community Justice Strategy Delivery Plan](#) (June 2023)
 - Care Inspectorate's [Guide to self-evaluation for community justice in Scotland](#) (July 2023)
- the development of a CJS recommendation to Scottish Government for the future of voluntary throughcare and mentoring.

The year also included the further development of policy initiatives which will have a significant impact on justice arrangements in the future. These included the [National Care Service Bill](#) and the [Bail and Release from Custody \(Scotland\) Bill](#) both entering Stage 1 in June 2022.

Taken together, it was a year of substantial strategic change within and around community justice. It was also an opportunity for partnerships to take stock and focus on strategic directives set out by ministers.

Renfrewshire Council's Chief Executive Service supported Community Justice Renfrewshire (CJR) with the interpretation of the new National Strategy for Community Justice. The service reviewed the strategic focus of the new strategy and worked on its alignment with Renfrewshire's revised Community Plan. This created an opportunity to underline the importance of community justice activity in working towards both local and national improvement outcomes and define the discrete and complementary activity being progressed through CJR and other projects and programmes of work.

They identified that the strategic focus of the new National Strategy for Community Justice created opportunities to leverage partner resources to best effect, improving outcomes for people with living experience of the justice system and supporting their reintegration. This helped inform an approach to enable the Community Justice Lead Officer to re-establish CJR and define an effective vision and purpose.

Victims, Trauma and Justice reform

There were significant developments across justice policy relating to victims of crime and violence against women and girls. Discussions that were initiated by the partners involved in the [Victims Taskforce](#) were further developed following the recommendations of the [Misogyny and Criminal Justice Working Group](#) and consultations on [improving victims' experiences of the justice system](#), culminating in the [Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) introduced to Scottish Parliament in April 2023.

Alongside these developments, the focus on trauma in justice settings was further developed by many national and local partners; in most cases utilising resources and opportunities made available through the [National Trauma Transformation Programme](#).

Restorative Justice (RJ) in Scotland continued to develop in line with the vision presented within the RJ Action Plan 2019. As a result of the pressures of the pandemic, and the need to work more collaboratively with partners on serious and complex cases, the timescales for delivery were extended. In early 2023 stakeholders agreed the development of an RJ policy and practice framework to

support the delivery of RJ in Scotland as a parallel process to the criminal and civil justice systems, now due for consultation in Spring 2024. Further information on the work completed in the advancement of RJ for the 2022/23 period is available in the [RJ Action Plan Annual Report](#).

There were also changes relating to children and young people in the justice system. The Scottish Sentencing Council's [Sentencing Young People Guideline](#) came into force in January 2022, and contributed to local and national discussions around community justice. In December 2022, the [Children \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) entered Stage 1 at the Scottish Parliament, including proposals to put an end to placing under 18s in Young Offenders' Institutions and create opportunities for 16 and 17 year olds with offending behaviour to be responded to via the children's hearing system.

Significantly, the publication of the final report of the Scottish Drugs Deaths Taskforce [Changing Lives](#) (July 2022) recognised the importance of a shift to community-based alternatives to custody in reducing drugs deaths.

Strategic Complexity

It was in this context that the community justice partnerships were working to understand the new National Strategy in relation to their local areas, to identify their local priorities and begin work to develop their new approach to planning and delivery.

Community justice arrangements inhabit a complex strategic and operational space, with links to a wide spectrum of policy issues, strategic partnerships, and needs. The partners involved in the planning and delivery of community justice arrangements are in most cases also those directly involved in driving other linked policy issues. Though the populations involved are often overlapping, there are competing demands for the allocation of resources to achieve specific aims. This means that unless strategic engagement is effective there is a risk of missed opportunities and the duplication of efforts, potentially to the detriment of community justice outcomes.

Where local partners are engaged and strategic alignments are identified, we see impactful collaboration across policy issues, with partners seeking to leverage resources and create opportunities for collaboration, enabling organisations to benefit from the expertise and resources of other entities.

In North Lanarkshire partner funding received from NLC Employability Support and Skills Development has enabled the extension of voluntary throughcare support in North Lanarkshire. The commitment of funding was agreed following significant work undertaken by the NLCJP Education and Employability Group reported in the previous annual return related to horizon scanning, participation with those with lived experience and staff and reviewing available data. This evidence highlighted a need to increase voluntary support to people leaving custody. Bridges and Beyond is a service that has been developed over the last year. The project identifies short term prisoners who originate from North Lanarkshire who may benefit from support upon release to resettle. The project works closely with housing, employment services, health, addictions, SPS, welfare agencies and the families of our individuals being released to support them to achieve better outcomes. While the project is in its infancy it is already proving to be beneficial in supporting reintegration.

In East Renfrewshire joint working between the Local Employability Partnership and their Community Justice Partnership identified the need for a specialist employability programme for people with convictions. While there had been some good examples of progression for clients with convictions within the wider employability services previously, it was recognised that there was a gap with this provision. A joint review between community justice and Employability highlighted the benefits of co-production between services and a new service is to be embedded inside justice social work services.

6. The local picture

Governance

Community justice comprises the activities, services and partners that work with and around people from the point of arrest, through the justice system and supporting their exit from justice contact and integration into their community. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 requires that the relevant statutory partners take a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of these arrangements at a local authority area level.

All local areas now discharge these duties via a strategic partnership approach, aligned to the relevant local governance and planning arrangements. For the purposes of this report, we will refer to these arrangements as “community justice partnerships” or “partnerships.”

Priorities

The purview of the community justice partnerships is set by the scope of the National Strategy for Community Justice alongside any additional local priorities. This can encompass a wide range of practice issues. The following issues were commonly identified by local areas across the reporting year:

- Diversion from Prosecution
- Access to services from police custody
- Bail services
- Strengthening the use of electronic monitoring
- Supervision, support, and services to address needs
- Access to health services
- Employability
- Support after liberation from prison
- Strengthening leadership of local partnerships

Further detail on activity related to these priorities is available in this report.

Engagement

Last year we highlighted a [Talking Point](#) around the difficulties of engaging community justice partners. There are signs of improvement, but partnerships continue to report difficulties in building and sustaining engagement with their partner agencies. Over recent years, every sector and organisation has seen

substantial change, including staff changes, and areas report that when people move on it is often challenging to transition, develop quality relationships, and maintain momentum in the shared community justice agenda.

This is particularly acute where the change is in a key role in the local partnership, such as a community justice coordinator or partnership Chair, but it is also challenging where it involves a representative who is entirely new to community justice.

Several areas reported that some partners struggle to identify clearly their roles and responsibilities in relation to the shared community justice agenda, and this was a barrier to engagement. Many areas reported developing their own induction packs with an explicit focus on introducing community justice to new partner representatives. They also often utilised products from CJS to add content and context in supporting engagement such as targeted templates to assist in the development of the local evidence base.

In Perth and Kinross there was rigorous engagement in various partnership activities, including quarterly partnership meetings, establishment of the Community Safety Third Sector Collaborative meetings, engagement with the ADP Lived Experience Group, and the formation of working groups and topic-specific sessions. The Third Sector Forum was re-established, expanding its membership to include relevant statutory services. The partnership aimed to address the cluttered service landscape, emphasising the need for a "No Wrong Door" approach.

A significant amount of activity – primarily developing local area needs assessments - aligned the partnership to the new National Strategy for Community Justice, involving extensive engagement and information gathering for the new CJOIP. They unpacked complex topics such as arrest referral, people remanded in custody, and voluntary throughcare and mentoring, revealing significant similarities and crossovers in some work. For example, the same individuals commonly receive services for remand, arrest referral, and for throughcare after short term sentences.

These Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA) activities were found to be useful for improving understanding and collaboration, leading to the launch of Partnership tests of change activities including arrest referral, complex needs co-ordinator, voluntary throughcare, and specified worker. The cluttered service landscape highlighted the need for service pathways, resulting in the development of flowcharts for arrest referral and voluntary throughcare. The partnership explored opportunities for improved collaborative working to increase alignment.

Resources

Public sector budgets across the system were put under strain throughout the year, with unanticipated inflationary pressures reducing the intended impact of spending plans at a time of increased demand.

Areas reported increasing pressure on housing and homelessness services. In many areas a shortage of suitable housing stock and supported accommodation is not in itself a new issue, however challenges were present to a greater degree than previously.

As a result of these budget pressures, in some areas the capacity for innovation and collaboration was reduced. Areas reported partners were struggling in some cases to maintain their existing commitments to community justice collaboration and engagement alongside their core service delivery. Typically, as agencies must prioritise their statutory functions, this meant that resourcing activities beyond statutory requirements, particularly third sector and community-based prevention activities, were at significant risk throughout the period.

Workforce and wellbeing

The rising interest rates and high inflation which ran throughout the reporting year also meant that much of the workforce were under significant pressure in their own lives. Burnout, mental health, and wellbeing are issues evident across the workforce. At the same time, workloads were high and increasing because of demand and capacity limitations.

Recruitment and retention of staff, is a significant issue reported by multiple local areas across agencies, not least in justice social work² but also the third sector and the wider community justice workforce.

Cost of Living

Poverty remains an endemic issue for those who experience community justice. The challenging economic circumstances undoubtedly made this more acute, with community justice agencies supporting more people in a greater degree of need. The evidence returned by local partnerships frequently highlighted the requirement to deliver support for basic needs, including food.

Trauma for people who are in conflict with the law

Sometimes a previous experience of trauma can lead to behaviours and reactions that are challenging for people and systems to respond to. People involved with the justice system have often themselves been victims of serious crimes, in some cases unreported and unrecognised.

Service providers emphasise that individuals entering the justice system present increasingly complex needs, often stemming from unresolved trauma. Human connection serves as a protective factor against the impact of trauma, and the restrictions of the pandemic significantly increased isolation for many. The complexities in casework in community justice may additionally be exacerbated by these factors.

There are examples of the community justice workforce using their expertise in trauma to cascade learning to other policy issues, with practical examples of trauma responsive work evident in many local areas.

In Aberdeenshire participation in the two-day trauma training has not only increased and improved practice skills of the social work workforce, but has also created opportunities to review, through a trauma lens, how the service operates. The Criminal Justice Social Work Service has established a Trauma-Informed Practice Group, which links in with the Aberdeenshire Trauma Informed Development

² Social Work Scotland (Oct 2022), Submission to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee [Written Evidence on Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2023-24](#)

Group and is currently working to identify ways in which policies, practices and documentation can be more trauma-informed and responsive.

The Third Sector

As in previous years there was a strong presence of third sector agencies supporting delivery of community justice across Scotland, from operational levels to strategic involvement within partnerships. Research indicates that interventions that support desistance are often ideally delivered by non-statutory routes. Service provision from the third sector is important for a range of quality services that meet the needs of a diverse and vulnerable group, in the interests of increasing desistance from offending.

The limited funding opportunities, tightening public sector budgets, the precarity associated with single year contracts, and absolute need to increase wages if recruitment and retention is to be supported, all combine to put the third sector and the mixed provision of services, at significant risk³.

As the straitened economic conditions continue to put pressure on commissioning bodies, in particular public sector budgets, it is likely that this will show in the further reduction of third sector funding. This will inevitably have a consequence on the sector, their staff, and not least the people who receive services and the communities in which they live.

Many third sector partners contribute to community justice outcomes. The following organisations were highlighted most by partnerships:

[Access to Industry](#)

[Action for Children](#)

[Apex Scotland](#)

[Barnardos' Scotland](#)

[Circle Scotland](#)

[Cyrenians](#)

[Families Outside](#)

[Heavy Sound](#)

[Phoenix Futures Scotland](#)

[Right There](#)

[RCA Trust](#)

[Sacro](#)

[Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs \(SFAD\)](#)

³ Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (Sep 2023), [The Scottish Third Sector Tracker - wave 6 summary report](#)

[Recovery Scotland](#)
[Resilience Learning Partnership](#)
[Change Grow Live](#)
[Tayside Council on Alcohol](#)
[Scottish Recovery Consortium](#)

[Stirling Community Enterprise](#)
[Turning Point Scotland](#)
[Venture Trust](#)
[The Wise Group](#)

Community integration and person centric outcomes are enabled with contributions from thousands of other community-based groups. [Third Sector Interfaces](#) (TSIs) play a pivotal role in many community justice partnerships. Additionally local partnerships report that Victim Support Scotland, Women's Aid, Rape Crisis, and others provide further valuable insights for community justice arrangements.

Consultation draft

7. Progress towards the National Outcomes

This reporting period is a transition year for community justice and relates progress towards outcomes set out by the previous national strategy.

National Outcome One: Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice

How did local areas engage with partners, communities, and individuals to improve their understanding and participation in relation to community justice?

Participation

All areas provided evidence of their approaches to enabling people to participate in community justice. The depth of this engagement varied significantly from, for example, publishing partnership meeting papers on local authority websites, light reference to scrutiny of community surveys to targeted feedback and surveys, to active and participative facilitated engagement to have community justice-focused conversations with communities and individuals. Where engagement has involved the latter approaches, there are emerging examples where it is informing strategic planning with identified themes feeding into the development of CJOIPs.

Use of technology

There is noteworthy evidence of areas using a range of approaches to deliver their engagement and participation strategies using technology. This included using social media to promote community justice topics, publishing content on websites, and conducting interactive discussion and consultation events using online formats. The strongest examples used a mix of approaches including technology, but also highlighting in-person interaction. The use of virtual engagement is clearly an asset, particularly to areas with a wide geographical spread and creates an ability to reach services which would otherwise be impossible.

Partners in Orkney reported continuing access to such inputs, particularly with the majority being held in the central belt of Scotland. This allowed more frequent engagement and offered significant cost savings in travel and accommodation as well as time. This was a

particular benefit which partners in Orkney were keen was recognised nationally with a view to it being adopted as continuing good practice. This was to encourage that meaningful hybrid meetings were an option rather than returning solely to face-to-face meetings. Again, this reflected in other rural and remote communities as identified in peer discussions. By extension some partners, in particular Families Outside (FO), who offered support to the relatives of those serving a custodial sentence, identified the positives for remote and rural communities of progress with virtual prison connectivity.

However, it was also highlighted by some partnerships that engagement with partners and the public via these means did not necessarily result in high quality and inclusive conversations and relationships. For comprehensive partner and public engagement, the use of technology should be maximised, but ideally not used as the sole means.

Awareness raising

Approaches to awareness raising of community justice ranged from the publication of reports to large scale events with the exploration of community justice themes. Several areas utilised opportunities and products from CJS and worked with their local communications teams to promote local justice stories and topics, such as the benefits of Unpaid Work undertaken as part of CPOs (Community Payback Orders).

In Fife, members of justice social work staff provided inputs to various organisations to increase awareness around the role of Justice Social Work and attempting to reduce the stigma associated with service users involved in the justice system. Inputs have taken place at Robert Gordon University, Stirling University, Fife high schools, Fife College, Police Scotland, and Justices of the Peace from Dunfermline Sheriff Court. There was also the opportunity to attend the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Public confidence in justice social work is an essential element of this, and areas took steps to increase awareness and understanding.

In some cases, local areas sought to maximise exposure for community justice by connecting with local and national press for broader impact. Several areas told us about events focussed on community justice or providing community justice inputs to other events or training and development opportunities. Most of these events targeted local workforce across a range of policy issues as those who would have a potential overlap with community justice, including the public and third sector.

In Highland the conference 'Where is the Justice in Poverty' was held in March 2023 and had a range of speakers who delivered messages in relation to the links between poverty and those entering/within the justice system to around 80 people from across Highland. There was media interest in the conference and clients from Apex were interviewed which was covered in the STV News [feature](#). Moray Firth Radio also covered key messages from the conference.

Participation with people with lived experience

Justice social work and third sector services are commonly cited as sources of information for engagement of people with lived experience to coproduce services.

The following talking point was raised last year "Co-production with people with lived experience. It is reasonably straightforward to summarise high-level activity where the expertise of those with lived experience is valued and incorporated. However, as well as providing valuable context about needs, evidence, and innovation for the partnership, it can create both risks and opportunities for participants. It is not always clear how these risks and opportunities are managed to ensure that engaging those with lived experience is authentic, meaningful, ethical and effective."

This year partnerships provided more examples of taking steps to facilitate meaningful strategic engagement with people with lived experience of the justice system.

In Dumfries and Galloway lived experience projects have enabled the partnership to consult, listen to and involve those with direct

experience of justice, seeking to better understand people's experience of justice with a view to improving services as a result. This includes the Amazing Futures initiative delivered by local third sector partner Summerhill. The project promotes coproduction and joint delivery as fundamental, with those using the service being directly involved in developing activity. The project also commissions lived experience individuals to deliver aspects of service. This approach meant that they were able to use the skills and knowledge of those attending Amazing Futures to then deliver a particular session and get paid for doing so.

In East Lothian, a third sector partner, Access to Industry, developed a Listening Tool with funding from the Corra Foundation. The project produced a framework to embed listening into practice, and the toolkit was developed as an internal resource for the staff team to support their engagement with all their clients, not just young people. The toolkit explores active listening tips and tricks, how case workers initially engage with clients and build trust, what language they use to create safe spaces and encourage client engagement, and how client's needs are assessed. It then goes on to show ways that this can be transformed into an action plan which is tailored to individual clients' needs and includes resources which enable their personal development. There is also a section on evaluation which outlines how to gain feedback from clients to inform and develop services. The community justice partnership has agreed to use the Listening Tool as a framework for ongoing engagement with people involved in the justice system.

National Outcome Two: Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way

How did partnerships work to enable strategic and collaborative service planning and delivery?

Partner engagement

As highlighted earlier in this report, several local areas reported difficulty in building and maintaining momentum at a strategic level in the community justice agenda due to changes in staff. New partner representatives are often unclear on their roles and responsibilities in the community justice agenda, and it takes time for relationships to be built and buy-in to be gained. Nonetheless, there is substantial evidence of partnerships working collaboratively to drive strategic responses to local community justice priorities.

Strategic engagement across policy issues

Several areas reported strategic engagement with other local or regional partnership groups with overlapping population groups of interest. Most frequently this was with local Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships (ADPs). ADP involvement is evident across a wide range of community justice activities from operational to strategic levels, from point of arrest through to release from custody and beyond. There are clear indications of developed strategic relationships enabling targeting of resources at local priorities, particularly as partnerships work collaboratively to deliver the MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) standards in justice contexts.

Talking Point: Scope and Synergy

Scottish Ministers have defined the direction for community justice partners through priority actions in the National Strategy for Community Justice and in the outcomes defined in the Community Justice Performance Framework (CJPF). Policy is also in place for other activity such as community safety, violence against women and girls, alcohol and drugs, employability, poverty, homelessness, health inequalities, education etc. Much of this work overlaps with community justice and provides space for partners to work together, however it can be unclear how some of the work across various local area partnerships contributes to the overarching community justice outcomes. How can partners better identify opportunities for alignment between policy areas to greatest impact without losing the focus on community justice outcomes?

The strategic development of services for women

The other frequently cited example of strategic engagement was with Violence Against Women and Girls partnerships (VAWG). Some areas described activity linked to the provision of domestic abuse programmes, while others related engagement to inform understanding of victims. Some areas recognised that women survivors can also be involved in offending. Local areas provide several examples of collaborative working across policy areas to support women in the justice system.

There is a clear priority in local areas to continue to build and develop approaches with consideration to barriers that some women find in accessing services. One-stop shop approaches to justice services are now common. There are embedded structures such as, *The Glen Isla Project* and the *Glen Clova Project* also known as “*The Glens*”, an all women team who support women across Angus.

The Glen Isla Project supports women who are involved with the Justice System and most referrals to the project come through statutory routes. The Glen Clova project is the “voluntary” women's team and referrals can be made via a current worker or by contacting the project directly. Both Glen Isla and Glen Clova Projects work in a trauma informed way. The team are aware of the importance of establishing a therapeutic relationship. Enabling women to understand how their trauma has affected them is at the heart of their work, alongside developing problem solving skills, practical day to day support and advocacy work. The teams work in partnership with other agencies to offer a holistic approach to caring for and supporting the women and their families.

In Midlothian, the Spring service has operated with a full-time Justice Social Worker since November 2021, providing support to women on both statutory and voluntary basis. The service collaborates with NHS, [Health in Mind](#), [Shine](#), Women's Aid, and other third-sector

organisations. To enhance efficiency, all workers are now involved in the assessment process. A 'conversation café' consultation with service users in February 2023 led to various developments, including mindful gardening, sessions on online safety, and a smaller group for socially anxious women. The 'Monday group' includes sessions on well-being, budgeting, and a cooking program led by an Occupational Therapist. A DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) benefits advisor started attending in March 2023 because financial inclusion was identified as a priority issue. Recognising the prevalence of trauma among female offenders, a minimum training standard for staff was implemented, including training in domestic abuse, trauma, and to deliver the groupwork programme Survive and Thrive. During the reporting period, 32 women received support from Spring, with referrals from various sources, emphasising the multi-agency support the service provides. Positive feedback reflects the impactful and life-changing nature of the support offered by Spring.

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) also opened 2 new community custody units (CCUs), the Bella Centre in Dundee and the Liliias Centre in Glasgow. SPS state that *"The purpose of the CCUs is to provide safe accommodation and to support the needs of women who will benefit from closer community contact and access to local services, to create and sustain independence in preparation for successful reintegration into the community. Each CCU is comprised of a number of small accommodation units and a community hub where women can meet with visitors and a range of services and activities will be delivered."*⁴ From a community justice perspective, the local areas in which these new CCUs reside have been and continue to be engaged in developing community connections to support these aims, with an initial inspection⁵ of the Bella Centre identifying a positive trajectory in these efforts.

⁴Scottish prison Service (2022) "[Community Custody Units](#)"

⁵ His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (2023), "[The Bella Centre - Annual Report 2022-23](#)"

Elsewhere, the opening of the new national facility housing young and adult women prisoners provided an opportunity for the local area to collaborate in raising awareness of women's imprisonment and rehabilitation.

The Stirling Community Justice Partners were engaged at the opening of His Majesty's Prison & Young Offender's Institute (HMP & YOI) Stirling, and it provided a unique opportunity for staff across the partnership, community organisations and citizens to visit and learn more about the national facility and the vision for community justice and the rehabilitation of women in Scotland. HMP & YOI Stirling facilitated successful community open days and a considerable number of people received a tour of the prison before it opened. Journalists were also invited to visit the facility including; Stirling Observer, BBC Scotland and STV News resulting in positive and nuanced media content with a significant reach. The Stirling Observer's lengthy article was entitled "Stirling at heart of new era in our prison system".

Collaboration and Multiagency working

There are multiple areas where strong strategic relationships have supported targeted collaborative efforts to work towards community justice outcomes. Notable examples often occur around points of transition between stages of the justice process; around point of arrest and admission into custody, and around release from prison. Two areas highlighted their multiagency collaborations to develop approaches to arrest referral services, working to enhance access to services to address needs.

The North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service is an 18 Month Test of Change (ToC) funded by North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (NLADP) and developed in partnership with the NLCJP, for people arrested and held in police custody. The service is delivered by two local third sector organisations who have employed support workers with experience of the justice system to engage with people

whilst being held in custody to improve access to treatment where alcohol, drugs or mental health issues have been factors in their presentation within police custody. The service has been up and running since April 2023, with operational oversight delegated to the Arrest Referral Steering group, which meets on a bi-monthly basis. Additionally, progress is reported to the NL ADP, NL ADP Justice Subgroup and NLCJP. Initial reports indicate a good uptake of the services, further information will be included in annual reporting 23-24.

Most areas reported their collaborative efforts to work with prisons to enable targeted and appropriate support on release from prison, including housing, benefits, and access to treatment for drug and alcohol issues.

These efforts are best enabled by local partners who understand the local networks, relationships, assets, and flow of information; however, they cannot be implemented without commitment from national partners where required. For example, agencies that work on a national or regional basis such as NHS Boards, Police Scotland, the COPFS (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service) and CJS, should ensure that they provide meaningful support and resource where required to these approaches. There has been good practice in this regard in relation to, for example, the development of information sharing protocols, however further work is required.

Despite the wider strategic challenges some partnerships demonstrated particularly strong examples in their coordination of resources, planning, and service delivery.

Justice Social Work in Inverclyde introduced a bail supervision service, emphasising a wider partnership approach through the Short Life Working Group (SLWG). The SLWG identified potential partnership improvements in relationships with third-sector organisations and local housing partners to prevent people on bail supervision from becoming homeless. Simultaneously, efforts were made to address housing needs for those subject to public protection arrangements.

Work with the Inverclyde ADP resulted in funding for a Justice Support Worker post focused on addictions in the justice population. The local

commitment to becoming trauma-informed and responsive continued, with workshops, training, and conferences on trauma-informed systems and services. A Trauma Enhanced Training program was initiated, and a Community Justice Strategic Health Improvement Group was formed to identify health improvement evidence in community justice.

The reporting period saw collaboration with Public Health Scotland for a Community Justice & Remand population Health Needs Assessment, linking remand population data with public health information. The partnership also engaged in workshops to gather views on the National Strategy for Community Justice, influencing the development of the Inverclyde CJOIP.

The Inverclyde partnership worked productively with third-sector partners, leading to the creation of a third-sector community justice forum leading to the identification of new opportunities. The emphasis that people live inside communities rather than inside services guided the CJP's approach, fostering a renewed focus on partnership and the upcoming outcome improvement plan publication.

National Outcome Three: People have better access to the services that they require, including welfare, health and wellbeing, housing, and employability

What steps have areas taken to improve access to services, and what impact has there been as a result?

Access to services

Local community justice arrangements have successfully leveraged resources in some areas to support multi-functional, multi-organisational and inter-team working within co-located facilities.

In Falkirk, the justice social work service provides one such hub. The Tackling Inequalities, Improving Outcomes (TIIO) Project supports justice service users with social welfare and well-being needs, aiding their engagement with CPOs and license conditions. The project addresses barriers to accessing universal services, providing practical tasks, financial support, health assistance, and more. Community justice partners also support the Social Inclusion Project, targeting individuals facing substance use and anti-social behaviour issues. Collaborative efforts with mental health leads have embedded a Community Psychiatric Nurse, enhancing mental health support. The NHS Keep Well nurse and a Recovery Service contribute to holistic health and substance use support. Additionally, an outreach service, a Cost-of-Living Skills Course, and access to the employability pipeline aim to enhance well-being, community integration, and employment opportunities for justice social work clients. The Justice Employability project, third sector organisation Cyrenians, and Falkirk Housing Service further contribute to the overall well-being and reintegration of individuals within the justice system. The Falkirk model demonstrates that regional or national services can find flexibility to connect to services.

Community level connections are important in both urban and rural areas; therefore, community justice partners must remain observant that local flexibility and empowerment in community justice arrangements is a prerequisite for success. The

challenges are quite different between areas and partnerships use their local knowledge and expertise to set out solutions to meet local needs.

For example, the Outer Hebrides archipelago covers a line of islands through 130 miles of sea, so their partnership identifies vastly different sets of strengths, needs and logistical challenges to most other areas. The wider public sector in the island authorities operate in a much smaller scale but with more obvious integration. Therefore, planning and reporting of community justice must be nuanced and proportionate.

Homeless Services have played a vital role in implementing pre-release arrangements thus ensuring that the released person's practical needs are considered and locally individuals have an identified address prior to release wherever possible. This work is particularly important in island and remote rural communities where the travel back to the home area from a prison establishment takes significant time and delays the same day access to services.

A Talking Point relating to geographic difficulties – place-based challenges in accessing services – was [raised in last year's report](#) and local returns for this year included more information on their considerations on geographic challenges.

The centralisation of Police Custody Centres has created challenges for some local areas, such as the provision of appropriate adult services and similarly centralisation of court business created difficulties for service provision. Some local authorities have neither a police custody centre nor a sheriff court within their area, which means their populations interact with multiple police custody centres and courts. This makes local integration of support arrangements more challenging. Additionally, the host local authority has additional workloads from out of area clients.

Further analysis is required to better understand the impact of geographic distance and compliance to requirements made on people to attend courts and police stations. The prohibitive cost and availability of public transport to access services is an ongoing issue which services seek to mitigate, however there are also

examples of more consideration to geography in the design and delivery of services. Place-based working is a person-centred, bottom-up approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources and collaborate to gain local knowledge and insight.

During 2022-2023, the Argyll & Bute MAT Standards pilot in the Cowal & Bute area was established. This area was chosen as a result of an analysis of need carried out by the ADP in relation to drug and alcohol harms and deaths. During the same period, concerns began to develop around Oban and discussion on collaborative opportunities to review the justice and addiction pathways in both these areas was agreed. Involvement of Public Health Scotland in facilitating MAT Standards Workshops to baseline the justice pathways was also agreed. This is a key area of ongoing activity during 2023-2024.

The development of the local community justice plan is considering a place-based approach and the associated service mapping.

Shetland has also been testing the place-based approach to address local challenges for communities - The Shetland Partnership's Locality Plan for Islands with Small Populations began in 2016, with a Locality Plan approved and signed-off by all partners 3 years ago for implementation and collaborative working; Nort Natters began the process in the North Mainland, and is still at an early stage.

Geographic access to services is also a concern in urban areas.

In Edinburgh it was recognised that travel and distance can present a barrier to the most vulnerable in society including those in the justice system, discouraging them from accessing vital services. The [20-minute neighbourhood](#) approach aims to create inclusive and accessible communities with easy access to key services, and has to date identified 19 local areas for implementation. A phased roll-out is

being delivered to help address those place-based challenges and encourage citizens to engage with their communities and access universal services locally. For those accessing justice services specifically, staff employ a flexible approach including holding face to face meetings with people in their local area and conducting telephone appointments. Groupwork interventions are however, delivered centrally.

Linking services in the community

Police custody

Many local areas are prioritising the development of services linked to police custody and there is strong collaboration in place with ADPs so that this work bridges support relating to substance use. Similarly, appropriate mental health services have been leveraged locally through delivery of Action 15 from the [Mental Health Strategy](#) “to give access to dedicated mental health professionals to all A&Es, all GP practices, every police station custody suite, and to our prisons. Over the next five years increasing additional investment to £35 million for 800 additional mental health workers in those key settings”. Full local integration with wider services such as housing, social security, financial inclusion, language, and communication support etc. is also critical for success. Some areas have also developed connections between services that provide local voluntary throughcare arrangements, arrest referral and bail support. This is advantageous because there is a core group of people with significant and complex needs who are arrested, held in custody and often returned to prison for short periods of time. The ongoing instability that they experience means the continuity of care by the same key workers is beneficial.

There are many ongoing challenges which include the following:

- High prevalence of pilot and test of change activity around police custody from short term funding which raises questions about the sustainability of such services
- There are reported ongoing information sharing problems between Police Scotland and services in communities and between police custody nursing services with health provision in the community in many areas.
- There are practical problems for meaningful engagement inside police custody settings. Detainees are more likely to be under acute stress and

therefore less likely to be able to engage meaningfully or retain information provided to them during this time.

- There is limited evidence around how services might enable more people to be released on undertakings rather than being held in Police Custody. For example, supporting people to attend court on an undertaking. The national care in custody network continues to implement steps towards achieving delivery of quality health and social care services in police and prison custody, for example rolling out training to custody nurses and police staff in relation to general healthcare and mental health.

An issue of potential significance that is not yet developed at a local area level is the role of appropriate adult services to enable equitable access to justice for people who are vulnerable. During the reporting period Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) hosted the National Appropriate Adult Co-ordinator and the Policy & Participation Officer (Appropriate Adults). This was a result of an agreement to work with the Scottish Government to implement the new statutory duties relating to [Appropriate Adult services](#) in justice settings. There is an associated oversight group which has regard to duties relating to the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (Support for Vulnerable Persons) Regulations 2019. During the reporting year, the Care Inspectorate was also developing their quality improvement framework for appropriate adult services which will be an area for further development by community justice partners in the future, with support from national partners to identify and address issues.

Employability

There are positive examples of embedded employability workers inside some Justice Social Work services and local links with employability pipelines through the [No-One Left Behind](#) strategy to provide pathways to employment and a wraparound support of continued complex needs. There is however less evidence of the availability of specific services relating to when, why and how to disclose criminal convictions (or to legally not disclose) to support employment progression. Further, there is still little evidence of progress towards embedding the opportunities which arise from more realistic disclosure/rehabilitation periods implemented by the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019.

Employing people with convictions

Some partners are leading the agenda in recruiting people with convictions, beyond the peer role function. This demonstrates to a wider set of local employers, that

there is untapped potential which they can also deploy by recruiting people with convictions.

In Ayrshire, all three Local Authorities North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire agreed to become organisations for employing people with convictions. Ambassadors promote safe and sustainable employment for people with convictions in their own workplace and seek to influence other workplaces too. Ambassadors seek to ensure that internal recruitment policy and practices are both current and proportionate regarding the employment of those with convictions.

Peer Workers

A primary access problem for services can often be mistrust of public services after bad experiences throughout lifetimes and generations, and individuals' caution around self-hope after previous unmet promises from services. Peer workers can form an important part of the solution. There has been progress through increased employment of people with lived experience within service delivery settings and the term "peer worker" is more commonly used in local returns. The employment of people with lived experience enables the deployment of a more diverse and relatable workforce which seeks to encourage participation in services.

There are several examples of peer workers cited in the returns with funding from various sources.

In East Dunbartonshire funding was secured to employ a Peer Navigator (Justice). The procurement process was completed with Apex Scotland the preferred supplier and the Peer Navigator has been in post embedded in the justice social work team since late 2022.

There will be inevitable complications such as vetting and disclosure. Similarly, more evidence is required to ensure that the "peer" workforce is being supported, integrated, and developed effectively through supervision, fair pay, training, career progression, vicarious trauma monitoring and with equality of opportunity.

Health

Justice settings are also used as an opportunity to address health inequalities by reaching people in poor health who do not commonly access services except in emergency or crisis situations. For example, Keep Well nurses, occupational health and mental health professionals have been deployed in justice settings. Wider pressures on the availability and accessibility of universal services health services are challenging, however community justice remains a critical opportunity for Health Boards to address health inequalities by engaging with people who they otherwise cannot reach.

In Dundee, a Keep Well service co-located with Justice Social Work used anticipatory health care checks and health consultations to engage with people at risk of inequalities. The nurse engages with people as they attend supervision, unpaid work, prison release appointments and/or when on Home Leave. Over the year, this involved 129 consultations over multiple appointments.

Compared to pre-pandemic profiles of people receiving checks and subsequent support, those referred to and/or attending appointments with the Keep Well Nurse presented as having more complex and/or unmet health needs. They continued to be given support beyond initial consultations.

Financial inclusion

The cost-of-living crisis has created new needs. Areas have described access to financial inclusion services such as Citizens Advice bureaus. When necessary, appropriate and supported emergency referral pathways to foodbanks are in place, often as is the case with the Trussell Trust “providing additional support to help people resolve the crises they’re facing so that they don’t need to use a food bank again in the future. This could include things like debt advice, mental health support, or benefits guidance.”⁶

⁶ Trussell Trust (2023) ["How food banks work"](#)

Housing

The availability of suitable housing remains a structural problem, however there are significant ongoing developments through the [Ending Homelessness Together](#) strategic work as well as [SHORE](#) (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) standards implementation which is described later in this report, and anticipated new policy and legislative proposals around homeless prevention.

Liberation from Prison

Enabling access to services after short periods of imprisonment is particularly challenging, especially unplanned liberations from court and many local areas have been prioritising activity in this area.

There are significant challenges in enabling access to services such as:

- Low awareness of the term 'voluntary throughcare and mentoring support' creates confusion and means that people do not know what services are available or who provides support.
- Service provision and availability is inconsistent across the prison estate. The number of prisons which might liberate people to any one local authority adds complexity and the distances which some people travel to return to their local authority after imprisonment are too far.
- Disengagement can be a challenge and timing of the offer of support is crucial to aid engagement.
- For people on remand, not knowing court/release dates means that forward planning is challenging.
- The lack of support available for men on remand is inequitable, and a missed opportunity to engage, support and prepare people for release.
- Services delivering voluntary throughcare and mentoring support face challenges in funding/resources, and co-ordination/communication between organisations as well as difficulties in coordinating access for people to basic needs which support resettlement and desistance. These include suitable housing, medication and money as well as connections to a local area and important people in their lives.
- Mentors suggest that the insecurity of year-on-year funding undermines staff retention and, therefore, their service's stability. More support for staff wellbeing may be required, given the complex and emotive work they are involved in, and the need for professional development.

Coordination of integration support after liberation from prison

In response to the challenges, some local areas have implemented complementary services to their local systems to improve arrangements for people returning from prison. Some local areas described how they developed use of the information sharing agreement between SPS and local authorities to better effect. A growing number of areas have developed coordination systems to help reach people with the right service, in the right place and at the right time so that basic needs are prioritised. The local coordination of whole systems is essential because the best outcomes are achieved from holistic approaches with joined up services. The availability of services is normally fluid, and their accessibility is relevant at microgeographic levels inside local authorities. People also commonly re-present, in services again after being arrested and a continuum of the same system of support at this stage is beneficial.

Accommodation

Local areas are continuing to develop their housing solutions in line with the SHORE standards model. Areas are at various stages of implementation but structural problems with the availability of suitable housing remain amid increasing demands for housing from other pressure points.

In Scottish Borders, a SHORE working group was reconvened in 2022/2023. The working group includes representatives from Homelessness services, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Justice Service, Youth Justice, Scottish Prison Service and Housing Support. The aim of the working group is to improve housing outcomes for people leaving prison regardless of their housing status and how long they have been in prison or young offenders, by working in a collaborative way that allows for dynamic involvement across a range of stakeholders.

Key achievements from the group include the following;

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- *Development of the information sharing protocol, to allow sharing of information from the SPS weekly reports with the four local RSLs to promote homeless prevention activities.*
 - *Developing a shared understanding of homelessness prevention activities when a tenant is incarcerated to ensure a consistent approach and support the no wrong door initiative.*
 - *In partnership with Waverly housing, a property was acquired to provide bail supervision and home leave accommodation.*
 - *Utilising 'Ending Homelessness Together' funding, a part-time SHORE Homelessness Case officer was appointed, for a period of 12 months, to support imbedding of new practices.*
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Support with substances

There is clear recognition of the profound impact of individuals who have lost their lives to drug-related deaths in Scotland. Community justice partners are collaborating with ADPs to implement the MAT Standards across all justice settings. The progress made by ADPs in developing MAT standards in previous reporting years serves as a valuable learning experience for integrating these standards within a justice framework. Recovery groups have also been developing further inside prisons and in the community.

Voluntary Throughcare

There are also some new locally integrated services to support people after liberation and increasing references to peer workers. The new services are operating inside wider local systems of support in tandem with voluntary throughcare from Justice Social Work services and the existing New Routes, SHINE and Moving On Scotland voluntary throughcare and mentoring programmes.

CJS will continue to support the development of improving access to services when it assumes grant management and monitoring responsibility for the Scottish Government funded third sector delivered voluntary throughcare and mentoring service.

Social Security

The return to normal working after the pandemic for DWP work-coaches in prisons and their additional resources in some areas is also another welcome development and some areas mentioned positive collaborations in work to enable financial inclusion.

Mental Health

Integration Joint Boards are statutory community justice partners and there are numerous examples of investments in services to reach people with mental health services in justice settings using allocations from Action 15 of the [Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027](#).

Employment

Community Justice partners are collaborating with their Local Employability Partnerships to help maximise the impact of the No-one Left Behind Strategy and Shared Prosperity Fund. Some people are ready and motivated for employment, education, or training straight after prison and some partnerships have described strengthening pathways to jobs and learning for people being liberated so that they can access opportunities at the right time for them in relation to addressing basic needs first.

People being liberated from prison can connect to these community pathways but there should ideally be links prior to liberation from prison.

In Aberdeen City a new employability sub-group comprising of HMP Grampian, DWP, Aberdeen City Council Employability Team, Aberdeenshire Council Employability Team and SDS (Skills Development Scotland) was established focusing on employability pathways and support for individual's pre-release. Specifically, the Group tested the impact of pre-release support with specific employers offering pre-release job interviews so that individuals had secured employment in advance. This has been tested with private sector employers. This change has shown that provision of in-work support for those being released from prison and moving into employment was an essential element to be in place. The Aberdeen

LEP (Local Employability Partnership) will be procuring this which will give those leaving custody similar levels of support to individuals accessing employability support via the community route.

Skills Development Scotland and SPS collaborated to develop a memorandum of understanding regarding the approach for services to young people in custody. This identified further work to be undertaken such as, revising the data sharing agreement between the organisations so that services such as access to training and education can be better facilitated when the young person is liberated.

Families

Many partnerships described close working with Families Outside to raise awareness within local systems of services around the needs of families as well as the development of referral mechanisms for support. The welfare and resilience of families affected by the adversity of imprisonment is a critical need. There is however little other notable policy focus on this space in local areas or at a national level. Partnerships specifically mentioned learning from engaging in the development of the now-published [Paying the Price: The Financial Cost to Families of Imprisonment and Release](#).

Overall, the work of local partners is aiming to improve the integration and support for individuals, emphasising collaboration, proactive planning, and addressing various needs.

Equality and access

The activities described by the evidence in this outcome arguably cover the breadth of needs associated with the justice population. Nonetheless, it is not clear that partners are taking into account diversity within the population whose needs are to be met. The Equality Act 2010 creates a duty for the public sector to consider all individuals in shaping policy and delivering services, and take steps to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. Good practice in the development of equality impact assessments encourages agencies to take into account the challenges that individuals experience as a result of their identity and to consider how a policy may impact, either positively or negatively, different sectors of the population in different ways. It is unclear the degree to which community justice partners are incorporating these approaches to the development and delivery of community justice arrangements.

Talking Point: Equality in the justice system

People in contact with the justice system are a diverse group, experiencing the justice system in different ways and all with distinct needs. The focus on the needs of women and young people in the justice system is comparatively well developed, however there is little evidence of a strategic consideration of the needs of other groups, or on where different aspects of identity may intersect and contribute to additional complexity and experience of marginalisation. How can local and national partners promote and contribute to equality in justice for people who have distinct experiences as a result of their disability, race, sex, religion, sexuality, or other aspect of their lived experience and identity?

Consultation draft

National Outcome Four: Effective interventions are delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending

What changes have been made to community justice arrangements to enable desistance, reduce reoffending, and promote integration, and what impact has there been as a result?

[Further context to EM (Electronic Monitoring) BAIL, RLO's EM CPO's Requirements, Diversions, Bail Supervision, Court Reports, CPO (Community Payback Orders), DTTO (Drug Treatment Testing Order), Structured Deferred Sentences and court backlogs will be added when statistical evidence becomes available in January 2024]

Bail Support Services

Some local areas have prioritised the improvement and development of bail support services. The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 brings opportunities to make improvements for bail support. Increasing the effective use of bail assessment reports by Sheriffs will be a key factor, however resourcing the production of these reports as well as the ongoing resourcing of associated bail support services will continue to present a challenge.

There are clear links to third sector support in the community and requirements to consider bail within a whole local system which includes voluntary throughcare, arrest referral, MAT standards implementation, mental health provision, financial inclusion, employability pathways, whole family support and housing.

The use of electronic monitoring is still in its infancy in Scotland compared to south of the border. The research evidence on electronic monitoring⁷ asserts that it is ineffective without wraparound support. There is a clear opportunity for support and supervision arrangement to make even more contributions to ameliorate the prison population problem in Scotland, however this will require a significant resource shift to enable support services before it is expanded.

[Some local areas have described increased use of EM and bail supervision however national data will be inserted and contextualised when available]

⁷ Scottish Government [Electronic monitoring - Reducing reoffending - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/information/electronic-monitoring-reducing-reoffending/)

The Glasgow partners have a Bail Support Improvement Plan with priorities for, Housing, Mentoring, Victims, Mental health, Judicial and Public confidence, Trauma informed practice, Performance, and electronic monitoring.

Over the year, they have made progress with some of these priorities, including;

- the colocation of the Prison Homelessness Casework Team with the Justice Social Work Court Team, to better able the court team to access information to inform their reports. This allows up to date information on housing status and accommodation to be included in court reports, supporting bail decisions. The Court Social Work Team are fully embedded in Glasgow Sheriff Court, and manage a high number of Bail Supervision cases, with support for the whole person, not just in relation to offending, including addiction, housing, debt, employment/training and educational opportunities.*
 - The partnership has made working links with the Homelessness Management Team, ensuring Community Justice priorities are reflected in the city's Housing and Homelessness Strategies.*
 - Work is ongoing with the COPFS National Marking Team to ensure that the Procurator Fiscals who are marking cases before they go to court are aware of all the options in Glasgow to support bail.*
 - A Bail Mentoring Service had been temporarily funded, and while this funding will end, there is work being undertaken to find alternative community supports for people on bail.*
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Diversion from Prosecution

Redirecting individuals away from prosecution, when suitable, allows them to address various issues contributing to alleged offences early on. This benefits both individuals and communities, reducing instances of offending and reoffending, leading to fewer victims and less harm to society. Recognising that those in contact with the justice system often have higher vulnerability and complex needs, the aim is to ensure timely diversion after arrest. Using well-informed, and tailored opportunities reflecting the nature and severity of the alleged crime to address underlying needs and causes of offending behaviour.

Diversion activities can occur in the form of warnings from the Police or from the Procurator Fiscal or fixed penalty notices. There are other types of non-court-based disposals available to police and prosecutors such as; a conditional offer, compensation offer or a fiscal work order. More formal diversion from prosecution cases are managed by justice social work services when an individual accepts an offer from the procurator fiscal to receive services or treatment to address underlying needs which relate to the offending behaviour.

Local partnerships have reported widely on formal diversion from prosecution cases for the reporting year. Services have been developed and links have been strengthened with third sector organisations. There is widespread reporting of needs assessment, service planning work to improve outcomes in relation to diversion from prosecution. Several areas have established working groups to explore opportunities with increasing use of formal diversion cases.

[Partnerships indicated an increase in diversion - Data on the numbers of formal diversion referrals will be included when published]

Local areas have raised concerns about how to resource growing demand for formal diversion from prosecution cases without a specific uplift in funding for this. Some areas have managed to leverage funding for third sector provision, however there are sustainability concerns around these services.

Some partnerships have raised concerns about a small number of diversion referrals relating to gender-based violence. There is also widespread reporting of people presenting with more complex needs. Such cases typically require more time.

The [Joint Review of Diversion from Prosecution](#) was carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland (IPS), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), the Care Inspectorate (CI) and HM Inspectorate of Prisons for

Scotland (HMIPS). It highlighted that diversion from prosecution, designed to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, was well established as an effective intervention for those aged under 18, but that more could be done to promote confidence in its use for adults. There was scope for improvement in how diversion from prosecution operates and the report contained 34 recommendations. This will also be monitored by national partners as part of the Community Justice Strategy Delivery Plan.

Partnerships widely reported on work undertaken to review these recommendations locally within the context of their planning and improvement processes. Local areas which participated in the review expressed positive experiences from the process and the wider recommendations have been welcomed by stakeholders.

South Lanarkshire advised that feedback from the Care Inspectorate commended South Lanarkshire's delivery of Diversion from Prosecution, highlighting good case management, strong partnerships, effective use of funding, and positive service user experiences. The recommendations and feedback have informed content in their Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan.

There was less contextual reporting of partnerships enabling earlier diversionary processes such as police warnings however this is commonly monitored by partnerships as part of their improvement process.

There are reports that people with more complex needs are presenting in formal diversion services. However, there is no rigorous evidence yet to define whether the increase in cases is being driven by de-escalating prosecution or the escalation of cases which would previously have been resolved through Fiscal warning letters, or other drivers. CJS' Improvement Tool and associated proposed logic models will provide better evidence for this in the future.

COPFS report that there were significantly fewer fiscal warning letters issued in the reporting year and it may be regressive if the increase in diversion was the result of escalating cases which were previously closed by warning letters. Only 3,249 fiscal warning letters were sent in the reporting year compared to 5,203 in 2021/22, 6,583 in 2020/21 and 5,261 in 2019/20.

This will be monitored through the lifecycle of the National Strategy for Community Justice.

There are several positive signs for developments in diversion from prosecution cases from some local areas.

For example, West Lothian report that their, justice social work service has employed extra staff to respond to the increasing need for assessments and interventions. They have managed the increase in Electronic Monitoring Orders (EMOs) together with community referrals for immediate support. Their Diversion from Prosecution cases have shown consistently high numbers of referrals and completions with minimum statistical fluctuations over the last three years despite the pandemic. This contrasts with a reduction in other areas of statutory work within the service.

West Lothian accept all Diversion from Prosecution cases for assessment that are sent from the Procurator Fiscal with a dedicated response to age and stage. Those up to 21 years receive a service from the Youth Justice Team while their Adult Justice Services accept all other cases. Given the focus for expansion, which is likely to include an increase in complexity, they are now increasing the resource to support individuals on diversion.

CPO

[CJS are currently preparing a separate National Summary of CPO annual reports for 2022-23 – early findings include themes which are consistent with this report such as:

- there is embedded integrated working arrangements with community organisations with orders managed by local authority social workers with connection to local services*
- people are presenting with more complex needs*
- Recruitment, retention, and funding concerns in justice social work (like many other services) tend to shift resources towards implementing risk controls and away from addressing needs*

- *funding cuts to wider third sector funding shifts workloads relating to addressing need onto social work]*

Alcohol Brief Interventions

Alcohol remains a significant factor in relation to crime and some areas use Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI) as part of the efforts to address the issue.

The Moray Health Improvement Team has been actively delivering an ABI training program to practitioners from the Local Authority, NHS Grampian and Third sector interface with validated evaluations. The training equips practitioners with the knowledge and confidence to provide early intervention and prevention support to their clients to prevent the long-term health and social implications of excess alcohol consumption. In the reporting period 85 practitioners completed ABI training.

Caledonian

The Caledonian System is an integrated approach to addressing domestic abuse, combining a court-ordered programme for men aimed at changing their behaviour, with support services for women and children. It is presently available in 19 local authorities (covering approximately 75% of the population). There is a continuing implementation gap for the remaining areas due to funding constraints. Flat funding for existing services also creates a challenging operating environment.

West Dunbartonshire partners identified a need to expediate implementation of the Caledonian System locally because there are continued high level of reported domestic abuse in the area. Partners have leveraged funding for a period of 2 years to implement the system.

The system includes a men's programme, which can be a requirement of a CPO or post release license. The system also includes a women's service and a children's service to enable safety, support, and rights for those who have been harmed.

Moving Forward Making Changes (MFMC)

MFMC is a programme providing treatment for men who commit sexual offences or offences with a sexual element. The programme forms part of a Court Order or Post Custody Licence.

MAPPA

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of statutory partnership working arrangements. Representatives of agencies that are either responsible authorities for MAPPA or have a duty to cooperate and attend partnership meetings which enables appropriate oversight and scrutiny of community justice matters in relation to public protection.

A national overview [report](#) for Scotland provides an overview of the main developments in relation to MAPPA during the reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The report highlights the following 4 key developments in the reporting year:

1. Partnership work with the UK government in the implementation of a new system called the Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS). Its implementation will enhance information assurance among Scottish Partners and with cross border partners in the rest of the UK.
2. Work has been undertaken to improve connections between terrorism policy and MAPPA.
3. Piloting the revised programme MF2C (Moving Forward 2 Change) which builds upon the accredited work of MFMC which aims to reduce the risk of sexual offending recidivism.
4. The implementation of sections 10 to 40 of the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016. The new orders are designed to protect the public from sexual harm and contain a lower threshold than the previous orders.

The report confirms “Sex Offender Notification Requirements are robustly policed so that those who breach their terms are identified at the earliest opportunity.”

[Statistics related to Outcome 4 will be inserted here when available]

National Outcome Five, Six and Seven:

- Life chances are improved through needs, including health, financial inclusion, housing, and safety, being addressed
- People develop positive relationships and more opportunities to participate and contribute through education, employment, and leisure activities
- Individuals' resilience and capacity for change and self-management are enhanced

What mechanisms and arrangements enable areas to understand progress for people against these outcomes?

Specific person centric outcomes have been removed from the new National Strategy for community justice, however embedding person centredness and trauma informed practices are threaded through the strategy.

Person-centric issues are unique to individuals, therefore defining person-centric outcomes for someone else or groups of people, is contradictory. Meaningful reporting of and evaluation of person-centric outcomes at a systemic level was thus challenging through the previous national strategy. They are a core principle of trauma informed, person centred and assets-based working rather than something which is easily measurable across a system.

It remains important for person centric outcomes to be monitored within the context of services and for them to be integrated into quality improvement. Local areas have described the use of various mechanisms, such as Justice Outcome Star, which measure progress of individuals. These are valuable operational tools which add value to case management and service quality improvement. However, any inference from aggregation of the data beyond a single service is limited without wider qualitative data to support quality improvement across systems of services.

At a partnership level there should be curiosity and the right leadership across whole systems of services to develop person-centric outcomes. In [last year's annual report](#) we raised a Talking Point referencing the difficulty in identifying progress in the longer term to inform community justice improvements at a system level.

Triangulating the views of lived experience in analysis of the evidence base has been embedded in Clackmannanshire where the strategic needs and strengths analysis considered was co-produced. Case studies through justice journeys were considered by people with lived

experience of the justice system, alongside analysis of these with a wide range of service providers. The value of using this approach was fed back by many of the individuals and organisations who participated in the process allowing the strengths and the gaps within the system to be identified. The partnership seeks to use a similar process as part of the monitoring of the outcomes going forward to ensure that lived experience is embedded within the quality assurance of services that support people's justice journeys. Additionally, a person with lived experience co-chairs the partnership board.

To respond to these challenges, CJS is designing a series of resources to complement the CJS Improvement Tool, to support partners to assess progress towards national outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. A core feature of the resources is triangulation of evidence involving community justice leaders, the community justice workforce, and people with lived experience. The intention is to enable better oversight of the disconnections and gaps between services, monitoring of solutions or workarounds, and clearer evidence for required changes which need to be made at a regional or national level by partners.

Talking point: National levers for local issues

National levers for local issues

Local partners solve problems at a local level by identifying and overcoming barriers or by implementing workarounds. However, some challenges require decision making and influence which are inaccessible to local partners, relating to regionally and nationally set policy and practice. How can local and national partners work with Scottish Government and others to support overcoming barriers and bring forward developments without compromising local autonomy?

Community justice leaders have also participated in the Scottish Trauma Informed Leadership Training (STILT). This is part of the [National Trauma Transformation Programme](#) which sets out a blueprint for developing systems, services, programmes, and interventions to help them to be more trauma responsive. The language of being trauma informed is commonplace in community justice partnerships and training has been undertaken by the community justice workforce.

8. Conclusion

The community justice partners are moving ahead with the refreshed National Strategy and the national outcome and indicators set out in the [Community Justice Performance Framework](#), published on 31 March 2023.

The 9 National Outcomes	
More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution	More people in police custody receive support to address their needs
More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision	More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences
More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence	More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence
More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment	More people access voluntary throughcare following a short-term prison sentence
More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice	

CJS published the [Community Justice Improvement Tool](#) at the same time, designed to complement the national framework at a local level. This tool will help drive improvement in local areas, setting out the local supporting evidence that should be considered throughout the year to help local community justice partners plan and monitor improvement activities.

The next annual report to be produced by CJS will describe progress across Scotland regarding the nine new national outcomes. We will seek information from local and national partners to evidence the journey and better understand what needs to happen to support progress.

All areas have been working to produce their new CJOIPs that will set out how they will work towards these national shared outcomes. Local areas will develop, gather, and utilise information in collaboration with CJS to support improvement and to report on the achievement of the nationally determined outcomes, and provide CJS with local evidence as part of their annual reporting for Scotland. CJS will support

implementation of the Improvement Tool throughout the coming year and beyond, and work with partners to help drive and monitor improvement in community justice.

This was another year where the collective community justice workforce strove in exceptionally challenging circumstances to deliver improved outcomes for some of Scotland's most vulnerable people. Challenges which were not new were nonetheless present to a degree that had not been experienced so acutely in recent years, and it is unlikely conditions will ease in the near future.

In the introduction to this report we set out our overarching recommendation required to retain progress that has been made in community justice across Scotland:

We recommend that Community Justice Scotland (CJS), the Scottish Government and all statutory partners work together to shift the balance of justice funding to align with the preventative aspirations of [The Vision for Justice in Scotland](#).

A more substantive shift in our collective approach to justice that leads to a decisive movement from custody to community, as set out by the Scottish Government's Vision for Justice, cannot be achieved without a more systemic approach to reform that adopts a cross-portfolio approach to tackling the drivers and effects of offending in our communities. This could lead to substantial budgetary savings, improvements for communities and victims of crimes, and less offending and reoffending through more effective approaches to prevention and support.



First published **DATE**

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