



Achieving Community Justice Outcomes

Targeted resource to support national outcome improvement planning in local authority areas

National Outcome: More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment

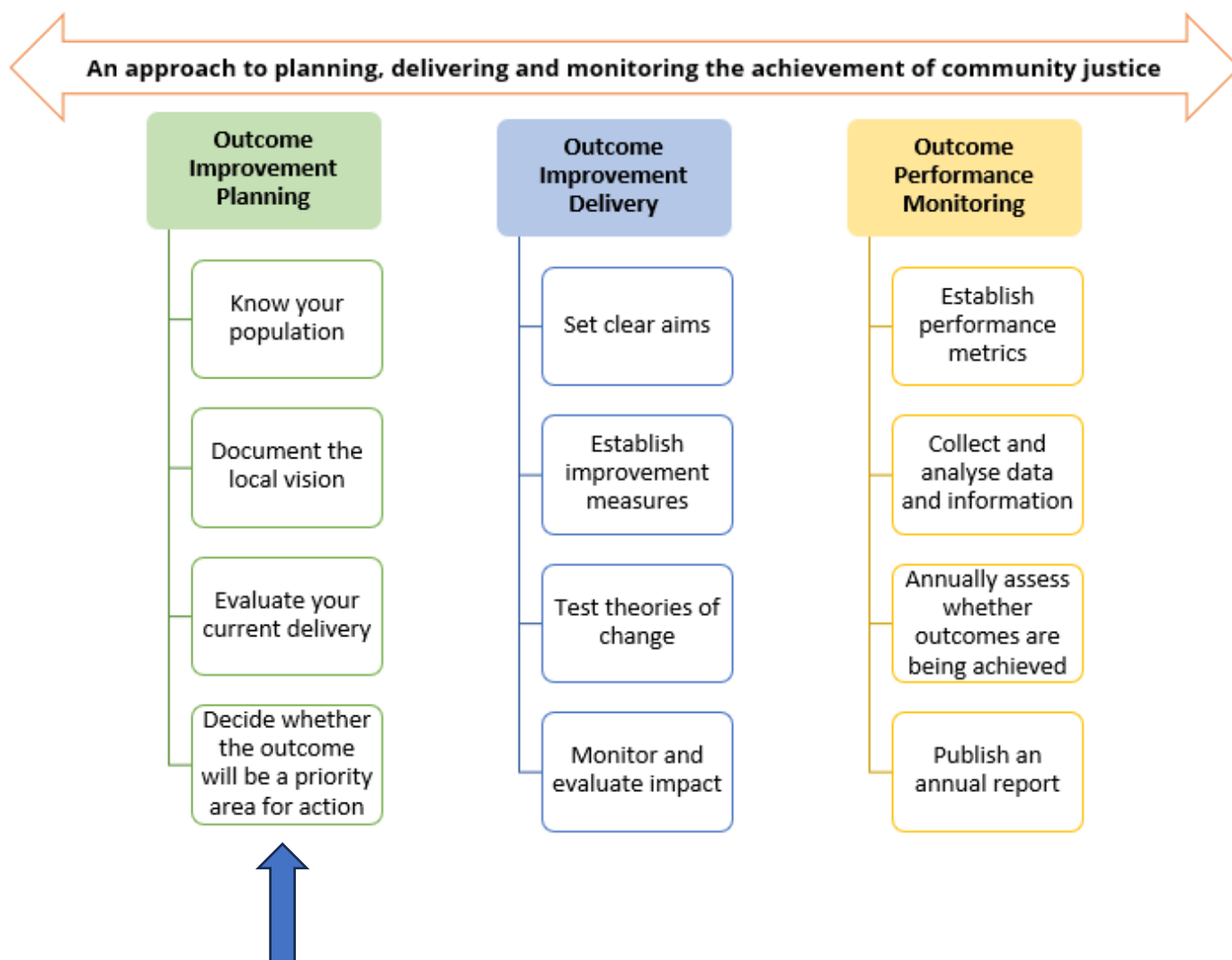
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Outcome Improvement Planning

An approach to support partners in the planning, delivery and monitoring of community justice outcomes in local authority areas was published in June 2024. The approach is intended to provide community justice partners, acting jointly at a local level, with a practical framework to work within to plan, deliver and monitor outcome delivery.

The approach methodology defines three **processes** to meet this aim, each with a distinct number of steps:



This targeted resource focuses on the first process within the approach: **outcome improvement planning** and relates to the following national outcome:

“More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment.”

National outcomes

Nationally determined outcomes are set out in the [Community Justice Performance Framework](#) (the framework) and describe the result of implementing the priority areas for action in the [National Strategy](#) (the strategy).

This targeted resource provides a detailed step by step process intended to support partners in the planning and assessment of progress towards the national outcome ***“more people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment.”***

Local Outcomes

Community justice partners may have identified other outcomes in their Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP). These outcomes will reflect local priorities and will be consistent with the national outcomes, or may relate to priority actions in the strategy where there is no associated national outcome. Partners can use the principles outlined in each step of this process to plan for the achievement of these local outcomes.

Outcome overview

The strategy states that: “Being employed has been shown to be associated with reduced reoffending. The way we support individuals to undertake training and education pathways with a view to accessing, retaining and sustaining employment before, during and after they are involved in the justice system is therefore critical. Community justice partners should take a person-centred approach, recognising that individuals are at different stages of the employability pathway and that not all individuals serving community sentences, in custody, or leaving custody are ‘employment ready’. Additional needs such as addiction, healthcare, benefits and housing support may need to be addressed before an individual is ready to develop skills to sustain employment. Individuals may also require opportunities to develop skills in a supported work environment and individuals with additional support needs including communication support needs may require reasonable adjustments to be made, in order to bridge the gap between employability support and sustainable employment. However, some employers are speaking out to highlight that when appropriately selected and given support where appropriate, individuals with previous convictions can not only secure and sustain employment, but can prove to be committed and successful employees.

We also recognise the beneficial changes made by the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 to reduce the Disclosure periods for certain past criminal convictions. We would encourage partners (with an interest in employability) to help to ensure that people with criminal convictions are aware of these changes and their positive impact when seeking employment, and to provide appropriate support for conviction disclosure for those who are required to make disclosures.

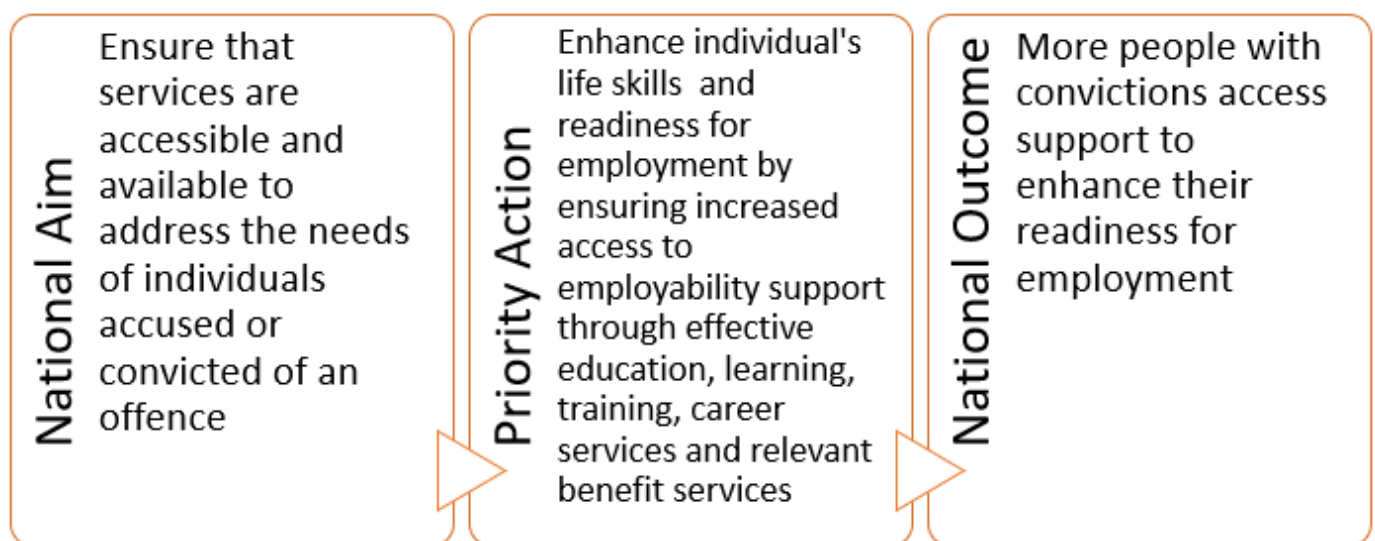
No One Left Behind is the Scottish and Local Government’s partnership approach to an all age employability service working with partners at a local, regional and national level to deliver a person-centred, place based design and delivery approach. In implementing this commitment, community justice partners should ensure that there are direct pathways between the justice system and

employability services, in particular with Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) which operate in every local authority area to provide support to individuals to progress into and sustain quality jobs. We also recognise the strong links between work to improve employability outcomes and work to widen access to higher education. Additionally, engaging families and family learning are critical components in the “theory of change” which underpins the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Employability leads should engage with SPS, justice social work and others to continually develop and enhance relationships, policy and processes, enhance community links, and ensure that the pathways to employability are supported at each key stage. In particular Skills Development Scotland can champion issues relating to community justice and assist, with other local partners, in improving the employability outcomes of individuals who have criminal convictions within LEPs.

Leading by example, statutory partners should also examine their own recruitment processes to ensure that people with unspent criminal convictions are not, in practical terms, being unnecessarily excluded from the possibility of employment.”

Your local authority and Local Employability Partnership are likely to have already developed significant work for this outcome through their responsibilities in “No-one Left Behind”. Therefore, further development will be significantly collaborative.

The strategy sets out aims and priority actions for partners to focus on over the duration of the strategy. The framework describes what the desired change looks like in the form of national outcomes. The aim, priority action and national outcome relevant to employability needs for people with convictions are:





Step 1 - Know your population

Strategic planning information about the prevalence of employability needs will significantly help in planning the delivery and achievement of this outcome. It will also help you to assess the scale and depth of the challenge in meeting the outcome.

Knowing your population involves applying principles of strategic needs and strengths assessment (SNSA)¹ and appreciative inquiry². This involves using quantitative and qualitative data and information to help partners collectively understand the people for whom you are striving to meet the outcome for, and supports partners to look at old problems and issues in new ways. A good quality evidence base will enable partners to gain knowledge and wisdom about the delivery of community justice locally, and to use these insights to plan improvement.



To understand the employability needs of people with convictions in your local area, you will need to find out as much as you can about their prevalence, who is experiencing it, what their specific needs are, and whether the right services are available locally to address those needs.



And pause for a minute...

What do we mean by quantitative and qualitative data and information?

It is worth taking a moment here to explain what we mean by quantitative and qualitative data and information and what we want to use it for in outcomes planning.

Quantitative data (or numerical data) is helpful for answering basic questions such as “who”, “what”, “where”, and “when” and is helpful for measuring the extent, prevalence, size and strength of an outcome. Quantitative data on its own (as in raw, unprocessed facts and figures) are seldom meaningful or useful and numbers alone do not tell the whole story. However, when processed and analysed, quantitative data can produce a succinct picture which is easy to compare, such as when presented as a baseline and trend.

Qualitative data enables a richer understanding of how outcomes are being delivered and provides important context to the numbers. It is helpful for exploring more complex issues, generating hypotheses and gaining deeper insights into human behaviour and experiences. It can also highlight

¹ Find out more: [Strategic Needs And Strengths Assessment: Guidance - Community Justice Scotland](#)
[:Community Justice Scotland](#)

² Find out more: [Forming new futures through appreciative inquiry | Iriss](#)

issues and priorities which are important to the workforce or people with living experience of community justice, which may not fall within a performance remit. Qualitative data helps to answer questions such as “why” and “how”.

Ultimately, we want you to use a range of data and information, both qualitative and quantitative, to establish a good quality evidence base on which to make decisions about outcome improvement.

What data and information should we source and what if it isn't available?

We know that the provision of data and information within community justice is an evolving process and some data points, and mechanisms to capture insights, are more readily available than others. There is work ongoing at a national level to discuss community justice data development and improve the publishable evidence base in community justice.

The example data collection plans in the following sections provide a wide range of questions to be answered, and include signposting to potential types of data and information in terms of whether it is quantitative or qualitative and where it might be sourced. These example data collection plans are provided to engender curiosity amongst partners and provide a ‘pick and mix’ of examples that local areas may wish to choose from. They are not mandatory or directive and local areas can decide what is most meaningful and proportionate when establishing their data collection plans.

The availability of some data and information identified in the example data collection plans may be unavailable currently. This relates to both quantitative and qualitative data. If partners collectively agree that the data and information is meaningful to collect, and it is currently unavailable, partners should consider whether this in itself should be considered as an improvement action. For example, you might identify an improvement activity to work with a local statutory partner to produce a data sharing agreement. Or you might have an improvement activity to develop a survey that collects insights from the workforce in the delivery of the outcome.

If partners have tried to source the data and information and it proves to be unavailable, and won't be available in the foreseeable future, it may be worth including this in the outcome progress report (described in [Step 3](#) this document) as an audit trail of local data and information development. This will help to inform both the local area and national picture of community justice data and information availability.

Once you have a data collection plan for each national and local outcome, it is worth reviewing them collectively to see what data and information you need to source directly from national partners, the workforce and people with living experience of community justice. For example, you may have a number of data items or insights that you want to request from SPS or COPFS and these might need to be coordinated or collated into a single request to make it easier for partners and organisations to respond to.

Understanding People

A demographic data profile collates information relating to people with convictions in the local area who have an employability need. The demographic data profile should include data and information that enables you to describe the prevalence of employability needs in the local area, and where possible give insights into the people experiencing them, and their characteristics.

Sources of data for the demographic data profile will vary. Some data will be national, some may be published and broken down to local authority level, and other data may be held locally.

A simple data collection plan should set out the questions you want to ask and identify possible sources of data and information. An example of how a data collection plan for people experiencing employability needs might look is provided:

Sample questions – answered with quantitative data (possible sources provided in brackets)

What percentage of people in employability services have convictions? (national indicator – provided annually by JAS)

How many people sentenced at court have an employability need? (LS/CMI³ - discuss data availability locally)

How many people on community sentences were referred to local employability support services? (Local Employability Partnership - discuss data availability locally)

How many people, on admission to prison, have an employability need? (discuss data availability locally)

How many people, as part of release planning, were referred to employability supports? (discuss data availability locally)

Sample questions – answered with qualitative data sourced from local workforce and people with living experience

Why are people completing community sentences referred for personal placements?

How do people experience employability services in the local area?

What can the Third Sector Interface tell us about people with convictions accessing volunteering opportunities?

The data in your final data collection plan may be able to be broken down to give further information about people's characteristics (such as gender, age, employment status etc.).

Using the information gleaned from your data collection plan you should be able to describe the prevalence, over time, of employability needs for people with convictions in the local area. Data that is

³ Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) is an assessment that measures risk and need factors for adults.

able to be broken down into specific characteristics should enable some insight into the local population experiencing employability needs and whether the population profile is changing over time.

Needs

A needs data profile builds on the demographic data profile. Now that you know who is experiencing employability needs, it will be important to try and understand what their needs are.

It can be difficult to obtain further needs based data as relevant data is often not recorded or datasets are recorded in such a way that extracting the information is not possible. Therefore, it is important to talk to the workforce supporting people both in the community and in prison and people receiving support. For example, prison officers may be able to provide a general overview of the employability needs of people completing prison sentences. Local authority and third sector staff will be able to give insight into the practicalities of supporting people with employability needs, such as helping individuals to disclose current and previous convictions, preparing CVs and accessing employment related qualifications.

Any strategic planning data and information available from tools used by the workforce for supporting and measuring change when working with people would be particularly useful (such as Outcome Star).

Services

A services profile provides an overview of the services that are available in your local area in relation to supporting people with convictions to access employability supports. It will be particularly important to collect information about service availability in relation to the needs data profile.

Once you have collated all of the information it will be important for partners to consider what it means in terms of the vision for providing support for employability. For example, the demographic data profile may reveal trends in age or gender that require a specific focus in delivery. Similarly, the needs data profile may highlight specific needs that require particular focus in terms of local and national service provision. The services profile may reveal gaps and/or duplication in service provision or may highlight the need to improve the interface between community and prison services.



Step 2 - Document the local vision

This step in the process requires partners to collectively define what good delivery looks like for people from the local area with convictions who require employability support. A good way to visually represent the process by which the outcome will be achieved is to document this as a 'theory of change' using a logic model.

Policy landscape

Creating the local vision involves taking cognisance of legislation and national standards and guidance, alongside reflecting what is known about the local population (established by applying [Step 1](#)). The following policy documents may assist partners when developing the local vision:

- [Bail and Release from Custody \(Scotland\) Act 2023 \(s12\)](#)
- [Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)
- [Disclosure and criminal record checks](#)
- [Employability in Scotland](#)
- [No-one Left Behind](#)
- [Framework for Local Employability Partnerships](#)
- [Community Payback Order Practice Guidance](#)
- [Regional Skills Assessments](#)
- [Scotland Works for You](#)

Theory of change

A [sample logic model](#) setting out the theory of change for supporting people with convictions with employability support has been produced by CJS (in consultation with national policy colleagues). Partners should adapt the logic model to reflect any additional partner activities and outcomes that require to be a focus to meet the needs of the local population and to realise the local vision.

National improvement actions

The strategy delivery plan, published by the Scottish Government, expands on the strategy by setting out a number of tangible, time-limited deliverables, detailing exactly what work will be undertaken to drive improvement nationally towards the national outcomes. These activities form an important part of the theory of change for meeting national outcomes and have therefore been included in the logic models (identifiable in brackets by the action number from the delivery plan). Progress towards the deliverables will be monitored by a Community Justice Programme Board which brings together community justice partners at a national level. Keeping up to date with the progress of these activities will be important in the evaluation of your current delivery as some local improvements may be dependent on national improvement progress.



Step 3 - Evaluate your current delivery

Once the local logic model is complete you will need to identify how you are going to tell whether the model works as predicted. To do this, partners should consider each activity identified in the logic model and discuss whether, and how, it happens in practice. Formulating some questions to ask relevant partners as part of this process is a powerful way of teasing out the facilitators and barriers to local delivery. These are known as evaluation questions.

Ask evaluation questions

A simple data collection plan should be prepared and completed as part of this step. Consider each activity from the logic model and think about what you might want to know, from whom, about how the activity is working in practice. For example:

Activity from Logic Model	Question For	Question
Organise unpaid work placements to enhance employability skills (Local authorities)	Justice Social Work	Are there a range of placements available locally for people to enhance their employability skills whilst completing CPO? Are you able to identify and make recommendations for employability support as part of a CPO at court report stage?
	Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	Do you receive enough information pre-sentencing to consider employability support prior to sentencing?
	Local Employability Partnerships	How have you incorporated the requirements of people with convictions, and those serving community sentences, in your strategic planning for employability services?

Individual sessions with partners and stakeholders to ask questions and collect information about how the activities are carried out can be a good way of establishing the realities of local delivery. It is also important to talk to partners collectively to ensure the support of people with employability needs as a whole system and to test whether the predicted outcomes are being achieved. A facilitated workshop can be an effective way of doing this.

Set specific indicators

In addition to formulating evaluation questions, partners should identify specific indicators that will measure or signal whether the logic model is or isn't working as expected. Often, the demographic and needs data that you collected in the 'know your population' step of the process will be helpful. As a minimum, partners should consider using the indicators specific to community sentences outlined in the framework, the improvement tool and the self-evaluation guide:

Source	Indicator
Performance framework	Percentage of those in employability services with convictions
Improvement tool	Effective links between the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and Community Justice Partnership supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Local employment, education and training providers to respond to the needs of those with convictions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Local employment, education and training providers are confident and competent in providing effective conviction disclosure supports iii) Local employers to develop more inclusive recruitment processes and employ people with convictions.
	<p>Referral pathways are in place to connect people to appropriate services and support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) At commencement of, during and at the end of a CPO ii) Following release from custody.
Self-evaluation guide ⁴	<p>Improving the life chances and outcomes of people with living experience of community justice (quality indicator 1.1)</p> <p>Impact on people accused or convicted of offences (quality indicator 2.1)</p> <p>Providing support when it is needed (quality indicator 5.1)</p>

Summarise the evidence

You should now have a range of quantitative and qualitative data and information available about how local people with conviction's employability needs are supported. What can be said (either conclusively or hypothetically) about the support for people serving community sentences, those being admitted and liberated from prison to the local area and those with historical convictions? What inferences or conclusions can be made from the data and information?

To help structure this step it might be helpful to prepare an outcome progress report that can be shared and reviewed by partners collectively. The report should summarise what has been established in the steps of this process, particularly:

- Information about the **prevalence** of employability needs of people with convictions over time.
 - ✓ Are the needs increasing or decreasing over time?
 - ✓ Are people regularly being screened for employability (and other) support needs at key points in their justice journey?
 - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- Information about the **population** with employability needs.
 - ✓ What is known about their demographics and does this necessitate targeted interventions?
 - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- The **needs** of those populations.
 - ✓ What is known about the employability needs of people with convictions in the local area?
 - ✓ Are there any trends apparent?

⁴ These quality indicators have been identified by the Care Inspectorate as particularly relevant in the assessment of employability needs delivery. However, this is not definitive and the Care Inspectorate would urge partners to promote flexibility in the use of other quality indicators to evaluate impact.

- ✓ Is the needs profile becoming more or less complex?
- ✓ Does this necessitate accelerated pathways into certain services?
- ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- Employability support **services**.
 - ✓ How is the Local Employability Partnership taking account of the needs of people with convictions and employers in the design and delivery of services?
 - ✓ Are people continuing to be supported post involvement in the justice system?
 - ✓ Based on the needs profile, which services are particularly relevant for this cohort?
 - ✓ Is there sufficient training for staff in universal service provision to support people with disclosure, for example?
 - ✓ What information is shared between statutory partners and the third sector?
 - ✓ Are there any established fast-track pathways into employability support services?
 - ✓ Are community and prison based support services joined up to ensure a smooth transmission between community and prison on admission and release?
 - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- The **local vision** for employability support delivery.
 - ✓ What does good support for people with employability needs look like locally?
 - ✓ Has a logic model been developed that clearly sets out the process by which the outcome will be achieved for the local population?
 - ✓ Does the logic model set out who the crucial partners are and the crucial activities they will carry out to meet the outcome?
 - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- An **evaluation** of current support for people with convictions with employability needs.
 - ✓ How did partners, stakeholders and individuals answer the evaluation questions?
 - ✓ What have you learned about how the activities outlined in the logic model are, or are not, working in practice?
 - ✓ Where are the strengths in delivery and where are the main areas that need improvement?
 - ✓ What did the specific indicators tell you about local delivery?
 - ✓ Are you confident from the information and data collected that the needs of people can be addressed?
 - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?

Assess progress towards the outcome

The conclusion of the outcome progress report should be a collective agreement by partners as to whether the local area is meeting, or how close the local area is to meeting, the national outcome of “more people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment”. If the outcome is not being met, the conclusion should clearly state why and list the required improvements. If your theory of change is correct, most of the improvement activity should link

directly to the activities outlined in the local logic model. It is important to note that identified gaps in data and information may also form an improvement action.



Step 4 - Decide whether the outcome will be a priority for action

The assessment of whether this outcome will be a priority for action in the CJOIP will include consideration of the other outcome progress reports for both national and local outcomes.

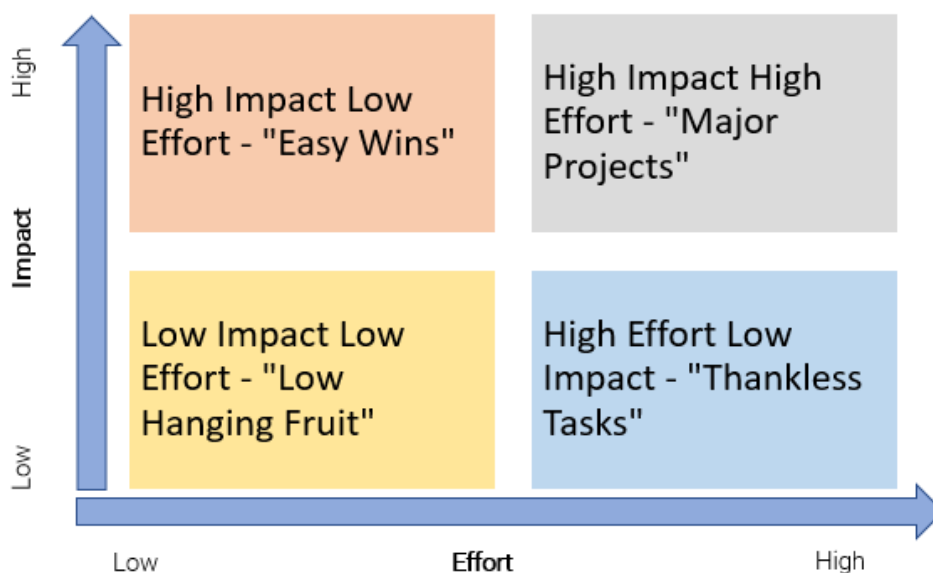
This step involves putting the outcome progress reports in a hierarchical order according to how close or far away from being met the local and national outcomes are assessed to be. Prioritisation of the outcome improvement reports is best done as a collective activity by partners. A facilitated workshop can be an effective way of doing this.

There are a number of techniques that partners can use to aid this step.

Impact vs effort matrix

An impact versus effort matrix is a simple tool that can help generate conversation and aid partners in their decision making regarding prioritisation.

The axes for the matrix can be set according to what will be the most helpful to make an informed choice regarding prioritisation. As well as impact and effort, as shown in the example, you might consider changing the axes to importance versus urgency, cost versus benefit or risk versus reward.



Scoring criteria

Developing a scoring criteria is another method that can be helpful in prioritising the outcomes. This involves partners assigning a score for each identified improvement activity across a range of criteria. For example:

Outcome	Imp activity	Critical to meeting standards	Strategic value	Ease	Benefit to the individual	Cost	Resource impact	Overall priority (average)
More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment	Imp activity 1	4	1	3	3	5	2	3
	Imp activity 2	5	2	4	4	4	5	4
	Imp activity 3	1	1	5	1	3	4	2.5
								3.2

For this table, you could set the following priority ratings:

Critical to meeting standards?	Is the improvement activity crucial to ensure everyone with a conviction has access to supports to enhance their readiness for employment?	1 = Critical	5 = Not critical
Strategic Value?	Is the improvement activity important to your overall strategy?	1 = Highly important	5 = Not important
Ease?	Will the improvement activity be fairly easy to complete?	1 = Very easy	5 = Very difficult
Benefit to the individual?	Will the improvement activity likely yield significant benefit to the individual?	1 = Highly likely	5 = Not likely
Cost?	Will the improvement activity likely cost a lot?	1 = Low cost	5 = High cost
Resource impact?	Will the improvement activity have a great impact on CJP resource?	1 = Low impact	5 = High impact
Overall priority:	Priority for each individual improvement activity is the average score of all five criteria. Total priority for the outcome is the sum of all overall priority scores, divided by the number of improvement activities.		

Note: The lower the score the higher the improvement activity and overall outcome priority.

There are many other techniques that can be used to aid prioritisation.

Narrative assessment for the CJOIP

At the end of the process, partners should use the outcome progress report to clearly articulate:

- whether the access to employability supports outcome is being achieved in the area
- if not, how near the outcome is to being achieved
- whether the outcome requires to be a priority for action
- the action they intend to take to achieve, or maintain achievement, of the outcome.

This narrative assessment should be included in the CJOIP.

Support to enhance readiness for employment - sample logic model

National Goal / Priority	Inputs	Activities – What we do					National Outcome
<p>What we want to achieve</p> <p>Over the duration of the National Strategy community justice partners will:</p> <p>Enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment by ensuring increased access to employability support through effective education, learning, training, career services and relevant benefit services..</p>	<p>What we invest</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Staff training</p> <p>Data</p> <p>Information sharing processes</p> <p>National standards and guidance</p> <p>Legislation</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Provide local employability provision which incorporates support in areas of health, justice and housing.</p> <p>Provide an advocacy role within the employability pipeline.</p> <p>Establish employability leads in each local authority area who are responsible for ensuring individuals are able to access education and employability services.</p> <p>Provide accessible disclosure support to people with convictions so they can assertively, effectively and authentically disclose the convictions if they need to.</p> <p>Work with Scottish Government and Local Employability Partnerships to raise awareness of employability opportunities for people serving community sentences (JSW).</p> <p>Organise unpaid work placements to enhance employability skills.</p> <p>Community Justice Partnerships, Local Employability Partnerships and Employability Leads within Local Authorities should ensure that they are effectively integrated and aligned to ensure individuals are able to effectively access education and employability services (action 29).</p>	<p>Skills Development Scotland</p> <p>Provide people with convictions access equal to universal service provision.</p> <p>Provide accessible disclosure support to people with convictions so they can assertively, effectively and authentically disclose the convictions if they need to.</p> <p>Provide the Local Employability Partnership and the local Community Justice Partnership with key strategic support in matters relating to employment, education and training.</p> <p>Use influence to promote safe recruitment of people with convictions to wider labour demand stakeholders.</p> <p>Skills Development Scotland and SPS to develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding (action 30).</p>	<p>Third Sector</p> <p>Provide volunteering opportunities for people with convictions through third sector interface provision.</p> <p>Provide commissioned employability services.</p> <p>Provide accessible disclosure support to people with convictions so they can assertively, effectively and authentically disclose the convictions if they need to.</p> <p>Support people with ill health or disability to sustain or return quickly to work through a Single Health and Work Gateway.</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>Support people with ill health or disability to sustain or return quickly to work through a Single Health and Work Gateway.</p> <p>Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service</p> <p>Seek information from Justice Social Work about individual's employment circumstances before sentencing.</p>	<p>Scottish Prison Service</p> <p>Establish referral processes to support people with convictions into local and national employability services.</p> <p>Work with Scottish Government to increase referral rates for people leaving custody into employability support, through pre release planning.</p> <p>Maintain an employability toolkit for use by navigators within the Violence Reduction Unit for signposting into employability support services.</p> <p>Develop a strategic framework to assist with the establishment of SPS Employability Advisory Boards (action 28).</p>	<p>What we ultimately want to achieve</p> <p>More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment.</p>

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