



## Achieving Community Justice Outcomes

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

**National Outcome: More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence**

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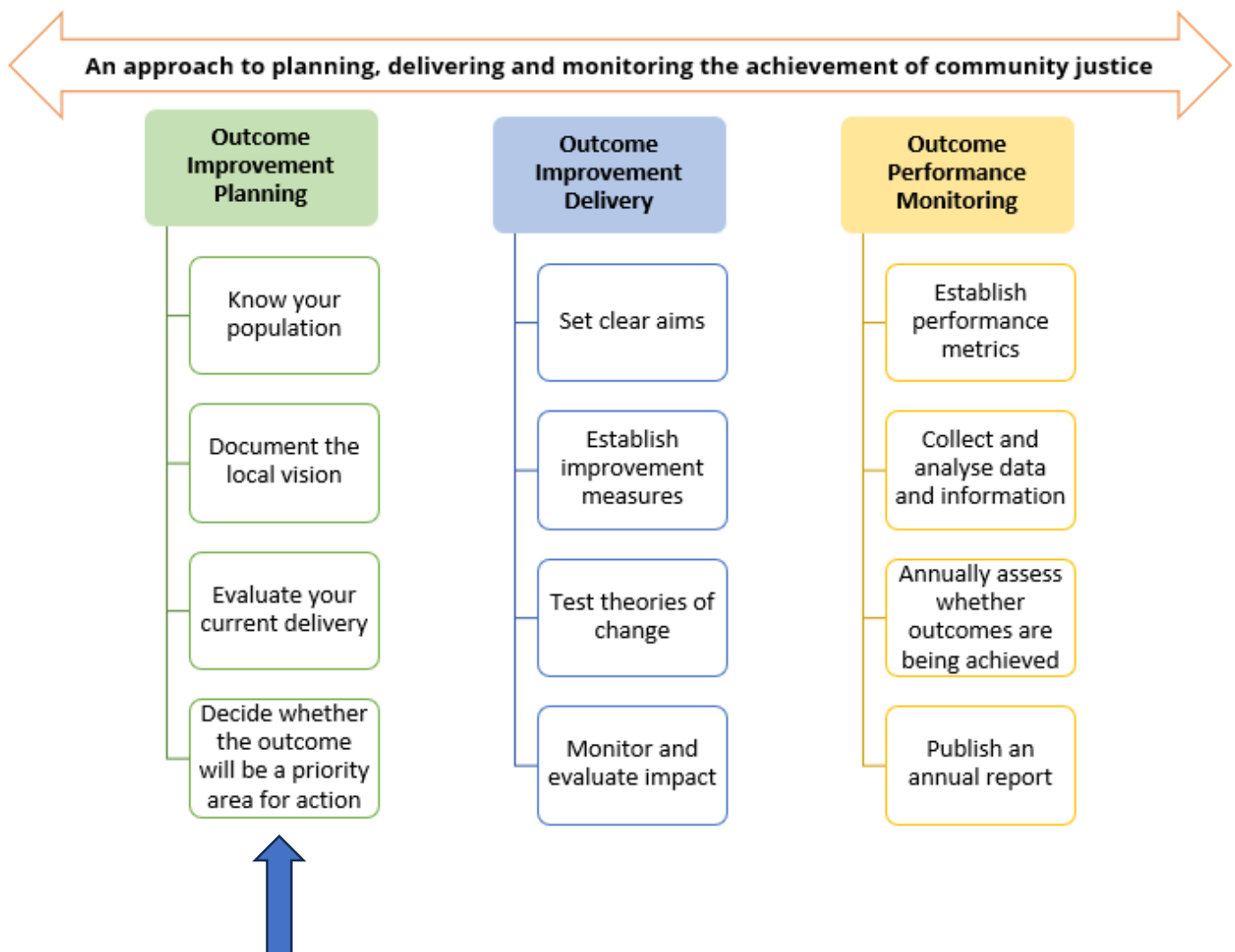
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## Outcome Improvement Planning

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 access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence.”***

## 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 access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence.”***

## 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: “When an individual is released from custody, they are likely to have been disconnected from mainstream public services, and will potentially need additional support to re-engage. This is a vulnerable time, where any gaps or failures in the delivery of support can have severe consequences for the individual, leading to an increased demand for emergency support services, or potentially a return to offending and a return to custody. To support individuals, there are a range of statutory and voluntary throughcare services available, as well as third sector and specialised services which engage with individuals, depending on their individual circumstances. On release, individuals can request voluntary throughcare assistance provided by local authorities – either from a justice social work officer supervising them after release, or from local authority / justice social work if they are not subject to supervision. Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to offer voluntary throughcare, which consists of advice, guidance and assistance to individuals who request such a service either before release from custody or within 12 months of their release.

Partners should work together to ensure that effective throughcare support services are in place and consistently offered, working in co-ordination with the activities of the SPS, justice social work and other public services supporting individuals and meeting the specific needs of different groups of individuals interacting with the justice system. This will involve robust co-ordination and planning processes being in place across justice, public and third sector services, to plan those activities in co-operation with individuals. There is also a need to ensure that public services are aware of the particular needs and challenges faced by individuals in the justice system, and for them to pro-actively engage with that population at the earliest stage, to ensure their needs are supported.”

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 voluntary throughcare are:



## Step 1 - Know your population

Strategic planning information about the use and prevalence of voluntary throughcare, and about the people in your local area who are experiencing voluntary throughcare, 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)<sup>1</sup> and appreciative inquiry<sup>2</sup>. 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.



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

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

To understand the population experiencing voluntary throughcare in your local area, you will need to find out as much as you can about its use and prevalence, who is experiencing it, what their 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 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 in a community or population. The demographic data profile should include data and information that enables you to describe the use and prevalence of voluntary throughcare in the local area, and where possible give insights into the people experiencing it, 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, possible sources of data and information received. An example of how a data collection plan for voluntary throughcare might look is provided:

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

How many people are there in prison with an index sentence of less than four years? (Strategic planning data provided to local authorities by SPS)

How many people are held on remand? (Strategic planning data provided to local authorities by SPS)

How many people eligible for voluntary throughcare were liberated from prison? (SPS/local authority information sharing agreement)

How many voluntary throughcare cases commenced? (National indicator – provided annually by JAS)

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

How are people made aware of voluntary throughcare services on admission to prison?

What do we know about people being released from prison directly from court?

What information do we receive from Public Social Partnerships about people being supported?

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 use and prevalence, over time, of voluntary throughcare in the local area. Data that is able to be broken down into specific characteristics should enable some insight into the local population experiencing voluntary throughcare and whether the population profile is changing over time.

### **Understanding Needs**

A needs data profile builds on the demographic data profile. Now that you know who is eligible for and who is receiving voluntary throughcare, it will be important to try and understand what their holistic needs are.

It can be difficult to obtain further needs based data that is specific to the cohort of people accessing voluntary throughcare. Relevant data is often not recorded or datasets are recorded in such a way that extracting the information is not possible. Therefore, the workforce delivering voluntary throughcare, and the people receiving support, are perhaps the best sources of information to inform the needs profile.

For example, prison based Social Work may be able to give an overview of the range of needs captured for eligible people on entry to prison. Local voluntary throughcare providers may be able to give a generic overview of the needs of people subject to voluntary throughcare and which services they are referred to.

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).

### **Understanding Services**

A services profile provides an overview of the services that are available in your local area in relation to voluntary throughcare. It will be particularly important to collect information about service availability in relation to the needs data profile and to establish how accessible the service pathways are for people taking up a voluntary throughcare offer. For example, local area housing services may be involved in the provision of direct access to accommodation for those subject to voluntary



throughcare and health services may be involved in the provision of services such as mental and physical health and substance use.

Having a shared understanding of local service provision for people engaging with voluntary throughcare will be important when establishing effective pathways into universal services pre-release. Information will already be collated locally and is published via the [Community Support Services Across Scotland](#) tool published on the CJS website.

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 local voluntary throughcare delivery. 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 service provision. The services profile may reveal gaps and/or duplication in service provision or may highlight the need to improve the accessibility of service pathways for people subject to voluntary throughcare.



## Step 2 - Document the local vision

This step in the process requires partners to collectively define what good voluntary throughcare delivery looks like for the local area population. 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:

- [Criminal Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2003 \(s71\)](#)
- [Social Work \(Scotland\) Act 1968 \(s27\)](#)
- [Bail and Release from Custody \(Scotland\) Act 2023 \(s12\)](#)
- [New Routes Throughcare Mentoring Service](#)
- [Shine Women's Mentoring Service](#)
- [Literature review: Commissioning voluntary throughcare and mentoring services](#)
- [Commissioning of Voluntary Throughcare and Mentoring Services: Research Findings](#)
- [Demographic profile: Commissioning voluntary throughcare and mentoring services](#)
- [Integrated Case Management Guidance Manual](#)

### Theory of change

A [sample logic model](#) setting out the theory of change for voluntary throughcare 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 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
Provide admissions and liberations data to local authorities and PSPs	SPS	Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that the admissions and liberations data is being sent to the right single point of contact in the local authority for justice social work and housing?
	Housing	Do you regularly receive the admissions and liberations data? How do you use it for service planning?
	Justice Social Work	Do you regularly receive the admissions and liberations data? How do you use it for service planning?

	Third Sector PSP providers	Do you regularly receive the admissions and liberations data? How do you use it for service planning?
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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 delivery of voluntary throughcare is considered 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 voluntary throughcare outlined in the framework, the improvement tool and the self-evaluation guide:

Source	Indicator
Performance framework	Number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced
Improvement tool	Mechanisms are in place to support people serving short term sentences Proportion of people liberated from short term custody: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Made aware of support</li> <li>ii) Accepting support offer</li> <li>iii) With a coordinated pre-release plan in place</li> </ul> Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people accessing voluntary throughcare to support improvement Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of community justice partners in delivering voluntary throughcare to support the needs of people leaving short term custody
Self-evaluation guide <sup>3</sup>	Improving the life chances and outcomes of people with living experience of community justice (quality indicator 1.1) Impact on people accused or convicted of offences (quality indicator 2.1) Providing support when it is needed (quality indicator 5.1)

### Summarise the evidence

You should now have a range of quantitative and qualitative data and information available about how voluntary throughcare is delivered locally. What can be said (either conclusively or hypothetically)

<sup>3</sup> These quality indicators have been identified by the Care Inspectorate as particularly relevant in the assessment of voluntary throughcare 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.

about the delivery of voluntary throughcare in the local area? 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 **use and prevalence** of voluntary throughcare over time.
  - ✓ Is the use of voluntary throughcare increasing or decreasing over time?
  - ✓ Is there good awareness amongst prisoners and partners as to its availability and eligibility?
  - ✓ If voluntary throughcare is more fully utilised what would that mean for capacity?
  - ✓ Is there any significant attrition between referral and engagement with universal services?
  - ✓ Are the reasons for this understood?
  - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- Information about the **population** receiving voluntary throughcare.
  - ✓ What is known about their demographics and does this necessitate targeted interventions?
  - ✓ What does the local population remanded in custody indicate in terms of what capacity may be required should voluntary throughcare be made more widely available to them?
  - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- The **needs** of the population.
  - ✓ What is known about the needs of people eligible for and engaging with voluntary throughcare?
  - ✓ What does the LS/CMI<sup>4</sup> and admission to prison assessments data tell you about need?
  - ✓ Are there any trends apparent?
  - ✓ Does this necessitate accelerated pathways into certain services?
  - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?
- Voluntary throughcare **services**.
  - ✓ What is known about the awareness and accessibility of voluntary throughcare services?
  - ✓ Based on the needs profile, which services are particularly relevant in onward referral (for example housing, financial inclusion and mental health)?
  - ✓ Are there any established fast-track pathways into treatment or support services?
  - ✓ How easy is it for local authority and third sector services, who were supporting people on admission to prison, to maintain a relationship and provide continuity of support when they leave?
  - ✓ Are community and prison based support services comparable and are they joined up to maximise continuity of care for the individual?
  - ✓ Are there any gaps in the information and how can this be rectified for the future?

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<sup>4</sup> Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) is an assessment that measures risk and need factors for adults.

- The **local vision** for voluntary throughcare delivery.
  - ✓ What does good voluntary throughcare delivery 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 voluntary throughcare delivery.
  - ✓ 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?
  - ✓ Is it clear how voluntary throughcare services support desistance and reintegration?
  - ✓ What did the specific indicators tell you about local delivery?
  - ✓ Are you confident from the information and data collected that need assessments are undertaken in all suitable cases and how is engagement with voluntary throughcare promoted and maximised?
  - ✓ 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 access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence”. 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.

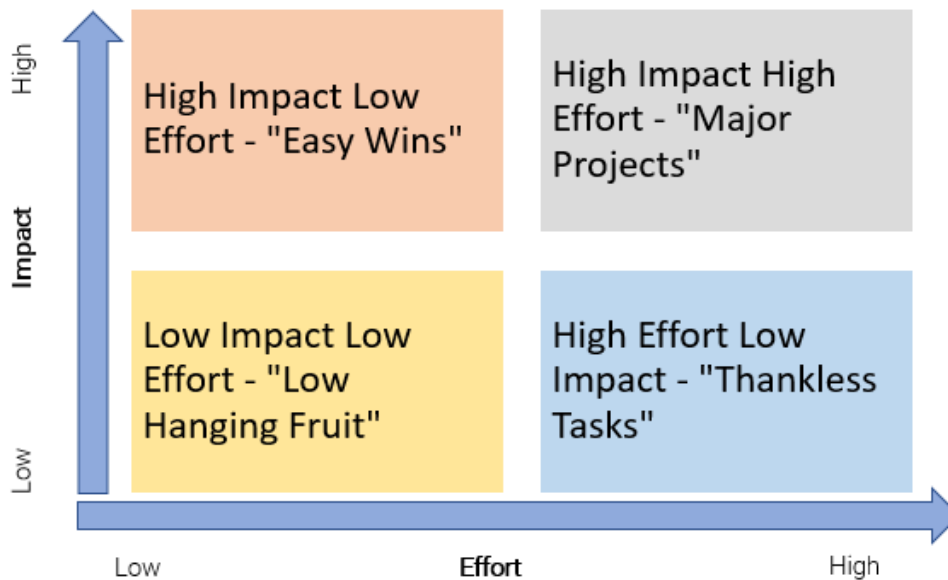
This step involves putting the outcome progress reports in a hierarchical order according to how close or far away from being met the local and national outcomes are assessed to be. Prioritisation of the outcome improvement reports is best done as a collective activity by partners. A facilitated workshop 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 access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence	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 effective voluntary throughcare provision?	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 voluntary throughcare 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.**

## Voluntary throughcare - sample logic model

National Goal / Priority	Inputs	Activities – What we do					National Outcome
<p><b>What we want to achieve</b></p> <p>Over the duration of the National Strategy community justice partners will:</p> <p>Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services</p>	<p><b>What we invest</b></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><b>Police Scotland</b></p>	<p><b>Local Authorities (Justice Social Work)</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Prison Service</b></p>	<p><b>Third Sector</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Government</b></p>	<p><b>What we ultimately want to achieve</b></p> <p>More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence</p>
		<p>Review outstanding warrants pre-release as part of co-ordinated approach.</p> <p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>	<p>Identify needs and appropriate referrals at point of sentence.</p> <p>Promote the availability of voluntary throughcare to those in custody and their families.</p>	<p>Undertake assessment of needs at point of reception into custody and provide advice/ support via appropriate referrals (e.g. housing, health, welfare, employment).</p>	<p>Provide nationally commissioned voluntary throughcare services (PSPs).</p> <p>Provide locally commissioned voluntary throughcare services.</p>	<p>Publish and embed updated operational guidance to justice social work for the delivery of throughcare services (action 31).</p>	
		<p><b>Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service</b></p>	<p>Promote the availability of voluntary throughcare within pre-release planning.</p>	<p>Provide admissions and liberations data to local authorities and PSPs.</p>	<p>Engage in release planning processes.</p>	<p>Continue to promote and enhance multi-agency pre-release planning and co-ordination of activities in support of throughcare. This requires more consistent information sharing practices and consideration of the movement of people between Local Authority and health board areas (action 33).</p>	
		<p>Ensure individuals appearing in court from remand have their personal belongings and medical prescriptions with them (in case of release from court).</p>	<p>Use SPS admissions and liberations data proactively.</p> <p>Co-ordinate and support a partnership approach to voluntary throughcare (including being the link with family, community based services and prison).</p>	<p>Undertake short term custody case management planning and link with community case management to ensure continuity of care.</p>	<p>Lawfully share information with partners (consent from the individual required).</p>		
		<p><b>Skills Development Scotland</b></p>	<p>Participate in timely and person-centred release planning.</p>	<p>Work with local authorities to create effective referral pathways into local universal service provision.</p>	<p>Engage in release planning processes.</p>	<p><b>Community Justice Scotland</b></p>	
		<p>Engage in release planning processes.</p> <p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>	<p>Identify needs and make appropriate referrals (from point of sentence through to reintegration).</p> <p>Create effective pathways into universal service provision.</p>	<p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>	<p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>	<p>Review the provision of Third Sector Voluntary Throughcare services (action 32).</p>	
		<p><b>Integration Joint Boards</b></p>	<p>Commission third sector voluntary throughcare services.</p>				
		<p>Engage in release planning processes.</p> <p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>	<p>Lawfully share information with partners.</p>				



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Community Justice Scotland

R1 Spur, Saughton House,

Broomhouse Drive,

Edinburgh EH11 3XD

**T:** 0300 244 8420

**[www.communityjustice.scot](http://www.communityjustice.scot)**

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