

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	CPPB/20/24



**Highland**  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas  
Dealbhadh  
Coimhearsnachd

**na Gàidhealtachd**

**Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 20 September 2024**

**Community Justice Partnership Annual Report**

**Report by: Kevin Flett (CJP Manager)**

### **Summary**

**The CPP Board is asked to approve the attached Highland Community Justice Partnership Annual Report 2023-24 prior to submission to Community Justice Scotland by 27 September 2024.**

## **1. Background**

1.1 Following the implementation of the Community Justice Scotland Act (2016), which delegated responsibility for the implementation of Community Justice to Community Planning Partnerships, the Highland Community Justice Partnership was established in April 2016.

On behalf of the Highland CPP Board, the CJP provides an annual return to Community Justice Scotland (CJS). The requirement is not for detailed statistical information, but a descriptive narrative highlighting aspects of Partners' activities during the year. This is the first year (2023-24) that this format has been used. This is the document attached.

It is also a requirement for the CJP to produce and publish a public facing annual report, this will be completed for publication before the end of December 2024.

1.2 The attached return provides information about the work of CJP partners for the year 2023-24, which was guided by the CJP 2021-22 Improvement Plan. This had been extended in the form of a Position Statement which provided a link between the 2021-22 Improvement Plan and the creation of the Highland Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) 2024-2029, which was agreed and published in June 2024.

The new National Strategy for Community Justice was published in 2022 and the Outcomes Performance and Improvement Framework, now known as the Community Justice Performance Framework (CJPF) was published in April 2023, with updated guidance in March 2024.

- 1.3 In the current year work is being taken forward to restructure the CJP to become more focussed on outcomes and delivery, and aligned with National Outcomes and indicators. Recommendations will be brought to the CPP Board in due course.

## **2. Highlights**

- 2.1 The Annual Report describes significant work being done by partners in Highland.

In Highland there is a well-developed approach to arrest referral operating within and beyond the Police Station in Burnett Road, Inverness. In addition to the partners operating within the custody setting, there is also proximity to the Inverness Justice Centre which brings added synergy.

Since March 2020 the Custody Link Worker Project (CLink) has continued to support individuals coming into police custody assisting them to identify aspects of their life which are placing them at risk of offending and returning to custody.

Police Custody staff have been very supportive of the initiative and work closely with the CLink team and NHS nursing staff within the custody setting as well as linking across to the court setting. There is a high degree of trust and mutual respect which underpin close working practices and improved outcomes for individuals experiencing this part of the justice system.

The Highland Justice Social Work Team works in partnership with organisations and community groups to support individuals who have been given community based sentences (in particular Community Payback Orders). Community Payback teams around Highland have been working effectively in partnership with Community Councils, Trusts and third sector organisations to complete useful projects around their communities.

Justice SW are also involved in highly effective, but challenging work with people who have Domestically Abused.

Within HMP Inverness there is a multi-agency approach taken to prepare those who are returning to the community from prison, to support them to access housing, to address employment, training and benefits needs, and to ensure continuity of care for any health needs. This collaboration involves partners from SPS, the NHS, Justice SW, DWP and third sector agencies.

- 2.2 The report also summarises the work done in developing the CJOIP 2024-29, which built on significant engagement across Highland as well as highlighting the strong input from Third Sector partners in working with local communities, and with those who have experienced the effects of crime, including families and those who are victims of crime.

## **3. Challenges**

- 3.1 The CJP has undergone significant change in leadership over the past nine months. A newly funded Senior Development Officer, Gabrielle Buist, began in post in January 2024. A new CJP Manager, Kevin Flett began in June 2024, and a new CJP Chair, James Maybee was appointed in September 2024.

- 3.2 Individual partners are facing significant challenges across the Justice system. Many of the justice issues that are played out and reported in the media impact services and providers in Highland as they do everywhere.

While partnership meetings continues to benefit from a core group of regular attendees, wider participation would strengthen the partnership's work. However there is recognition of how increasing workloads, difficulties in recruitment and tightening resources can impact the ability of partners to fully engage.

- 3.3 Public awareness of community justice also presents a challenge. Given the nature of the work and how community justice is portrayed by the media and perceived by the general public can be problematic. It is envisaged that one of the new sub-groups being planned will seek to address communication and public perceptions.

#### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to:

- i. approve the Community Justice Partnership Annual Report 2023-24.

**Author: Kevin Flett**

**Date: 12 September 2024**

**Appendices: CJP Annual Report 2023-2024**

**Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland  
Local Area Annual Return Template**

**Community Justice Scotland**  
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

**Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland  
Local Area Annual Return Template  
Reporting year April 2023 – March 2024**

April 2024

## **1. Background**

This reporting template has been developed in discussion with community justice representatives from local areas. This template is designed to enable local areas to report on progress towards the community justice outcomes.

## **2. Statement of Assurance and Data Usage**

The information submitted to CJS using this template will be used by CJS in its role to monitor, promote and support improvement in, and keep the Scottish Ministers informed about, performance in the provision of community justice.

In line with provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), CJS will use appropriate data to ensure that there is continuous reporting, development and progress towards the national outcomes. By providing data to CJS you are consenting to its use by CJS as indicated. Community Justice Partnerships should be aware that any information held by CJS is subject to statutory Freedom of Information obligations.

Completion of the template can help local partnerships to fulfil their requirements under s23 (1b) of the Act by using the developed content to inform the production of the publicly facing summary statement of annual progress.

## **3. General principles of the template**

The template and guidance have been developed using the following principles:

- Support CJS in developing the evidence base for local community justice activity and progress across Scotland within the reporting year
- Support CJS to comply with their duties set out in the Act, Sections 26-30
- Support local partners to comply with their local reporting requirements set out in section 23 of the Act.

#### 4. How to fill in the template

The return should be completed and consulted on with partners involved in community justice in your local area. In line with the Act this includes statutory partners, third sector bodies involved in community justice in relation to the area, and such community bodies other persons as partners consider appropriate. CJS expects that completion of this template will be a collaborative effort.

This template incorporates guidance to support completion, with the text (*in blue*) providing reflective prompts to consider when developing your answer, which can be deleted and replaced with your response. These should be considered together through the development of your answer rather than addressed individually.

**There is no expectation that areas will return substantial numerical data.** It is likely that local areas will not have the national data indicators set out by the Community Justice Performance Framework at the time they are completing this template. **It is not anticipated that CJS will routinely use or refer to local level national indicator data in the context of the national outcome activity annual report.** If in developing the national report it becomes apparent that local-level data may support further analysis of particular outcomes, for example in identifying potential recommendations, exploring data outliers, or areas for further development, we expect this to be taken forward in discussion with the relevant local areas and partners.

Instead, we want partners to focus on the qualitative evidence drawn from their activity and insights about impact. Relevant local supporting evidence from the [CJS improvement tool](#) that will supplement the national indicator data has been specified under each national outcome in this template. We would encourage partners to develop the response to this template in conversation with each other and view it as an opportunity to reflect on your strengths and needs in partnership.

Where the template asks for evidence, a written response will suffice and there is no expectation that you send additional supporting documentation – if there are any aspects CJS is unclear on, it will be our responsibility to request clarification where necessary.

If any response or evidence requires details about people with lived experience (e.g. evidence in respect of someone's life story) please DO NOT include any identifiable personal or sensitive information (as outlined in Schedules 2 & 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998) as CJS does not require such information. If this is unavoidable then please ensure that the data is fully anonymised.

If you have any queries about completing the template, then please email [CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot](mailto:CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot).

## 1. Community Justice Partnership / Group Details

Name of local authority area	<i>Highland</i>
Name and contact details of the partnership Chair	Name: James Maybee Email: CJPChair@highlandtsi.org.uk Telephone: 01349 864289
Contact for queries about this report	Name: Kevin Flett Email: kevin.flett@highlandtsi.org.uk Telephone: 07454983516

## 2. Template Sign-off from Community Justice Partnership / Group Chair

*Enter the name of the chair to confirm that the local community justice partnership representatives have agreed this return as an accurate record. It should be returned to CJS by 27 September 2024.*

*For the purpose of submitting this return to CJS ensure you have agreement from community justice partners.*

*For the purpose of publishing this template as part of your s23 duty (publish a public-facing annual report on progress towards national and local outcomes) you should follow local governance arrangements.*

Date: 17 September 2024

Name: James Maybee

### **3. Governance Arrangements**

Last year, we asked partnerships to describe their governance structure for community justice arrangements and include links to wider community planning. Please describe any substantive changes since your previous answer.

There have been no substantive changes to the structure for community justice arrangements in Highland in the current year. However in the course of developing the Highland Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP), there was discussion around creating new structures which will be reflective of the new national reporting processes. This will be actioned in year 2024-25.

### **4. The year overall**

This section should be used to reflect some of the a) challenges/negative implications and b) opportunities/positive implications from the reporting year on the community justice partnership. This can include impact on the improvement activity, partner collaboration, and delivery of services.

#### **Challenges / Negatives**

- 2023-24 was a challenging year for the partnership. Interest in the partnership from a number of partners, including some of the statutory partners has been difficult to maintain, as evidenced by low attendance at some meetings and the challenge of gathering information for reporting. It is perhaps indicative of the challenges that have been faced by partners, including high prison numbers, the challenges of County Lines activities and court backlogs. These issues have been addressed at partnership meetings, and arose within some of the CJOIP development discussions and in discussion with the CJS Improvement lead for Highland, with ideas emerging around the restructuring and refocussing of the partnership to offer a more outcome focussed and supportive context for the delivery of services.
- The partnership's primary focus during the year was on the development and creation of the CJOIP for the period 2024 onwards. As indicated immediately below, there was a great deal of positive engagement with some partners and the wider justice community, but it was difficult to garner input from across the partnership. There was also the additional challenge of delay in the production of national frameworks, which resulted in a degree of disconnect between what has been developed locally and subsequent national expectations and priorities.
- The Custody Link (CLink) project, which is managed by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) has faced uncertainties over funding, which has disrupted their ability to sustain referrals. Short-term solutions have been found, but a more stable funding model is required.



- There is also a sense that the understanding of Community Justice has been limited across the wider justice community, and this can be reflected amongst some partners who struggle to understand their role within the Community Justice 'ecosystem'.
- Recruitment is a perennial problem across Highland in all sectors, and particularly in outlying areas, this can often result in gaps in services and a sense of discontinuity both operationally and at a partnership level, where changes in senior personnel (particularly within statutory agencies) can be disruptive and frustrating.

### **Positives / Opportunities**

*Despite some of the challenges outlined above, there are many examples of positive activity having been undertaken by partners, in the course of the reporting year, including:*

- The CLink project was externally evaluated by the University of Stirling covering the period from March 2020 to 31 March 2023. The report was submitted to the CJP in June 2023, demonstrating positive individual and service-level outcomes (based on use of the Outcomes Star), outlining the learning from different aspects of the project, and highlighting the highly developed partnership working within the custody setting in Inverness.
- A collaboration led by Justice Social Work (JSW) and Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) resulted in the creation of a two year post of Senior Development Officer (hosted by HTSI), with a focus on developing CPO's (especially in more remote parts of Highland) and improving communication across the partnership and beyond with the wider public. The post was filled in January 2024.
- Engagement beyond the partnership took place through the circulation of regular newsletters and a quarterly CJ forum which has involvement from a range of partners working within and across their local communities. Most of these meetings are online, to allow for participation from across Highland, with occasional face to face meetings.
- Statistical evidence had previously highlighted the distinctive experiences of women within the justice system (including higher than national average rates of women being imprisoned from Highland). Dr Briega Nugent, from the University of Strathclyde, was commissioned to research, 'What social-economic factors are contributing to Highland's higher rates of female offending and reoffending and how well are our services and interventions prepared to meet needs arising from those factors?' The report was not due for submission until the next reporting year, but the research took place in

2023-24, with initial findings beginning to challenge existing practice amongst partners.

- The partnership funded two initiatives in 2022-23, (Dragon's Den and Small Change for Justice) to support organisations involved in CPO's and providing opportunities for those who had experienced the justice system. Most of the projects ran from 2022 into the current reporting year, with end of project reports presented in 2023-24 highlighting a number of imaginative activities, (some of which have continued beyond the initial year, but others having to cease through lack of sustainable funding) delivering many positive personal outcomes for individuals, as well as contributing to a range of higher level outcomes.
- During the year the CJP invested in the creation of a 'Justice Pipeline Website'. This outlines parts of the journey for those involved in the justice system, including victims of crime, those who have committed crimes and their families and wider communities. The website signposts people to organisations which can offer support and guidance. It is also designed to sit alongside other features in the wider Community Planning Partnership website.
- The DWP representative on the partnership described joint work with HMP Inverness, including employability events through the year, and a pilot scheme designed to allow people to apply for Universal Credit prior to liberation from custody, which could become available to most people.

### **Priority Action One**

Enhance intervention at the earliest opportunity by ensuring greater consistency, confidence in and awareness of services which support the use of direct measures and diversion from prosecution

#### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution<sup>1</sup>

#### **Local Evidence**

- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people undertaking diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people supporting the delivery of diversion from prosecution and are used to support improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed

**5. What activity has taken place to increase successful completion of diversion? What impact has there been as a result?**

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)*
- *Police Scotland*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Third Sector*
- *Health*
- *Skills Development Scotland*
- *Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

**What activity has taken place to increase successful completion of diversion?**

Justice Social Work completed over 100 diversion suitability reports for 99 individuals during 2023/24; Diversion suitability reports are based on needs and during the assessment and later during the provision of the Diversion a frank discussion takes place between Justice Social Workers and individuals to recognise which needs ought to be prioritised; in previous years we concentrated in one to one support due to lower numbers of people completing diversion.

We have available a range of in-house programmes such as Decider Skills and SMART which people completing a diversion from prosecution can access if required. Individuals residing in the inner Moray Firth area can also complete their diversion while completing work and receiving support from third sector organisations contracted by Justice Social Work.

Meanwhile young people aged 16 to 17 would normally complete their diversion with the Highland Council's Youth Action Services as they hold more knowledge and expertise in provision of interventions to young people.

**What impact has there been as a result?**

We now have a wider range of interventions aimed at addressing individual needs more effectively which will hopefully deter them from being arrested and charged again.

However, we do need to note that we receive a high number of diversion suitability reports for individuals already sentenced to Community Payback Orders and even custodial sentences.

We are also receiving a significant number of diversions for individuals with significant offending histories. We find that diversion works best for individuals who have some or no prior convictions, young people and women.

## **Priority Action Two**

Improve the identification of underlying needs and the delivery of support following arrest by ensuring the provision of person-centred care within police custody and building upon referral opportunities to services including substance use and mental health services

### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people in police custody receive support to address their needs<sup>2</sup>

### **Local Evidence:**

- There is an effective relationship between community justice partners, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) and police custody centre for local population.
- Referral pathways and support are in place from police custody centre for local population

## **6. What activity has taken place to support people in police custody to access support? What impact has there been as a result?**

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Police Scotland*
- *Local Authority*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Third Sector*
- *Health*
- *Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

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<sup>2</sup> National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres

## **What activity has taken place to support people in police custody to access support?**

In Highland there is a well-developed approach to arrest referral operating within and beyond the Police Station in Burnett Road, Inverness. In addition to the partners operating within the custody setting, there is also proximity to the Inverness Justice Centre which brings added synergy.

Since March 2020 the Custody Link Worker Project (CLink) has continued to support individuals coming into police custody assisting them to identify aspects of their life which are placing them at risk of offending and returning to custody. They assist people to identify actions, access wider support and to reduce risks to enhance their quality of life and improve their life chances. Unsurprisingly the five most significant presenting issues in 2023-24 have been:

Mental Health (75%) : Need for Referral and Signposting (63%) :

Emotional support (63%) : Drugs and Alcohol (56%) : Housing (55%)

In reality, client issues are interlinked and complex.

Police Custody staff have been very supportive of the initiative and work closely with the CLink team and NHS nursing staff within the custody setting as well as linking across to the court setting. There is a high degree of trust and mutual respect which underpin close working practices and improved outcomes for individuals experiencing this part of the justice system.

Police colleagues have noted the positive benefits (including health benefits) of increased referrals and the reduction in the risk of individuals returning to police custody.

Highland ADP and the Highland Alcohol and Drug Advice and Support Service highlight that nationally in Scotland, 19% of people who have died of a drugs related death have been in police custody in the prior 6 months. On admission all custodies who confirm using illicit drugs during the Vulnerability Assessment were not offered a referral to health. Healthcare referrals were generated by police staff if any immediate interventions were required, reactionary healthcare with no focus on interventional harm reduction and this system resulted in inequity of care. In the primary custody centre within NHS Highland, the team identified a missed early opportunity for health intervention and referrals into core services resulting in drug related deaths and drug related harm.

The aim was to increase number of referrals to health, reduce number of drug related deaths for those who have been in custody within 6 months, increase number of referrals to outreach team, increase number of take home naloxone distributed and increase number of blood borne virus testing. These aims fitted into the organisational strategic vision and that of the government set standards. The impact and outcome of this work would improve user experience allowing for a person centred focus and would ultimately reduce the number of drug related deaths.

The team worked collaboratively with police colleagues to gather data and using quality improvement methodology to map current processes identifying gaps for patients at high risk of drug related harm. They used the model for improvement as their approach to identify and define problems and used small tests of change (PDSA's) to identify what they need to try to make the change and measure impacts.

The team created a toolkit to ensure equitable healthcare called Medication Assisted Treatment Pilot at Custody Toolkit (MATPACT). MATPACT includes patient identifiable information, current drug use, risk assessment, harm reduction offered and accepted, blood borne virus screening offered and accepted, encourages referral to outreach services and option to commence or continue on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) of Opiate Substitution Therapy. On admission to police custody, all patients who answer 'yes' to any drug related question are now referred to health for use of MATPACT. The nursing team delivering care and trialling tests of change continue to provide feedback and suggest improvement ideas. MATPACT is discussed at all health team meetings. Information and education has been shared with police colleagues.

The team have started to gather feedback from custodies as to their experience from the use of MATPACT, what went well, and what could be better. There has also been feedback on how people who have received harm reduction advice, training and been supplied with naloxone has gone to save the lives of friends.

### **What impact has there been as a result?**

The University of Stirling analysis of custody record data found that rates of custody amongst those who accepted a referral declined significantly.

Analysis also demonstrated that:

Many individuals, particularly females, present with far more complex and challenging circumstances and higher levels of vulnerability and adversity than were envisaged at the beginning of the project.

Police Custody is an ideal place to engage with individuals who are motivated to seek assistance.

Individuals who have accepted a referral are significantly more likely than those who have declined the referral to report mental health problems, current thoughts of self-harm or suicide, to take one or more prescribed medications, to previously having attempted self-harm or suicide, and to report dependence on alcohol.

Those accepting the offer of a referral tended to highlight getting stabilised before being referred to and accessing alcohol and drug-related services and supports as helpful.

It also reported that:

“A... key area repeatedly raised by participants is the empathetic and emotionally supportive approach of Link Workers, building rapport and trust in changing and pressured circumstances at the arrest referral and bail stage. In lives with heightened distress, navigating stigma and sometimes having been breached or ‘burnt bridges’ with services in other sectors, this flexible and empathetic approach can make a real difference. Service users we spoke to are emphatic that they found this helpful.”

The co-location of the range of services supports positive connections with Mental Health and Addiction services. However pathways are not always clear and there is a need for ongoing collaboration to enhance these processes.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of being able to offer equitable services across Highland, in particular the challenge of reaching beyond Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth area.

Regarding the MATPACT project, this allows for timely person centred care and intervention to be carried out according to need. Although time spent in custody is minimal, initial harm reduction can be carried out and referral to onward services can be made thus increasing numbers of people being referred into drug and alcohol recovery services. It encourages people to voice their experiences and participate in decision-making. This toolkit changed the teams approach in identifying those at risk of drug related harm whilst they were in police custody and allowed them to carry out a strategic intervention specifically around MAT and harm reduction.

There has been an increase in detection of people at risk of drug related harm and an increase in harm reduction being offered. A process for suspected drug driving offences has been implemented to have an automatic MATPACT referral. There have been 934 MATPACTS carried out for 684 for people ‘not in service’ and 250 for people ‘in service’ so this has identified 73.2% of people who were not ‘in service’ requiring support which was the aim of the project in finding ‘Scotland’s forgotten generation’. Key results include:

- Overall, there has been a reduction from 53% to 12% of missed opportunities of referral to custody healthcare.
- Out of 934 Naloxone kits offered, 260 people accepted Take home Naloxone.
- Out of 934 Bloodborne Virus (BBV) tests offered, uptake has been for 35 people with 2 positive cases identified.
- There has been increased referral to outreach and core Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services.
- MATPACT has the potential for wider use within Scotland.
- There is projected expansion within prison establishments.
- MATPACT has shown a quick improvement result contributing to positive patient and staff experience through low effort, high impact tests of change.

As well as increasing access to the right services, benefits have been in building critical connections and improving staff wellbeing. There is a cultural shift helping reduce stigma. People have feedback that this project's care is the "first time anyone has bothered asking me about my substance use." MATPACT is reaching people who may not be engaging with other services.

Police perspectives have changed as data results have helped reframe drug-related harm to police; facilitating discussions about the underlying reasons why people use drugs, and showing drug related harms are not just about health. Police Healthcare Liaison Inspectors play a key role in connecting the services. The MATPACT team is signposting to further community support available whether this is with recovery, mental and/or physical health needs or psychosocial support. Small tests of change continue to be carried out with a view to ensuring MATPACT remains relevant to the ever-changing needs of our clients ensuring a person-centred approach and meeting government standards.

### **Priority Action Three**

Support the use of robust alternatives to remand by ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available and delivered effectively

#### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision<sup>3</sup>

#### **Local Evidence**

- Mechanisms are in place to support a high quality bail assessment.
- Referral pathways are in place that support identified needs of people on bail supervision.

#### **7. *What activity has taken place to increase the use of bail, and support people to access services to address needs while on bail? What impact has there been as a result?***

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

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<sup>3</sup> National Indicator:

Number of:

- assessment reports for bail suitability
- bail supervision cases commenced
- bail supervision cases completed



*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Defence Agents*
- *Police Scotland*
- *Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service*
- *Third Sector*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Crown Office and Procurators Fiscal Service*
- *Judiciary*
- *Employability, Education and Training services*
- *Housing*
- *Health*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

### **What activity has taken place to increase the use of bail, and support people to access services to address needs while on bail?**

Due to difficulties recruiting, Highland Council was not able to enhance the provision of Bail Supervision and implement the new Bail Supervision assessment until April 2023. We now have a dedicated team of Justice Officers and a Social Worker, completing assessments and providing Bail Supervision Services.

There are five Courts in the Highland Council area with the busiest Courts being Inverness, Wick and Tain. From 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Highland Council completed over 400 Bail Supervision assessments however less than 10% of these assessments have translated into a Bail Supervision Order.

Justice Officers are paraprofessionals trained in interventions such as Decider Skills and SMART and are able to support individuals and signpost them to support and services in the community.

### **What impact has there been as a result?**

CJSW team members have found that Bail Supervision works very well for young people and women, however this is informal qualitative information. Early intervention in some cases is allowing timely intervention and the ability to address needs ahead of the Court case which at times can take over a year to be resolved.

## **Priority Action Four**

Strengthen options for safe and supported management in the community by increasing and widening the use of electronic monitoring technologies

### **No nationally determined outcome.**

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

### **8. *What activity has taken place in your area to increase the use electronic monitoring technologies? What impact has there been as a result?***

*This priority action was identified by Scottish Government as requiring nationally-driven actions as set out by the community justice strategy delivery plan. Given this is a developing area that does not have a national outcome, CJS do not expect many local areas to have undertaken significant activity in relation to it, however we recognise that some local areas, for example those involved with EM pilot projects, may want to report on their activity.*

There is no current activity relating to EM in Highland

## Priority Action 5

Ensure that those given community sentences are supervised and supported appropriately to protect the public, promote desistance from offending and enable rehabilitation by delivering high quality, consistently available, trauma-informed services and programmes

### Nationally determined outcome:

More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences<sup>4</sup>

### Local Evidence

- Availability of local programmes to support desistance from domestic abuse and sexual offending.
- Availability of referral pathways to support the needs of local population on community disposals.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people with experience of community disposals to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of the community justice workforce with regard to supporting the needs of people subject to community disposals to support improvement.

## 9. What activity has taken place that will support people serving sentences in the community to desist from offending, address their needs, and help them successfully complete their sentence? What impact has there been as a result?

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Justice Social Work*
- *Police Scotland*
- *Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service*
- *Third Sector*
- *Health*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

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<sup>4</sup> National Indicator:  
Percentage of:

- community payback orders successfully completed
- drug treatment and testing orders successfully completed

## **What activity has taken place that will support people serving sentences in the community to desist from offending, address their needs, and help them successfully complete their sentence?**

Highland Justice SW offers the Caledonian Programme for people who have Domestically Abused, Moving Forward: Making Changes (MFMC) which is being replaced by Moving Forward to Change (MF2C) for people who have committed Sexual Offences and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO) / DTTO2 for individuals who offend mostly due to substance use and would like to change their lifestyle.

We find that some of the available requirements for CPOs are not suitable in Highland unless Justice Social Workers and/or Justice Officers complete the work themselves. NHS ethos clashes with the mandatory nature of a Community Payback Order, therefore Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health treatment requirements are rarely used although they would be extremely beneficial to individuals who have been assessed and require these interventions.

There are no particular referral pathways to NHS, individuals under a CPO are considered as another member of the community requiring assistance.

The Highland Council has contracts with third sector organisations who offer support, interventions and guidance to individuals completing a CPO. We have referral pathways for these providers and while some providers only support individuals in the inner Moray Firth area, others provide online support to all of Highland.

When a person is completing an Order reviews take place where the individuals voice ought to be heard, this enables appropriate changes to any goals previously agreed. All individuals who have completed an Order should be offered an anonymous feedback form which enables us to analyse what is working effectively and which areas require more work. Third sector organisations are also obliged to send us feedback forms.

Community Payback teams around Highland have been working effectively in partnership with Community Councils, Trusts and third sector organisations to complete useful jobs around their communities. Last year project beneficiaries reported being 100% happy with the standard of work completed. The work was well supervised & there were few concerns. 100% of beneficiaries would be willing to have these types of projects done again by the Unpaid Work scheme.

The CPO Officers report anecdotally that their clients are largely benefitting from the structure and work of the CPO, with some continuing to volunteer at their placement after the order is complete, or starting up a small business in response to an identified gap in the market. Client quote: "I just want to say thank you for your help to get my hours done and for the chats we had made me believe in myself again".

## **What impact has there been as a result?**

In Caithness we recognised the lack of SMART provision in Wick and we negotiated with NHS to collaboratively offer a weekly SMART group in Caithness East. NHS

provides another one in Thurso on their own. This seems to be working well and many of our clients have now accessed the service.

With the increasing demand for community sentences, however, Community Payback teams are stretched. The supervisors in particular would benefit from Trauma-Informed Practice training and gaining a broader insight into CPO's more generally. It was also identified that though some clients move on positively after their order is completed, many clients are at a loss afterwards.

Raising public awareness of the benefits of community payback in order to increase offers of projects and placements around Highland and reduce stigma would also be helpful and is one of the roles of the new Senior Development Officer post.

### **Priority Action 6**

Ensure restorative justice is available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it by promoting and supporting the appropriate and safe provision of available services

#### **No nationally determined outcome.**

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

### **10. What activity has taken place to make restorative justice available to people and support them to access it, and what impact has there been as a result?**

*This priority action was identified by Scottish Government as requiring nationally-driven actions as set out by the community justice strategy delivery plan. Given this is a developing area that does not have a national outcome, CJS do not expect many local areas to have undertaken significant activity in relation to it, however we recognise that some local areas, for example those involved with RJ pilot projects or who commission their own RJ services locally, may want to report on their activity.*

Restorative Justice has featured in discussion at CJP meetings since 2022, and whilst there is real interest amongst the CJP partners and others (including Action for Children) to build some capacity for RJ in Highland, development has been hampered through lack of resource and leadership.

## Priority Action Seven

Enhance individuals' access to health and social care and continuity of care following release from prison by improving the sharing of information and partnership-working between relevant partners

### Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence<sup>5</sup>

### Local Evidence

- Health and social care circumstances/care plans are reflected in collaborative plans for release.
- Referral pathways and information sharing arrangements are in place to support timely access to health and social care supports upon release.

### 11. What activity has taken place to support people to access health and social care support after release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Police Scotland*
- *Scottish Prison Service*
- *Health*
- *Skills Development Scotland*
- *Local authority*
- *Third Sector*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

### What activity has taken place to support people to access health and social care support after release from prison?

The Highland Community Integration Plan (HCIP) is delivered in partnership with Scottish Prison Service, NHS Highland and JSW with a range of third sector agencies providing community support.

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<sup>5</sup> National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community

The HCIP was initially established within HMP Inverness in December 2020, with set criteria for those living in the inner Moray Firth area and having drug and alcohol issues. This is a multi-agency project which has been successful in terms of assisting those who are returning to the community from prison to assess their needs and tailor plans to support them on their release.

For those who wish to engage with the HCIP, Liberation planning begins at 6 weeks prior to release, attended by partners including NHS, PBSW, CBSW, local authority housing, New Routes, and other third sector agencies

Should it be identified that an individual who has been assessed as having been at risk of suicide is close to liberation (or a court date where they may be released from custody) a case conference will be held to clarify the relevant factors relating to the release that need to be addressed. The case conference will involve relevant partners to shape the direction of the plan and the support required.

The *My Compass* assessment tool is used to highlight individual needs prior to release and allows a focus for appropriate referrals prior to liberation.

Prison to Rehab is available for individuals to explore. There has been some success with individual uptake, e.g. liberation to the Jericho rehab centre.

There has been a focus on specific training for prison staff to understand and promote positive pathways for those in their care, including promoting better understanding of community partners and what they are able to offer.

### **What impact had there been as a result?**

The HCIP model allows for structured and supported liberation from prison, which aims to avoid the “cliff edge” often faced by those re-entering their communities. This work sees individuals supported to re-engage with communities and allows for any perceived barriers to accessing services to be addressed through structured support.

Families Outside report that these developments over the period have contributed to better partnership working and service visibility for family members of people leaving custody.

SPS colleagues report that learning has included:

- Better communication across a range of partners;
- Personalised action plans allow for more focussed discussion and engagement, leading to Person centred, appropriate support for those in our care whilst in custody and on release;
- Those in our care are better informed of the relevant support in their community;
- Staff have knowledge and understanding of partner agencies and the relevant support for individuals that they personally report on.

## Priority Action Eight

Ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed consistently and at an early stage by fully implementing and embedding the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards across all local authority areas

### Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence<sup>6</sup>

### Local Evidence

- SPS admissions and liberations information is shared with relevant partners to support suitable accommodation planning.
- Proportion of admissions where housing advice was provided.
- Percentage of people leaving prison who have been housed by the local authority and have maintained tenancy for more than 1 year

## 12. What activity has taken place to support people to access suitable accommodation following release from prison, and what impact had there been as a result?

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Scottish Prison Service*
- *Housing Services*
- *Other housing providers/landlords*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Health*
- *Third Sector*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

## What activity has taken place to support people to access suitable accommodation following release from prison.

As part of the Highland Community Integration Plan (HCIP) described above, Housing partners (including local authority housing) play a central role in its delivery.

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<sup>6</sup> National Indicator:  
Number of:

- homelessness applications where prison was the property the main applicant became homeless from



For people on licences, Justice Social Work and the Highland Council's Housing Department work very closely together when liberations are taking place. Both services normally plan ahead of time where the person ought to present as homeless, etc. For cases where the individual is a Registered Sex Offender, Police, Housing and Justice Social Work, work together compiling Environmental Risk Assessments.

On some occasions individuals liberated from prison have been able to access SMART homes, normally these are better suited for people with health conditions or those who are at risk of overdosing after liberation.

HMP Inverness has good links with housing providers and with the local CAB which supports planning for liberation. Upcoming planned liberations (Home Detention Curfew, parole, EDL etc) are communicated to relevant partner agencies to support suitable accommodation planning. Liberation meetings are held 6 weeks prior to release to ensure any potential issues are communicated with partners.

The HCIP supported a pilot project with FIT homes (Albyn Housing) securing accommodation for individuals with more complex needs – in particular, substance misuse, this also ensure links across to substance misuse services.

The *My Compass* assessment tool is used in Inverness prison, and identifies housing issues at an early stage, and how to address these. There are plans for the tool to be evaluated by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

Housing partners reported on providing input around Fit Homes for vulnerable/homeless clients to a Sheriff's annual event highlighting the opportunities this presents when considering sentencing.

Recent awareness sessions took place for HMP Inverness staff regarding the Housing (Scotland) Bill *Ask and Act* duty to improve staff awareness and understanding. This has been positive in developing staff knowledge and understanding, including understanding the role of partner agencies.

Families Outside have focussed on Promotion and networking with other throughcare providers to ensure that anyone leaving custody has had family support offered to their relatives.

Also reported on was the Safe at Home project where housing are receiving referrals from the police in relation to those involved in county lines. Early evidence is of an increase in demand which will require a response.

### **What impact had there been as a result?**

Implementation of the HCIP has contributed to better partnership working and awareness both with partners and with those leaving prison and their families.

This is evident in improved communication across a range of partners, more personalised approaches to planning and improved staff knowledge and understanding.

Learning identified by SPS includes:

- Strengthened relationships with partners (including Social Work, NHS, Police Scotland and Housing teams).
- Recent liberation to Fit home fully compliant with all conditions and engaging meaningfully.
- Effective assessment that places the individual at the centre of the process. This to be independently evaluated by UHI.
- Staff development and knowledge, understanding role of partner agencies.

Areas for development and improvement have also been identified, particularly around increasing demand and the limits of housing supply. Work has been undertaken in partnership with Sanctuary Housing to prevent domestic abuse victims going down the homeless route.

### **Priority Action Nine**

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

#### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment<sup>7</sup>

#### **Local Evidence**

- Effective links between the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and Community Justice Partnership supports:
  - i. local employment, education and training providers to respond to the needs of those with convictions
  - ii. local employment, education and training providers are confident and competent in providing effective conviction disclosure support
  - iii. local employers to develop more inclusive recruitment processes and employ people with convictions.
- Referral pathways are in place to connect people to appropriate services and support:
  - i. at commencement of, during and at the end of a CPO
  - ii. following release from custody.

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<sup>7</sup> National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions

### **13. What activity has taken place to support people to access employability support, and what impact had there been as a result?**

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Local Authority employability services*
- *Skills Development Scotland*
- *Third Sector*
- *Scottish Prison Service*
- *Scottish Courts and Tribunals Services*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

### **What activity has taken place to support people to access employability support**

Employability partners (including SDS and DWP) contribute regularly to the CJP.

HMP Inverness has a well-established Life Skills area, with a dedicated officer, who runs regular employability training as part of the Life Skills course. This includes CV building, budgeting and mock interviews, in partnership with Fife College. This develops skill and enhances opportunities for those in their care, as well as building confidence

The Life Skills Officer is proactive in engaging with local employers to establish connections and potential routes to employment.

SPS has a national partnership with DWP. HMP Inverness has a strong connection and effective working relationship with local DWP/Job Centre+. This includes the provision of a prison work-based coach, who attends the Links Centre on a regular basis and scheduled quarterly employability events.

During the reporting year the DWP representative on the partnership described joint work with HMP Inverness, including two employability events through the year (one promoting work in hospitality and one focused on construction.)

Also in the course of the year DWP ran a pilot scheme designed to allow people to apply for Universal Credit prior to liberation from custody, which could become available to most people.

The CJP funded two initiatives in 2022-23, (Dragon's Den and Small Change for Justice) to support organisations involved in CPO's and providing work opportunities

for those who had experienced the justice system. The end of project reports were presented in 2023-24, highlighting a number of imaginative activities.

Brief summaries of reports include:

**APEX Highland** embarked on a new project which involved reclaiming wood destined for landfill, burning or dumping. Using this wood, we are able to recycle and make planters, benches, tables, bird boxes and other items. This project has been a massive inspiration for our clients to recycle and make items for local charities, churches, schools and personal use, whilst engaging in sustainability and making an impact on the local community ... 18 clients participated, registering a total of 133 attendances (931 hours), 3 of which progressed into volunteer mentor roles and 1 individual gained part time employment with Apex Highland and is a current member of our staffing team.

**New Start Highland** provides a platform for training people either with a background of offending or at risk of being involved in offending behaviour. People gained a range of qualifications and work experience, but most specifically, a PAT testing qualification. This has contributed to New Start Highland's service which provides household and electrical goods free of charge or at a very low cost to people experiencing poverty or crisis in the local area. The project worked with 14 people ... and supported them as they carried out meaningful work experience. All had an induction and gained qualifications including manual handling, emergency first aid at work, fire awareness and a forklift certificate. All achieved SQA work related and life skills modules and one gained the "Certificate of Work Readiness".

SDS continue to work in schools across Highland and are developing their responses to the opportunities arising in the Inner Moray Firth area, particularly as they relate to the Green Freeport.

Café 1668 is a social café in central Inverness operated by HTSI in line with the previous CJOIP to provide a warm welcome, nourishing food and a safe space for all. The Café offers hot food and drinks free of charge to those in need on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and has staff who can support, identify and signpost people to services which are relevant to their needs. Several monthly Drop-in Sessions have been established including Cuppa with a Copper, Homeless Mental Health Drop-in, Voiceability and Social Security Scotland.

The Café has hosted individuals who are fulfilling their Community Payback Orders providing opportunities to learn hospitality and other skills.

### **What impact had there been as a result?**

Prison staff report that the new relationships created with employers has increased opportunities for those in their care to find meaningful employment on release. Also

how employment events offer the opportunity for employers and service providers to network, therefore identifying gaps in provision i.e. funding opportunities, gaining qualifications and subsequent working to address these.

The DWP also speak positively of the events taking place in HMP Inverness, and plan to continue with these. They also highlight the challenges in linking with housing now that Housing First is no longer available, and with health services (specifically Mental Health services).

### **Priority Action Ten**

Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services

#### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence<sup>8</sup>

#### **Local Evidence**

- Mechanisms are in place for partners to support people serving short term sentences.
- Proportion of people liberated from short term custody:
  - i. made aware of support
  - ii. accepting support offer
  - iii. with a co-ordinated pre-release plan in place.
- 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.

### **14. What activity has taken place to support people to access voluntary throughcare? What impact had there been as a result?**

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Police Scotland*

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<sup>8</sup> National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced

- *Justice Social Work*
- *Scottish Prison Service*
- *Third Sector*
- *Health*
- *Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service*
- *Integration Joint Boards*
- *Any other partners as relevant*

### **What activity has taken place to support people to access voluntary throughcare?**

HMP Inverness has an existing partnership under national contract with Apex (New Routes), who provide Throughcare on release and prison mentoring. This includes pre-liberation planning and meeting on release.

Some Throughcare provision is also available through the Criminal Justice Officer (Justice Social Work team).

Liberation meetings include the Throughcare provider, so as to ensure needs are communicated amongst all partners.

Throughcare needs are established through Core Screen assessments, My Compass or individual referral.

JSW report that their ability to provide throughcare support has been limited during the reporting year due to recruitment and staffing challenges.

### **What impact had there been as a result?**

Prison staff have identified a range of benefits to individuals who engage with New routes in supporting them through the liberation process

However it is recognised that the provision of voluntary throughcare in Highland is limited at present.

## Priority Action Eleven

Deliver improved community justice outcomes by ensuring that effective leadership and governance arrangements are in place and working well, collaborating with partners and planning strategically

### No nationally determined outcome.

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.

#### Local evidence:

- Mechanisms are in place to support engagement in each local authority, specifically:
  - a community justice outcomes improvement plan (CJOIP)
  - a participation statement
  - an annual report on progress towards nationally and locally determined outcomes.
- Mechanisms are in place to support an effective interface between national partner organisations and their local representatives within Community Justice Partnerships.
- Evidence of mechanisms to engage non-statutory partners in strategic planning
- Use of the Care Inspectorate 'self-evaluation guide to support quality improvement for community justice in Scotland', with focus on Leadership and Direction

### 15. How has your partnership worked to develop local leadership and enhance strategic planning and collaboration? What impact had there been as a result?

*Scottish Government have indicated that activity to delivery in relation to this priority action should be built into the work of partners to progress the 9 national outcomes.*

*We encourage partners to reflect on what local activity has taken place to develop engagement, collaboration, and demonstrate leadership in community justice partnership working. For example, this could include development as a partnership, engagement and joint working with other local strategic partnerships, or other relevant activity. If any self-evaluation activity has been undertaken, this may support development of this answer.*

The CJP Terms of Reference were reviewed in June 2023 and partners agreed that no changes were required at this stage. The CJP's place within local Community Planning Partnership structures is clear, as are lines of communication and accountability.

The primary focus for the CJP in 2023-24 was the finalisation of the new CJOIP. Development work had taken place over a two year period, culminating in a final Development session in November 2023.

This consultation and development process has been both positive and frustrating. Engagement with some statutory partners has been challenging, and with others fruitful and supportive. Consultation with the wider third sector has gathered views and experiences which have informed and shaped the local priorities which included the need to focus on: Poverty; Women & dependents and Victims.

These themes will inform and shape the partnership's action planning into the immediate future.

Also emerging from the CJOIP development process has been the need to reflect upon, and renew the structures of the CJP. Work commenced in 2023 to review current structures and proposals are being carried forward and will be implemented in 2024-25 so as to strengthen the partnership as a whole and it's action and planning processes.

In the course of 2023-24, there was significant change in senior personnel across a number of partners, however there has been positive input from a number of partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Highland Council JSW, Highland Council Housing, Highland Council (elected member), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Work and Pensions, Skills Development Scotland, Highland ADP, NHS Highland, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Support for the partnership comes from HTSI, which hosts the co-ordinator and other posts. There are strong links with the third sector partners, and during the year APEX Highland, Families Outside and Rape and Sexual Assault Service Highland (RASASH) have attended and contributed to the work of the Partnership.

The need to strengthen links with other partners is apparent, and this has been a priority leading into 2024-25, progress towards which will be reported on in the future.

### **Priority Action Twelve**

Enhance partnership planning and implementation by ensuring the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families are effectively incorporated and embedded

#### **No nationally determined outcome.**

Progress in delivering this priority action should be evidenced with reference to any relevant local activity.



**16. How has your partnership worked to understand and incorporate the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families into partnership planning and implementation? *What impact has there been as a result?***

*Scottish Government have indicated that activity to delivery in relation to this priority action should be built into the work of partners to progress the 9 national outcomes.*

*We encourage partners to reflect on what local activity has taken place to enable participation of people accused or convicted of offences, their families, victims of crime and other stakeholders in community justice strategic planning, delivery and impact monitoring.*

**How has your partnership worked to understand and incorporate the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families into partnership planning and implementation?**

As indicated in the response to Q15. Above, there has been significant engagement through the year linked to the development of the CJOIP, and this has included with families, victims and wider communities.

The CJP organises a Community Justice Forum, bringing together community groups, third sector agencies and others on a quarterly basis. The forum serves as a conduit for information, getting messages and information about community justice out to a wider audience, but also hearing from and receiving input from that wider audience.

Also indicated above has been the regular input to the CJP from a number of dedicated third sector partners.

APEX Highland, RASASH and Families Outside contribute actively to the partnership, and reflect into the partnership the views and perspectives of their stakeholders.

Examples of their input includes regular contributions to meetings from RASASH describing their work with the students at Inverness Royal Academy on a regular basis to implement a weekly presence of the service within the school.

Families Outside recognise that families of prisoners are innocent victims of crime, with profound impacts on children, often contributing to adverse childhood experience. Prisoners who maintain positive relationships with families are 6 times less likely to reoffend.

Locally, Families Outside offer group work and peer support and online support to families, and are involved in raising awareness, having delivered awareness sessions with statutory and third sector partner staff teams.

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) have a strong presence across Highland, and

especially in the Justice Centre in Inverness. In the course of the year they have provided professional support to vulnerable witness and victims of crime. Within the Justice Centre setting they provide links with court-based partners. In addition their administration of the Emergency Assistance Fund has provided practical support and improved security for many victims, including significant numbers of victims gender-based violence.

### **What impact has there been as a result?**

Reflection on this area of activity has highlighted a mix of strengths as outlined above, as well as weaknesses and opportunities for development.

There has been positive impact in the form of the approach from RASASH raising awareness of issues and offering students a more open route to access support and advice from RASASH.

Families Outside evaluates it's support service by three outcomes:

- Families are included and engaged - they understand process, are aware of available support, and are consulted.
- Families are connected - they have visits and physical contact or indirect contact.
- Families are safe and well - we help to prevent harm, and support wellbeing and positive outcomes.

However, there are weaknesses around the lack of mechanisms to gather evidence of outcomes and to ensure that partners are proactively included in the work of the partnership.

### **Priority Action Thirteen**

Support integration and reduce stigma by ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice

#### **Nationally determined outcome:**

More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice<sup>9</sup>

#### **Local Evidence**

- Community justice partner contribution to joint activity across policy areas to tackle stigma.

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<sup>9</sup> National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

- people should help their community as part of a community sentence rather than spend a few months in prison for a minor offence

## **17. What partnership-driven activity has taken place to improve understanding of and confidence in community justice across the workforce and local community?**

*In developing your answer to this question, you should engage with the relevant local partners involved in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activity. We would encourage you to reflect on engagement and collaborative activity rather than solely single service delivery.*

*For this Priority Action, you may wish to consider involvement from the following partners and stakeholders:*

- *Other local area strategic partnerships (e.g., Community planning, Alcohol and Drugs, Violence Against Women and Girls, Health Integration Joint Boards, etc.)*
- *Third Sector*
- *Any other local or national partners as relevant*

This response has two broad themes.

The first has a community focus, evidenced by some of the projects funded by the CJP funded *Dragon's Den* initiative referred to previously. Two further end of project reports outline initiatives which have had a tangible community impact:

**Care And Learning Alliance (CALA)** works within HMP Inverness to tailor and deliver programmes of support that best meets the needs of individual families. We have a focus on strengthening and maintaining family ties with those fathers who are in prison and their children, especially those who can't see their children regularly because of distance ... the project was set up to both support father's understanding of the importance of play in their child's learning and development and provide fun and easy connections between father and child at family visits while also providing a link (memory) for the child between each visit.

**Lochaber Hope** offered a two part project: (i) Early intervention working in schools with young people and in particular young people who were not engaging with school and with no positive destination, or were engaging but noncompliant due to several factors including lack of tools and resilience to cope with the pressures of school and learning environment. (ii) New Connections, bringing people together in the community to rekindle dreams and aspirations and provide a place to belong to and be part of. Our most disadvantaged community members come together with those who are advantaged and socialise, find commonalities, and activate motivation and momentum resulting in increased positive psyche.

The second has a more strategic focus.

In the course of 2023-24, the need to strengthen links with other partnerships was identified. Positive links have developed with Highland ADP who contribute to the partnership meetings as well as providing funding for some activity. Links are also under development with Highland Violence against Women Partnership. Members of the HVAW partnership presented to the CJP meeting in March 2024, and areas of collaboration around gender-based violence in Highland have been identified, including the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes, addressing work with perpetrators and training issues.

In the course of developing the CJOIP, issues pertaining to the experiences of women within the justice system were identified as a concern. The CJP commissioned Dr Briega Nugent, from the University of Strathclyde to undertake research. The report will be presented in 2024-25, but the research included a process of engagement with women who have lived experience of the justice system, and the insight gained from this will impact on the CJP's work going forward.

**18. Look ahead for your local area. Please tell us what the next steps are for your partnership.**

*Reflective questions to consider in developing your answer:*

*What are the next steps for your partnership?*

*What opportunities are there? What barriers and/or risks?*

The first half of the year 2024-25 has seen significant change for the leadership of and support for the CJP. The support team, namely the manager and the Senior Development Officer are new in post, and the role of Independent Chair has recently been filled by an experienced and respected leader who will bring insight and connectivity across the partnership and beyond.

With the publication of the Highland CJOIP in June 2024, the focus has shifted on to the creation of new structures for the CJP and the development of outcomes focussed delivery plans. These two facets are closely linked, and together present opportunities to refresh and refocus the work of the Partnership.

The CJP structure will be based on four delivery groups, each focussed on one of the four National Aims and the associated priority actions, reporting to a CJP strategic group which will co-ordinate the partnership's work and have direct accountability to the Highland CPP and Community Justice Scotland.

Whilst the delivery groups will be structured around the national aims, they will also take forward the priorities of the CJOIP, recognising the central role that local planning and engagement must play in delivering positive outcomes.

The delivery plans/reporting templates of the each group will reflect both national and local priorities, with plans being updated regularly and populated with information as the year progresses. This will require an update to our data processing and reporting.

Further prospects for development include the opening of HMP Highland in the near future, which will present opportunities for creating new working relationships and approaches within a more open and inclusive context. Opportunities include improved work around training and employability, recovery, family focussed work and new approaches to health and well-being. Linked to this are the opportunities which will emerge with the national voluntary throughcare commissioning process.

Closer ties with the Inverness Justice Centre and the partners based there will be pursued. There is recognition of the pressures faced within the court setting and the CJP would wish to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges and create processes which make engagement more meaningful and productive.

The ongoing development of stronger partnership links with the HADP and HVAW partnership will continue, as will re-establishing the presence of VSS and other victims-focussed organisations at the heart of the partnership. Linked with this is the need to constantly develop trauma-informed practice and approaches which recognise the value of lived experience.

The Nugent report identified the very positive experiences of women who had come into contact with JSW, however it also highlighted issues around the up-tariffing of sentences that appear particularly to impact women. Further insight is required to inform future responses to this.

The Scottish Fire and Resucue Service have identified areas of cross-over with their Highland delivery plan, and based on experiences elsewhere across Highlands and Islands, see opportunities for closer working with partners especially with younger people around the Fireskills programme, anti-social behaviour projects and road/driving issues.

The greatest challenges and risks relate to the best use of the resources at the disposal of partners, linked with the scope of our ambition. The creation of new structures and the implementation of new delivery plans carry the risk of overloading already busy partners, and progress (and expectations) will need to managed carefully.

There are also risks associated with aspects of service delivery. A clear example of this is the CLink project which sits at the centre of Highland's approach to arrest-referral. Independent evaluation and the testimony of partners attest to the effectiveness of the service, but the financial sustainability of the service is uncertain.

More broadly, and affecting all partners, is the issue of recruitment, especially of experienced professionals. Highland is not alone in this, but there are particular challenges, and these are most acute in more remote areas.