



BOARD MEETING
MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 8 APRIL 2025,
AT 10.30
R1 SPUR, SAUGHTON HOUSE

Present:

Ms Catherine Dyer, Chair
Mr Graham Bell (**via MS Teams**)
Ms Linda de Caestecker
Sheriff Kathrine Mackie (Advisor to the Board) (**via MS Teams**)
Mr Alec Spencer
Ms Helen Wollaston
Mr Keith Rosser

In attendance CJS:

Ms Karyn McCluskey, Chief Executive
Mr Scott Smith, Training and Innovation Lead (**Item 8 only**)
Ms Yara Pina, Research Officer, (**Item 9 only**)
Mr Richard Thomson, Improvement Lead, (**Item 9 only**)
Ms Laura Hoskins, Head of Improvement, (**Item 9 only**)
Ms Hannah Dickson, Project Lead, Voluntary Throughcare and Commissioning (**Item 11 only**)
Ms Rebecca Worrall, Head of Comms, (**Observer**)
Ms Hilary Ramsay, Head of Corporate Services
Mrs Dorothy Smith, Board Secretary (**Observer**)
Ms Rebecca Proctor, Business Manager (**minutes**)

Apologies:

Mr Henry Acres
Ms Lorraine Gillies
Ms Pauline Aylesbury
Mr Bill Fitzpatrick, Director of Operations

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board Members and staff to the meeting. She extended a particular welcome to Mr Keith Rosser as this was his first meeting. There were apologies from Henry Acres, Lorraine Gillies and Bill Fitzpatrick.

2. Declarations of interest, gifts, or hospitality and any change to Register of Interests

- 2.1 Sheriff Mackie indicated that her Register of Interests entry required to be updated, and she would send an amended version to the Chair. There were no amendments to previous declarations of interest and no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

3. Minute of Board meeting 19 February 2025

- 3.1 The Board minute was agreed and was adopted as the version for the Publication Scheme.

4. Matters arising – action tracker

- 4.1 The Board noted the status of the actions from the action tracker and updates were provided for outstanding actions and revised target dates agreed.

5. Papers circulated for information, comment, and approval.

- 5.1 The Board noted the reports circulated for information which were two of the statutory annual reports that CJS is required to lay before Parliament namely the OAAR and CPO report and, in addition, the remit of the Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission. The Chair advised that CJS must focus on ensuring all published reports are accessible and in an easy-to-read format as well as meeting the formal requirements. Ms McCluskey advised that an executive summary to summarise the information more easily is being produced in respect of both. Ms de Caestecker asked if CJS had issued press releases for these documents. Ms. Worrall confirmed that had been done and she will circulate the press releases.

Action: Ms Worrall to circulate to the Board press releases for the OAAR and CPO reports

6. Chair update

- 6.1 The Chair advised the Board about her role as a commissioner member of the new Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission which was announced in February and will be working throughout 2025. She will report back to the Board as appropriate at the following meetings. A public call for evidence is going to be issued

later in the month. The Chair of the Commission, Martyn Evans, has already had a number of initial meetings with groups and individuals with particular interests in the areas being reviewed by the Commission. Victim and survivor groups were among the first contacted and welcomed the review. A wide range of Justice System practitioners and service providers, who engage with and deliver community justice options across Scotland, have also been written to by the Chair of the Commission and a programme of further meetings has been arranged by the Commission Secretariat and has commenced. The Chair thanked Ms. McCluskey for hosting the Chair of the Commission on a preliminary fact finding visit on the work of CJS Scotland and arranging a visit to the custody court at Edinburgh Sheriff Court which included meetings with a solicitor and some of those appearing at court.

6.2 The Chair advised that she met with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on 6 March when they discussed the current work programme of CJS, including the necessary focus on activities aimed at reducing the prison population, and the significant role that community justice options, delivered by the various partners in local areas, can further play in that. The Chair highlighted what the CJS is doing as the national organisation tasked with oversight and leadership of delivery by local and national partners, and how CJS supports improvements in delivery of impactful options by them. They also discussed the myriad pressures that currently impact on local justice resources across the sector, including justice social work, unpaid work supervision, third sector, health and housing, among others, who all contribute significantly in managing and supporting individual offenders with very different needs, and those who have been diverted from prosecution.

6.3 The Chair advised that the Chief Executive and Chair are due to meet with the Cabinet Secretary on the 5th of June. The Board noted that the Chief Executive and Chair had last met bilaterally with the Cabinet Secretary in December 2023.

7. Chief Executive update

7.1 Ms McCluskey provided the Board with an update on key matters, these included:

- Criminal Justice Board are considering contingency plans in respect of potential further need in handling prison population.
- CJS is considering issuing a national improvement recommendation in terms of section 30 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 in respect of electronic monitoring by all Local Authorities regarding provision of appropriate and timely assessment for all people appearing from custody at court. This is an area that has been commented on by CJS and under scrutiny by CJ Board. The Chief Executive will report back on the progress made by the partners in improving the availability of reports to courts to the Board in two months. If there is not sufficient progress, there may be need for a s30 recommendation to be issued.
- There are currently around 10,000 warrants for people who failed to appear in court. Many of these people are then remanded to prison pending trial when they are arrested by the police and appear from custody at court. CJS have been leading work on sending text messages in addition to /instead of letters

confirming court appearance dates to individual accused. In other sectors such as health and in respect of failure to appear by witnesses' text contact has led to evidence of 20-40% increases in attendance according to research.

- CJS have been asked by Scottish Government (SG) to provide an options appraisal for Bail support for those that don't require supervision. CJS intends that this will be completed by June.
- The Chief Executive is working with partners on the "Prison to Rehab Pathway," incorporating a drug rehabilitation release.
- The removal of the Covid extensions to time bars for cases to first call in court which is due to happen later this year, will create a significant increase in the court appearance numbers and may well have knock on effects across the justice system. The Chief Executive and Chair are discussing the work that has been done on this by Justice Analytical Services and the Criminal Justice Board.
- **Action: Chief Executive to report back to the Board on progress in improvements by partners in delivering appraisals for courts in respect of individuals' suitability for release on bail with electronic monitoring**

8. Community over Prison - a demonstration of potential savings (CJS/2025/09)

8.1 Mr Smith presented on a demonstration of potential savings to the criminal justice system as a whole if different types of sentences of imprisonment were to reduce; key points to note included:

- Caveats on the data were considerable as it had been compiled from already available sources which had used different methods of calculation and were not always transparent in what had been included in the calculations to produce the end information. It was best considered as experimental data, it did not include fixed costs such as opening and closing costs of prisons or the incorporation of a portion of other services provided by the prison service.
- The Board thanked Mr Smith for the thought-provoking paper. The Board agreed that it would be most helpful initially to focus further on short-term sentences and the resource savings and opportunity benefits that reductions in those might bring. Mr Spencer offered to meet with Mr Smith to provide additional intelligence that may add robustness to the paper and allow consideration about the future uses of the approach for the CJS team and the Board.

Action: Mr Smith and Mr Spencer to discuss sources of reliable data and improve the robustness of some themes from paper to allow CJS to consider further.

9. Section 26 Dashboard presentation

9.1 Mr Thomson provided context around the section26 work that is ongoing in the Improvement Team in relation to monitoring performance of the nationally and locally determined outcomes, using the relevant indicators and reporting on that to community justice partners for each area on their performance. This has been done using the new indicators as 2023/24 was the first year that Community Justice Partnerships required to work to these.

9.2 Ms Pina demonstrated the new S26 Power BI dashboard to the Board. The Board thanked both for the amount of work that has been done and discussed future uses of the reports and dashboard. The Board approved adding of the dashboard to the CJS website. The Board asked for the data to clearly show if something is NIL or zero because a CJP area does not have access to a particular type of community justice option.

Action: S26 dashboard to be added to public area on the CJS website.

10. Public Perceptions of Community Justice Research

10.1 The Board noted the paper which advised of sources of data indicating public understanding and perception of the criminal justice system and the use of community justice sentences and diversion from prosecution. Key information was that in the Scottish Crime & Justice Survey (SCJS) 2021/22, which was published in 2023, of the members of the public surveyed nationally, 54% agreed that only those who committed the most serious crimes should be imprisoned; 89% believed that people serving community sentences should be given support to reduce the likelihood of then committing crime in the future; 82% agreed that helping local communities as part of a community sentence is an appropriate response for a minor offence rather than a short prison sentence. However, 24% believed that people who serve community sentences put the public at risk of crime. CJS is working with the SCJS team regarding possible improvements to the data gathering for the next survey to allow more localised breakdown to better inform CJP's of the standing of public knowledge in their local authority area.

11. Update on Progress to Establish the National Voluntary Throughcare Grant Fund (CJS/2025/11) and Governance Proposal for CJS Grant Management Responsibility

11.1 Mrs Dickson introduced the update paper regarding the new national Throughcare Service that was commissioned by CJS on behalf of SG and will be monitored by CJS with SG releasing payments as appropriate on receipt of positive reports regarding performance from CJS. She advised that the new national service is called 'UPSIDE' and was launched the previous week with a nationwide session for their staff and an afternoon session for their partners. Mrs Dickson indicated that the new grant letter had been issued by SG but not yet signed. The MOU between CJS and SG, regarding the monitoring and reporting that CJS is to carry out on behalf of SG which will lead to release or holding back of funds to UPSIDE, is currently sitting with SG legal services and be sent back for the Chief Executive of CJS to sign.

11.2 Mr Rosser considered that the indicators should be updated to ensure it reflects "what good looks like", in a rating style. Mrs Dickson advised these were

current the broad startup milestones which it will be updated to become more specific as the delivery of services and monitoring progresses. The Chief Executive indicated the “Justice Outcome Star” work will show the changes and improvements in respect of individual engagement and outcomes as the data is gathered at an individual level.

11.3 Mr Rosser asked what CJS’ accountability responsibilities were if the new service does not deliver. The Chief Executive indicated that this is spelled out in the governance arrangements in respect that CJS has to elevate concerns it identifies to SG and Cabinet Secretary if these are not addressed by UPSIDE.

11.4 Mr Bell congratulated the CJS Commissioning team and the SACRO team on their work to enable the grant to be established in such a short time following appointment of the UPSIDE partnership by SG. The Board thanked the CJS team for all of their work from the start of the commissioning programme. and

11.5 Paper 2025/11a was presented by Mrs Dickinson. The Board asked about assurances that will be provided to CJS on how the funds are spent and how UPSIDE were operating. Mrs Dickson stated that reporting on the new service will fall into quarterly reporting dates through each year and will match with the team’s reporting dates and be added to future Board agendas for discussion or noting as appropriate.

12. Business Plan 2025/26 (CJS/2025/12)

12.1 Ms Ramsay presented the Business plan and the focus on measuring the impact of work.

12.2 There were suggested improvements from the Board which it was agreed would be incorporated: In the budget section, clarification that the Board deliver leadership as well as governance

- Ensure Appendix 1 matched with the allied Outcomes and where necessary the short descriptions relevance be made clearer to the reader
- Amending the commitment to the Community Interventions and Support Directory (CISD) updates

12.3 The Board approved the Business Plan in principle pending the changes and agreed that the updated Business Plan to be sent to the Chair for final approval.

Action: Updated Business plan to be sent to the Chair for final approval

13. Budget 2025/26 (CJS/2025/13)

13.1 Ms Ramsay presented the proposed budget and asked the Board to approve it. The Board discussed and approved the budget.

14. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (CJS/2025/14)

14.1 Ms Ramsay presented the PSED report to the Board for approval as the first iteration. There were a number of discussion points including.

- We are not a direct front-line service but support those who deliver these
- How do we ensure we think about appropriate and inclusive language and become an influencer to other parts of the sector to adopt this?
- Data restrictions were noted as to in part due to the pro forma published in the new Oracle HR system.
- There were other ways which CJS are ensuring EDI within our team when completing hiring practices. The overall EDI commitment should be more aspirational and include reference on impact on the public as well as internal impact for staff.
- There were examples of EDI focus in some of the more recent CJS videos which had been commissioned

Action: Ms Worrall to circulate the new CJS videos to the Board.

Action: Ms Ramsay to make changes suggested by the Board and send for final sign off to the Board Chair.

15. Finance system update proposal (CJS/2025/15)

15.1 Ms Ramsay tabled the financial system update as there were some corrections from the previously circulated version and asked for any questions.

15.2 It was noted that a cover paper would have been of assistance to the Board. The Chair asked for the report to go back through the ARC for further consideration and assurance, a more robust review and then come back to the Board with the ARC recommendation regarding approval. Mr Spencer queried how this financial system links with the formerly proposed new payroll system which had been in the early stages of consideration but halted when SG intimated no new systems could be considered by NDPBs ahead of the Oracle rollout. The Chair also asked for an implementation plan to be added, particularly noting any need to run two systems in parallel for a period and any additional resourcing requirements for implementation to be assessed.

Action: Financial system proposal paper to be considered by the ARC at its meeting on 14 May 2025 with recommendation to Board meeting on 28 May 2025.

16. Risk register cover paper (CJS/2025/16)

16.1 Ms Ramsay tabled the risk register update as there were some corrections from the previously circulated version and asked for any questions or comments.

16.2 Mr Spencer indicated that a review of the current risks will be considered at the next ARC meeting.

Action: Risk management review to be added to the agenda for the ARC meeting to be held on 14 May 2025

17. Bail Assessments (CJS/2025/17)

17.1 The Chair asked for this item to be deferred to the next Board meeting as there would not be time to discuss and consider as fully as members would wish. All agreed.

Action: Bail Assessments to be added to agenda for Board meeting to be held on 28 May 2025

18. AOB

18.1 The Chair raised the requirement for refreshed membership at the next ARC and HRRC meetings and asked members interested in serving on these to consider putting their names forward when she circulated details ahead of the next Board meeting. The Board would also have to consider the appointment of a new vice Chair to succeed Glenys Watt who left the Board in February.

18.2 The Chair advised that the HRRC meeting would be moved forward to 23 July (when there will also be an ARC meeting) as it was anticipated that would be a better fit for allocation of members (needed to meet the quorum) and preparation of business to be discussed, rather than meeting on 14 May as originally proposed.

Forthcoming meetings: ARC 14 May 2025

Board 28 May 2025

8 April 2025