



Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland Annual Report 2021-2022

An analysis of progress towards the national
community justice outcomes

March 2023

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1. Foreword

This fifth Community Justice Outcome Activity Annual Report, covers the period 2021 to 2022.

This fell within the duration of the global pandemic which impacted everyone, and in particular created significant barriers for the community justice workforce and the individuals they sought to support. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who adapted quickly to the additional demands that scenario created and so enabled the continuation of the responses described within this report.

There are, nevertheless, significant legacies from this period which will require time, resources and innovation to resolve. We know that skilled practitioners, working with individuals to tackle underlying drivers of offending and improve wellbeing is the best approach to reducing reoffending. However it has been generations since we have witnessed worldwide events which have disrupted individual and community wellbeing by such magnitude and we cannot yet measure the full effect of this. We hear from public and third sector colleagues delivering community justice solutions locally that people are presenting with significantly more complex problems.

There are also structural problems which were present before the pandemic which still need to be resolved such as Scotland's excessive prison population, both remand and convicted, and unnecessary barriers to ensuring that all parts of the justice system deliver person-centred services and embed trauma informed practices consistently.

The new National Strategy for Community Justice was published in June 2022, setting out a compelling vision for all of our partners to re-focus on delivery of community justice. To support implementation of the blueprint that it provides, we have led collaboration of stakeholders throughout Scotland to develop new frameworks to measure Outcomes, Performance and Improvement. The resulting Community Justice Performance Framework and CJS Improvement Tools will allow us all to better monitor progress and drive further improvements across the whole system in the coming years.

Ultimately, the best way to protect communities and prevent future victims of crime is to further embed proven community justice methods throughout our systems.



Catherine Dyer CBE
CJS Board Chair



Karyn McCluskey
CJS Chief Executive

2. Executive summary

This report covers the period April 2021 to March 2022.

It describes activity leading to progress towards the national outcomes for community justice in Scotland. These outcomes are set out in the 2016 National Strategy for Community Justice and the Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework launched in 2016.

2.1 Key findings

The pandemic significantly affected activity over the year. Challenges linked to Covid-19 contributed to backlogs at every stage. Economic factors added pressure to local and national government, services, as well as people and communities. Planning and provision across all aspects of justice became exceptionally complex.

Nonetheless, the community justice workforce continued to provide effective services, using what was learned from earlier stages of the pandemic. As with previous years, effective and meaningful engagement by all partners has been a challenge, but progress has been made,

All areas described activities aimed at driving progress towards the national outcomes.

Outcome 1: Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice

Community justice partners sought to maximise the impact of engagement, to inform planning, raise awareness and shift perceptions. Next steps will include involving the whole community justice workforce to promote this agenda.

Outcome 2: Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way

Partners often had to focus on critical emerging priorities, which challenged their strategic resources to inform planning, however all partnerships managed to progress activities.

Outcome 3: People have better access to the services that they require, including welfare, health and wellbeing, housing and employability

People continued to present with a wide range of needs and increasing complexity. Partners took steps to identify and facilitate access to services to address these needs and complexity.

Outcome 4: Effective interventions are delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending

All areas continued activity to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending. They implemented learning from the first year of delivery under pandemic conditions, and targeted their responses.

Person-centred outcomes

Outcome 5: Life chances are improved through needs, including health, financial inclusion, housing and safety, being addressed

Outcome 6: People develop positive relationships and more opportunities to participate and contribute through education, employment and leisure activities

Outcome 7: Individuals' resilience and capacity for change and self-management are enhanced

The importance of a person-centred approach is understood. Partners sought to evidence impact and outcomes systematically, in ways that described people's progress. Areas worked collaboratively to help people have better lives free of offending.

2.2 Next steps

The revised [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) was published in 2022 with new national aims and priority actions. These aim to safely reduce unnecessary use of justice interventions and to enable growth in community integration. The revised strategy was informed by the evidence base of community justice activity since 2016 and engagement by the Scottish Government with a wide range of stakeholders. It sets out revised ministerial direction for partners.

Delivering these priorities will contribute to reversing the long-term drivers of an excessive prison population and enable the required human and social capital to help Scotland thrive.

3. Introduction

This report describes progress towards the national outcomes for community justice set out in the 2016 National Strategy for Community Justice and its associated Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (OPIF). The report is based on activity in Scotland between April 2021 and March 2022, the strategy's penultimate year.

This report, unlike those of previous years, makes no specific recommendations for improvement action required of the Scottish Government, Community Justice Scotland (CJS) and community justice partners. The revised [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) was published in 2022 with new national aims and priority actions. The strategy was informed by the evidence from community justice activity since 2016 and engagement by the Scottish Government with a wide range of stakeholders. It sets out the key areas on which partners must focus their efforts over the coming months.

3.1 Recommendations and talking points

Recommendations from previous reports have already informed the revised National Strategy for Community Justice and development of an improvement tool. The over-riding priority for stakeholders is to implement plans that take direction from these. Therefore, no new recommendations are made in this report.

However, ongoing work is still required to respond to previous recommendations. The appendix sets out progress against these.

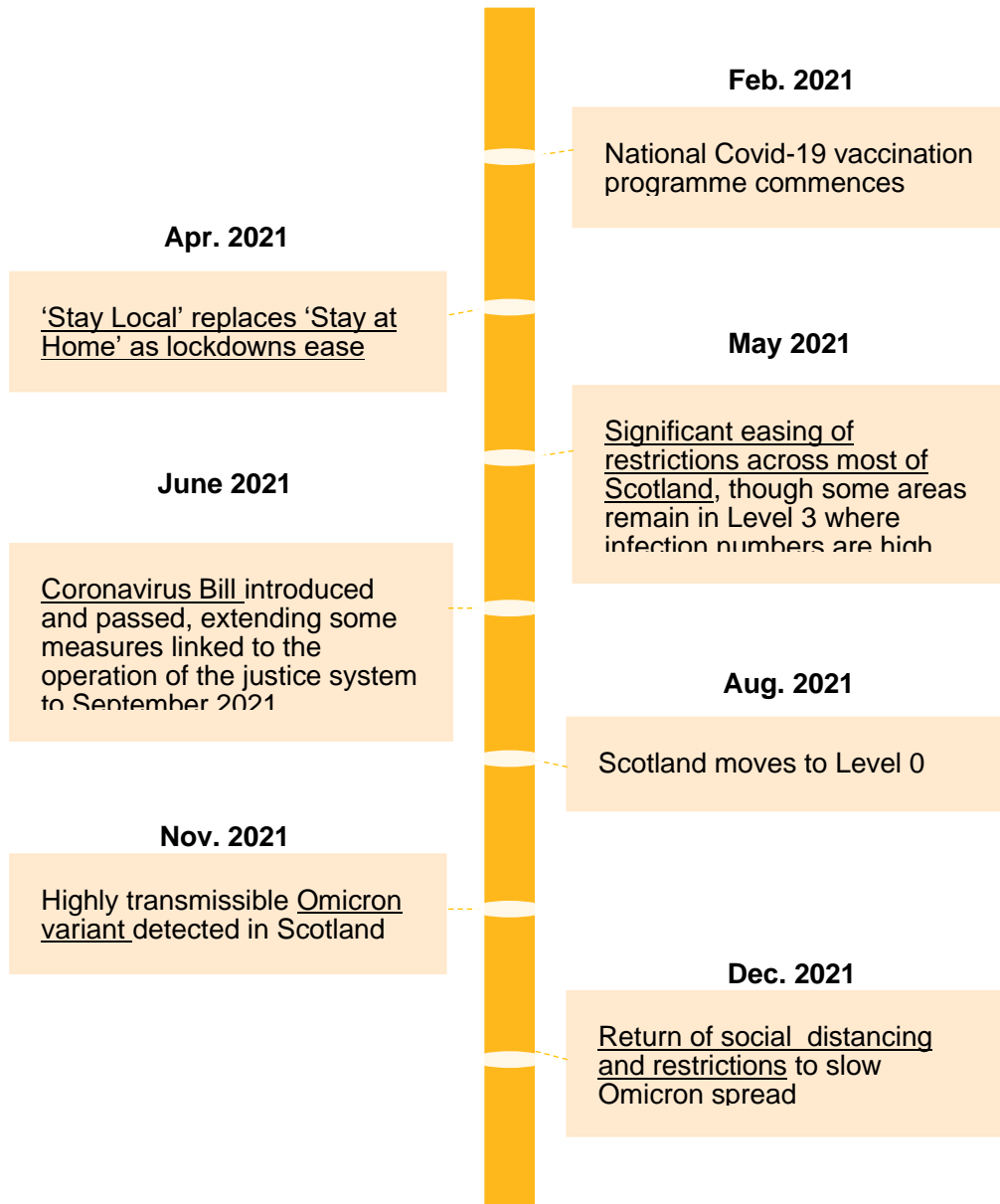
Talking Points

The evidence raises several 'talking points' to highlight areas for further investigation, locally and nationally. These provide additional direction for local discussion by partners, and will inform some of the improvement activity to be led by CJS in the coming year.

We also encourage stakeholders to use these talking points and prompts to have their own discussions about community justice.

3.2 Covid-19 in context for community justice

The reporting year was marked by the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, staff and people accessing support were navigating different levels of restriction.



The community justice partners and workforce in Scotland continued to respond to this adversity with resilience, innovation and compassion. Many impacts of the pandemic overshadowed this reporting period. Significantly;

- wellbeing was damaged
- resources were challenged
- whole systems of services were stretched

3.2.1 Data, analysis and planning

Analysis of community justice is now especially challenging because many more factors are driving numerical data to move upwards or downwards. The pandemic continues to present a number of challenges for the 'community end' of community justice, operating downstream from the criminal justice system.

These challenges are heightened by systemic backlogs in most services, ongoing recruitment and retention problems and more complex caseloads. Learning from pandemic innovations and new ways of working will be part of a new flexible response. However, flexibility and relying on the goodwill of the workforce to compensate are not sustainable options. Digital solutions in a hybrid model of service delivery will require ongoing resources to mitigate digital exclusion, and careful consideration is needed to address reduced face-to-face contact.

Recruitment, retention and wellbeing of the community justice workforce is an ongoing challenge which further complicates planning.

3.2.2 Living costs and running costs

Poverty remains a structural community justice problem. It is exacerbated by high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Additional funding from Scottish Government Covid-19 funds were used to commission third sector services and to provide technology and crisis support so people could comply with court orders. This additional resource will not continue in its current form.

Safe and successful community integration sets up people to succeed in a crime-free life. Local third sector organisations and community assets are pivotal in facilitating the transition from statutory services. Therefore, resourcing communities to enable this integration must remain at the heart of the strategic picture amidst shrinking public sector resources, where choices are often limited by what 'can' be cut.

3.3 The justice system in context

The pandemic created significant backlogs in the criminal justice system. The Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service implemented criminal court recovery planning¹ early in the reporting year.

The rising population of people held on remand in Scotland peaked in February 2022 at 1,961.² On average, at any time over the reporting year, one in every 586 men in Scotland aged 25 to 44 was remanded in custody. Backlogs also caused people to spend much longer periods on remand.

The wider prison population also remained excessive. The latest Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics describe the Scottish prison population as 'very high' in a grouping with the Russian Federation, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Slovak Republic, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Albania, Latvia, Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro, and England and Wales.

3.4 National policy and legislation

There were several significant developments related to community justice, requiring significant engagement from local and national partners.

3.4.1 A timeline for relevant developments

- March 2021: The Community Orders (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 come into force, reducing unpaid work hours for some offences
- June 2021: Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Bill introduced – extended measures linked to the operation of the justice system
- August 2021: Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Act enacted
- August 2021: [A National Care Service for Scotland](#) consultation launched, including proposals for the integration of justice social work
- September 2021: [National Strategy for Community Justice: review consultation](#)

¹ [Criminal court recovery planning.](#)

² [Scottish prison population statistics 2021-22.](#)

- November 2021: [Bail and release from custody arrangements consultation launched](#)
- November 2021: [Scottish Sentencing Council sentencing young people guideline](#) approved by the High Court of Justiciary
- January 2022: Women's Justice Leadership Panel established
- January 2022: sentencing young people guideline comes into effect
- February 2022: The [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) launched
- March 2022: [Children's Care and Justice Bill](#) consultation on policy proposals
- March 2022: [Working Group on Misogyny and Criminal Justice](#) independent report

In February 2022 the new [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) was published. This took account of community justice factors among wider challenges for the criminal justice system. This in turn informed the revised [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) published in June 2022. This sets direction for partners, and takes account of learning from previous annual reports.

3.5 Prevention

The impact of prevention and early effective intervention activity needs to be measured over many years. In Scotland, the positive impact of approaches to reduce criminalisation of young people is evident in the downward trend in the number of children and young people being incarcerated.

Partners in community justice have been developing further work aimed at reducing people's involvement in the criminal justice system at earlier stages. This includes diversion from prosecution, support after arrest, and community-based alternatives to remand such as electronic monitoring.

These activities link to priority actions in the new National Strategy for Community Justice (2022).

Prevention also involves reducing the use of certain interventions which, although designed to control short-term risk, can create long-term harm. An extreme example of such an intervention is remand, when people are imprisoned while awaiting trial.

Although the pandemic has caused structural impacts on the justice system, partners recognise the importance of maximising safe measures such as supported bail supervision

in order to reduce the use of remand. This has been reflected in the revised national strategy.

3.6 Governance

Each partnership has a bespoke model of community justice governance that fits with local systems of planning. Descriptions of governance arrangements vary in detail. However, they include links to community planning boards, locality planning, public protection partnerships and council committees.

Similarly, the links to parallel planning partnerships such as local employability partnerships, violence against women and girls partnerships, alcohol and drug partnerships (ADPs) and community safety partnerships exist within local design. These links enable scrutiny of activity, strategic influence and opportunity.

There are two outlying models of governance which are worth noting. The Ayrshire local authorities operate a regional approach with a single partnership providing governance requirements across three local authority areas. Highland is the only area to have an independent chair for its partnership.

The existence of community justice partnerships (CJPs) provides an opportunity to promote understanding and confidence in community justice across many platforms and policy areas.

Community justice co-ordinators and managers facilitate partner engagement, contextualise community justice policy and manage partnerships, supported with guidance from a partnership chair. This appears to provide the foundation for effective leadership and governance. From time to time, the Care Inspectorate provides in-depth supported self-evaluation of leadership in CJPs.

3.6.1 Focus on community justice

The information reported by CJPs tends to be heavily weighted towards justice social work, or activities driven by connected community planning domains such as community safety, gender-based violence, substance use and children's services planning. It is important for partnerships to be aware of this work and to find synergies. However, a primary focus on community justice is critical.

The new National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) sets out distinct priorities which aim to reduce unnecessary use of justice interventions and to enable growth in community integration. Delivering these priorities will continue to reverse the long-term drivers of an excessive prison population, and enable the required human and social capital to make Scotland the safest country in the world.

Partnerships have continued to operate throughout the reporting period. However, as with previous years, effective and meaningful engagement by all partners has been a challenge. Progress has been made through self-evaluation, workshops and reviewing terms of reference, and will require ongoing review in many areas.

Action 11 of the new National Strategy for Community Justice 2022 tasks partners to ensure that leadership and governance work well. This needs local flexibility to ensure that each partner is enabled to drive improvement through their expertise and circle of influence as well as providing strategic oversight of local planning and improvement.

3.6.2 Talking points

Engagement

The returns from partnerships describe progress in partner engagement. However, it is not clear whether all partners feel valued at meetings nor whether they find the meetings effective, practical or relevant to their own expertise and influence. Similarly the extent to which local community justice partners adopt leadership responsibilities is also unclear.

Scope of community justice

The community justice model is informed by the evidence base associated with desistance. This confirms that safely de-escalating criminal justice interventions and building social capital by safely enabling people to integrate with their communities are significant drivers for reducing re-offending. This is reflected in the National Strategy for Community Justice (2022).

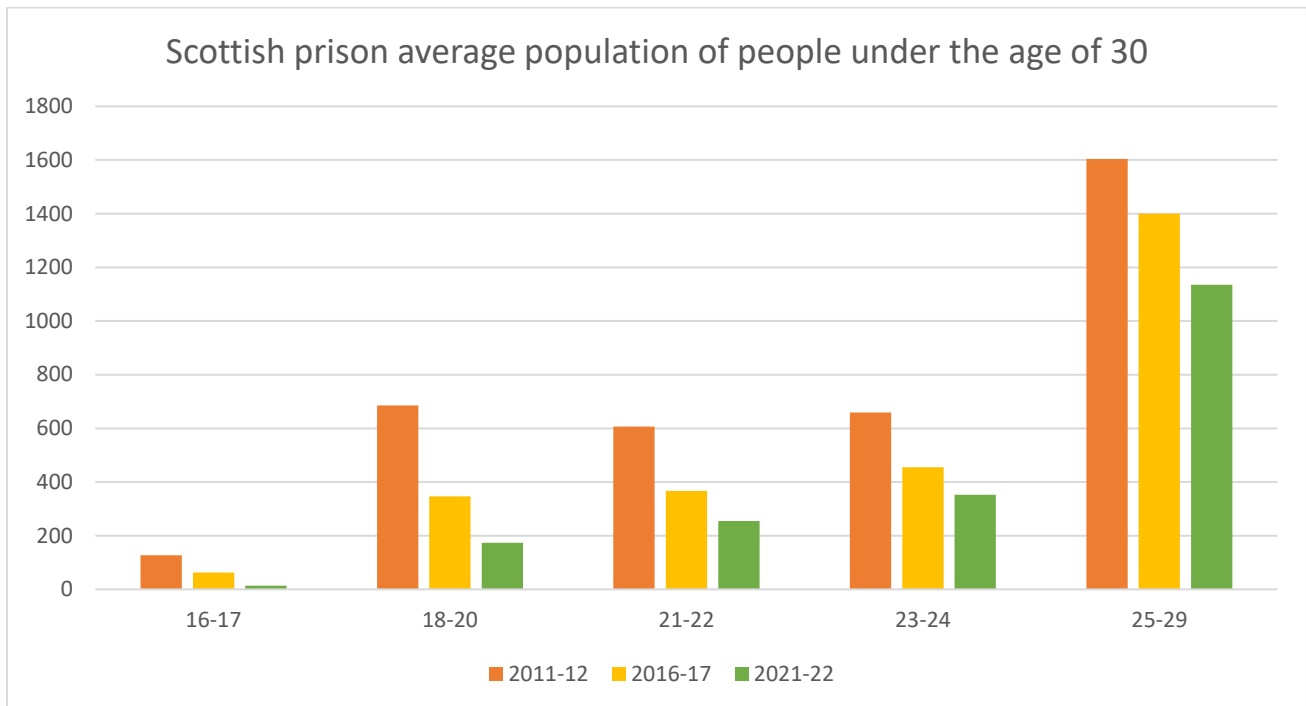
The returns cited considerable work emanating from other policy areas such as gender-based violence, substance use, community safety and children's services planning. However, there was often a lack of clarity about how this work contributed to community justice outcomes. Similarly, there was a focus on justice social work activity but less so on improvements in the wider ecosystem of services, people and places which contribute to desistance. If this is an accurate reflection, then the new National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) provides an opportunity for partners to refocus.

3.7 Key facts

We advise caution in comparing activity in years 2020-21 and 2021-22 with previous years because the pandemic has skewed the picture.

3.7.1 Imprisonment in Scotland

Excessive imprisonment remains a structural problem in Scotland, notably for untried people held on remand. The Scottish Government's Vision for Justice and the National Strategy for Community Justice seek to reduce the use of imprisonment. The demographic of the present prison population suggests that prevention strategies (for example Preventing Offending: getting it right for children and young people) have led to fewer young people entering prison.



3.7.2 Crime in Scotland

- Police recorded crime is at the lowest level since 1974, and is down 4% since the year ending September 2018. Between the years ending September 2021 and September 2022, the number of crimes recorded decreased by 3%, to 287,374. This fall was driven by a reduction in crimes recorded under Covid-19-related legislation (from 19,861 to 36). All other crimes collectively increased by 3%.³
- Recorded crime levels are usually triangulated with the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey to provide a more accurate picture of how victims experience crime and their confidence in the justice system. However, this survey has not been completed since 2019-20.
- The number of victims of homicide is at record low. There were 53 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2021-22, a 16% decrease from 2012-13 and the lowest value since comparable records began in 1976.

3.7.3 Justice social work

Although the causes for the following highlights are heavily caveated by pandemic conditions, increasing use of diversion, bail supervision and structured deferred sentences

³ [Justice Analytical Services Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Data Report: December 2022 edition.](#)

indicates that critical preventative activities were deployed and developed during the pandemic to enable support at earlier stages.⁴

- The number of diversion from prosecution cases commenced rose by 20% between 2020-21 and 2021-22 to 2,700, the highest level in the last decade.
- The number of bail supervision cases commenced in 2021-22 was 570, the highest in the last decade. This was an increase of 20% on the second highest level of 470 in 2019-20.
- There were 930 structured deferred sentences imposed in Scotland in 2021-22. This was the highest number in the last four years.

Similarly, the drivers for the lowlights are also caveated by pandemic conditions. However, where reductions occurred, they were further downstream in the justice system while court business was reduced. For example:

- There were 12,150 community payback orders (CPOs) commenced in 2021-22. This was 49% higher than in 2020-21 but was the second lowest in the last decade. From 2012-13 to 2019-20, the number of orders commenced ranged from 16,100 to 19,500.

3.7.4 Voluntary sector services and groups

Thousands of organisations across Scotland can contribute significantly to community justice outcomes without having formal connections to the justice system. Others have more formal connections. The highlights below relate to some of the organisations that received direct funding from the Scottish Government.

- Apex Scotland worked with almost 3,000 individuals in the reporting year. Its mentoring and support encourage people to gain skills-based qualifications, manage conviction impact and achieve meaningful employment.
- Families Outside supported families affected by imprisonment in every local authority, including 770 individuals through their regional teams and 2,500 queries to their helpline, and provided professional training to over 1,000 stakeholders.

⁴ [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland: 2021-22.](#)

- Prison Visitor Centres were coordinated by Families Outside, with services provided by Action for Children, Barnardo's, CentreStage, Croft, Crossreach, Cyrenians, Early Years Scotland, Getting Better Together Shotts and Forth Valley Inclusion.
- Public social partnerships provided mentoring services in work led by Action for Children, Sacro and the Wise Group.
- Sacro worked with more than 3,250 people across a range of community justice and public protection services, designed to help build safe communities by reducing conflict and offending.
- Turning Point Scotland provided the Turnaround residential and throughcare service using an assets-based approach to enable and sustain recovery and desistance.
- Venture Trust delivered the Next Steps service which combines community-based support and outdoor learning to support women.

4. Progress towards the national outcomes

4.1 Outcome 1: Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice

4.1.1 Key findings

- The pandemic continued to restrict community justice engagement activity with communities. However, there are examples of planned face-to-face activities re-emerging, and of learning from virtual engagement innovations and tools.
- Partners continued to engage with communities for various reasons including to gather evidence of need, to consult for planning, to provide information about the benefits of community justice, to challenge stigma, to raise awareness of trauma and to identify projects for unpaid work.
- Unpaid work continued to provide visible restorative solutions for communities – beneficiaries attribute value to the work undertaken.
- In order to establish changing perceptions and experiences of community justice, some areas have integrated community justice questions within community surveys.
- There are now some positive examples of co-production in strategic planning with people with lived experience and in service provision.

4.1.2 Summary of evidence

Engagement events

The pandemic continued to limit face-to-face community engagement such as conferences, events and public meetings which took place previously.

However, many partnerships have used video communications and blogs which remain part of a public record for future learning and development. Community Justice Ayrshire has developed several resources themed as 'A day in the life' of different members of the community justice workforce, and 'Let's talk' which was designed to help people understand the importance of community justice.

Partners in Stirling enabled the CJS 'Second Chancers' exhibition to be displayed at Stirling University. Alongside this, a 'trauma-informed practice in the arts' workshop was developed with local partners. A micro-grants project is being developed to support creatives to work

directly, in a trauma-informed way, with people affected by the justice system. Community justice partners have funded this project. The funds will be held and managed by Scene Stirling for four micro-grants to be awarded to artists in the future.

Some areas invited the CJS communications team to talk to their partnership boards about the [framing toolkit](#) which supports partners to talk to members of the public about community justice.

Social media

Local partnerships continue to develop their use of partner social media channels to reach communities with messages that relate to community justice. There is a particular interest in activities undertaken through the unpaid work requirement of CPOs. CJS will publish a separate CPO report for this period with more detail.

Public perceptions, understanding and confidence in community justice

Some local areas have fused questions within community surveys. A national picture will emerge when the Scottish Government's Crime and Justice Survey is re-established.

Consultation for planning

The revision of the National Strategy for Community Justice (published June 2022) triggered a requirement for local areas to revise their local Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plans. In anticipation of this requirement, many areas initiated their revision process. Local areas described robust engagement with stakeholders and communities to inform their required needs assessments and planning activities.

For example, the Perth and Kinross partnership engaged stakeholders widely to inform its needs assessment. It represented key strategic learning in a poster which has been printed and displayed by partner organisations across the area.

4.1.3 Talking point

Co-production with people with lived experience

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

4.2 Outcome 2: Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way

4.2.1 Key findings

- The pandemic continued to create operational problems for most partners and to affect their resource availability. Therefore, time-critical challenges tended to be prioritised ahead of longer-term strategic planning and actions.
- The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 requires partners to use the national strategy and the OPIF to inform their strategic planning cycles. Both were being reviewed in the reporting period, which made planning more difficult.
- Deploying new resources and methods to clear bottlenecks in one part of the system created spikes in demand and required new working methods for other services.
- Partnerships described crosscutting preventative work in which community justice is well placed to contribute to other outcomes such as suicide prevention, reducing drug-related deaths, supporting Equally Safe and delivering community safety.
- Virtual meetings remained the usual method of partnership working. This improved access to and efficiency of meetings. However, it also affected important interactions between partners.
- Developing engagement, participation and contribution from all statutory partners in all local areas is an ongoing challenge but local partnerships continued to refine how they engage and establish specific roles for local partners.

4.2.2 Summary of evidence

More partnerships used strategic needs and strengths assessment guidance provided by CJS. This is to be commended against the backdrop of the pandemic in which strategic development was limited by operational demands. CJS recognises that such work needs to be proportionate and pragmatic, and primarily to establish the evidence which partners need to make informed changes.

Many partnerships were planning or building upon partnership development work such as self-assessment, strategic information sessions with partners, terms of reference or operating arrangements and induction processes for new partners. Others described targeted work with specific statutory partners.

Lived experience engagement

The inclusion of people with lived experience in planning and delivering community justice is a crucial strategic element which can support innovation, research relationships, personal agency and testing processes.

Some local areas described authentic work which involved people with lived experience. CJS is developing work to support further progress in this area.

Strategic planning

The local model means that CJPs are embedded within community planning structures. This enables strategic links to children's services planning and more specialist planning committees such as those for looked after children. At a service level, these services are connected under the social work umbrella.

The local model for community justice lends itself to developing service delivery in co-location with multi-organisational teams which cross professional boundaries. Although the pandemic has enabled virtual collaboration, the required social distancing limited the potential for co-location and shared work spaces where different services come together..

Information sharing

An information-sharing agreement was developed by CJS and partners. This is now signed-off by local authorities. It allows Police Scotland to advise, at the start of business each

day, who has been arrested and charged and is due to appear at court that day from police custody in each local authority area. Having this information as early as possible allows justice social work staff to begin needs assessment and triage to support people appearing at court and, in particular, if bail is opposed.

Local learning and development

Local partners continue to work together to provide training resources for the community justice workforce. Examples include:

- trauma training such as the Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training (STILT) provided by NHS education for Scotland
- gender-based violence-related training such as the model provided by the Safe and Together Institute
- substance training such as administering naloxone
- MAPPA awareness training for partners,
- mental health training such as suicide prevention

Geography

Some local areas have highlighted problems relating to recent centralisation of regional functions such as sheriff courts and police custody. This has increased journey times for staff from local support services. It has also created additional access problems for some people travelling to and from these centralised justice functions.

Although locality planning is embedded, there appears to be little analysis of the geographic sensitivity of people with complex needs in accessing services. There is an expectation that existing person-centric approaches within local planning are currently working to mitigate access problems. However testing geographic impact may provide important strategic insights for planning and designing services.

Geographic access for prison visits also remains a problem for families affected by imprisonment. Many people are held much further away than their most local prison.

MAPPA

MAPPA has a distinct local management and reporting function. More information is at [MAPPA in Scotland: national overview report 2021-2022](#).

4.2.3 Talking points

Evidence and Data

The pandemic and other factors have created extreme uncertainty and have made many datasets inscrutable. This is likely to make scrutiny, planning and reporting even harder for several years. New improvement tools developed alongside the review of the OPIF have the potential to enable more meaningful information to be used for planning, quality assurance and reporting within a simpler model for partners.

Social Geography and Access

People experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage can find it difficult to access places which are beyond walking distance from where they live. This can limit their capacity to access universal services, attend appointments, maintain healthy relationships, and to meet the requirements of the justice system. Problems are evident across rural, suburban and urban settings, and affect individuals, communities and families. Locality planning models should enable partners to mitigate geographic challenges. Geographic information systems and other resources can be valuable in providing evidence to inform planning.

It is unclear to what extent local learning and improvement in community justice has addressed the 'place-based challenges'.

4.3 Outcome 3: People have better access to the services that they require, including welfare, health and wellbeing, housing and employability

4.3.1 Key findings:

- Responses indicated partners were identifying needs requiring a service response across a broad spectrum within their local population.
- Areas were using contact with the justice system as an opportunity to identify and address needs, often using person-centred approaches.
- Areas were taking effective steps to help people into services, for example through peer mentoring and technology.
- There was evidence of need for practical help linked to poverty, for example food parcels.

4.3.2 Summary of evidence

As in previous years, partners reported that service users were presenting with needs linked to alcohol and substance use, physical and mental health, wellbeing, employability, housing and more. Many individuals were experiencing more than one issue concurrently.

Accessing services

Areas took proactive steps to identify the needs of individuals and to support access to services. In some areas, these efforts connect to points in the justice system. This includes after arrest into custody suites with an arrest referral service, or in anticipation of release from prison with throughcare, mentoring and practical support. Examples such as these are evident across Scotland, with the strongest showing contact with the justice system used as an opportunity to identify and respond to unmet needs to prevent further offending. For example, Fife's Early Intervention Service operates with a team of social work assistants who oversee enhanced bail supervision, diversion from prosecution and structured deferred sentences.

Technology

In earlier stages of the pandemic, it became apparent that services needed to be delivered in non-traditional ways (for example virtual instead of face-to-face meetings). Digital inclusion was a barrier. Many areas have actively addressed this by providing IT equipment (mobile phones, tablets) to service users. Glasgow, created an App 'Let's get communities

connected', containing the details of more than 800 local organisations to help people access support quickly and easily.

Peer support

Areas identified examples of workers with lived experience of the justice system supporting people to access services, often in the form of peer mentoring.

Partnerships reported using peer support to connect with service users to help service users manage personal barriers, build on strengths and reintegrate with the community.

These examples included the national public social partnerships that use a mentoring approach (for example New Routes, SHINE), and also bespoke local approaches. For example, in the Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery Support Service, Edinburgh partners recruited a recovery motivator with lived experience to help service users with recovery and desistance.

Some areas described integration with services where the primary focus is not offending behaviour (often alcohol, substance use, and women-specific services). For example, Tayside Council on Alcohol provides mentoring within the Onestop Women's Learning Service (OWLS) (a community-based criminal justice service for women run by Perth and Kinross Council in partnership with Tayside Council on Alcohol and other organisations). The peer mentor programme sits alongside the community-based activities that support women involved in the justice system with advocacy to help them access services.

Practical support

Many areas described activities related to providing practical assistance including food parcels, toiletries, mobile phones and travel support. This indicates significant basic unmet need in the justice-involved population.

Throughcare

Most areas described activities to support transition between custody and community.

Most local areas mentioned SHINE and New Routes as part of their approach to throughcare. Some areas actively identify and respond to the needs of individuals leaving prison. For example, East Dunbartonshire takes a multi-agency approach to planning for

reintegrating residents on release from prison back to the community through one of its working groups. The Reintegration Working Group involves justice services, alcohol and drugs recovery services, homelessness, youth justice and young people, Police Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), the Wise Group 'New Routes' mentoring service, Families Outside, prison healthcare, East Dunbartonshire Women's Aid and Jobcentre Plus. The group uses information obtained from the data-sharing agreement between the SPS and the local authority/health and social care partnership. This provides information on scheduled releases, and enables partners to work together, case manage people's needs, and plan for release, ensuring adequate support and referrals before liberation.

Housing

Several areas mentioned Housing First and Rapid Rehousing approaches, however it was not always clear how well integrated these approaches are with community justice. There continue to be structural challenges with housing availability, and additional complexity associated with involvement in the criminal justice system. However, there is evidence of this approach being used in a justice context. For example, Highland described its Rapid Rehousing project as targeting complex cases that do not meet Highland's Housing First criteria. Service users often have complex needs involving harm reduction/significant drug and alcohol misuse, diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, multiple and complex personality disorder, learning difficulties and subject to community-based CJS measures.

Local implementation of the SHORE (safe housing on release for everyone) standards is at different stages across local areas but was a priority. Some partnerships described multi-agency working groups to build capacity for the approach, developing information sharing to allow swift action and pre-release planning. In some areas, the approach is more advanced and embedded, often with dedicated staff. For example, in Edinburgh, the presence of a prison-based housing outreach officer with HMP Edinburgh has enabled collaboration between SPS and local partners, leading to greater positive impact.

Alcohol and substance use

Access to services addressing alcohol and substance use was a priority for most areas.

There are examples of joint strategic working between CJPs and ADPs, and linked practice areas including justice, housing and addictions. Many areas described activity to enable emergency response and crisis support, including overdose training and non-fatal overdose referral pathways.

Some areas targeted resources broadly in order to address barriers to engagement. For example, Clackmannanshire intended to place an addiction recovery support worker within justice services, working on support with housing and homelessness with links to prison throughcare. In Falkirk, a recovery service is co-located within justice services to support effective screening and triage for support.

Mental health and wellbeing

Some areas described activities with a primary focus on mental health. Service interventions were varied and ranged from providing specialist psychiatric assessment and support (through community psychiatric nursing), crisis intervention and suicide prevention, and responses aimed at developing mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

Those involved in the justice system often have mental health issues alongside other needs and vulnerabilities which make it difficult for people to access support. Areas described working with individuals in crisis, developing a person-centred approach to identifying and addressing needs to help with recovery and to build resilience.

Employability and education

Evidence indicates that there was engagement between CJPs and local employability partnerships. Many people in conflict with the law face more barriers to employment than the general population. Some areas had developed approaches to enable access to employability services. In Aberdeenshire, a criminal justice employability service engages with people on a one-to-one basis, with employability support tailored to meet individual needs and designed to help people progress. The approach recognises that people may have significant underlying health and wellbeing issues that need addressed before they are ready for work.

4.3.3 Talking point

Disclosure and identity

The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 significantly shortened most of the time periods during which people are required to disclose previous convictions for the purpose of employment, especially people serving community orders. This creates various opportunities for people with convictions and services delivering support, to help develop positive self-identities, set personal milestones, address stigma and promote employability. It is unclear what activities have been undertaken locally to develop these opportunities for people who have been in conflict with the law.

4.4 Outcome 4: Effective interventions are delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending

4.4.1 Key findings

- All areas continued their activity to prevent and to reduce the risk of further offending, implementing learning from the first year of pandemic conditions, and targeting responses.
- Areas were targeting resources at earlier stages of justice involvement, working to address needs and to de-escalate justice involvement where possible.
- Areas continued to focus on targeting domestic abuse through perpetrator programmes and victim-focused work.

4.4.2 Summary of evidence

CPO quality, unpaid work and 'other activities'

CJS will publish a separate CPO report for this period.

Direct measures

Direct measures or 'alternatives to court' include diversion, fiscal fines, fixed penalties, community and work orders. The justice system suffered repeated disruption over the reporting year. This added to the complexity of the service environment and the flow of people.

Diversion

Many areas described activities linked to direct measures, in particular diversion. Cases are identified so that individuals can benefit from intervention without proceeding to trial, and collaborative interventions to reduce the likelihood of further offending can be enabled. Some areas noted increasing breadth in offence types referred for diversion, and greater complexity requiring a commensurate response level from social work. In East Dunbartonshire, the CJP delivered collaborative multi-agency working to support effective diversion through its Prevention Intervention and Diversion Group. This brings partners together to adopt a case management approach and to provide meaningful interventions and services to address the underlying causes of alleged offending, while also responding to the needs of the individual. This can interrupt a cycle of offending and/or prevent further offending. Several areas reported engagement with the local Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to enable effective decision-making for diversion.

Some areas reported an increase in the number of referrals for diversion, others a slight decrease. As with other aspects of justice, there is limited potential to identify meaningful trends from the data at this stage.

Further detail about the number and nature of direct measures will be available in the criminal proceedings data due for publication by the Scottish Government in 2023.

Bail support and supervision

More areas are developing bail support and supervision services, the majority of which were in the planning and development stages in the reporting year. In areas where the approach is further developed, the responses described person-centred approaches to address a range of needs and risks. The return from Ayrshire described the added challenge of delivering supported bail under Covid-19 restrictions, compromising face-to-face contact and increasing time on bail due to cases being deferred.

Structured deferred sentences

Several areas reported activity related to structured deferred sentences, where much of the work was at a planning stage. Where delivery was underway, numbers were relatively low. Where activity is more advanced, partners cited the sentencing young people guideline and

co-ordinated partnership working. More time and assessment of impact is required to better understand the outcome of this activity.

Gender-based violence

Some areas noted increased reporting of domestic abuse during the pandemic, alongside their service response. Activity was mainly linked to identifying staff for training in and delivery of the Caledonian Programme (now available in 19 local authorities covering approximately 75% of the population), risk assessment tools (such as Spousal Assault Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA-V3)), the Safe and Together model, and multi-agency approaches to managing risk and protection. There are strong links with local partners in the Scottish Government Equally Safe strategy, including violence against women and girls partnerships. Several areas described specific activities offering support for victims.

Public protection

Areas described a range of activity in risk management for public protection. Strategic and operational relationships between justice social work and multi-agency partners were key, coming together to enhance delivery of statutory duties with robust public protection links. Examples given described the relationship between risk assessment, mitigation and offence-targeted work to reduce the likelihood of further offending.

Drug and alcohol use

Interventions targeting problem drug and alcohol use are in place across Scotland. Returns frequently described actions relating to national priorities including the Drugs Deaths Taskforce, the implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards and collaboration with ADPs.

Naloxone distribution, the opiate antagonist that can be used to save a life in the event of an overdose, commonly featured. Renfrewshire described its multi-agency Naloxone Delivery Group, established to expand naloxone availability throughout Renfrewshire. The group has developed a dedicated work plan which focuses on reducing barriers, addressing stigma raising the profile of naloxone and providing more learning opportunities for overdose awareness. Returns also highlighted the rollout of Buprenorphine, a replacement treatment for methadone, with patients receiving an injection every 28 days instead of taking daily medication.

4.5 Person-centred outcomes 5, 6 and 7

Outcome 5: Life chances are improved through needs, including health, financial inclusion, housing and safety, being addressed

Outcome 6: People develop positive relationships and more opportunities to participate and contribute through education, employment and leisure activities

Outcome 7: Individuals' resilience and capacity for change and self-management are enhanced

4.5.1 Key findings:

- Evidence suggests that the importance of a person-centred approach is well understood.
- There is clear recognition of the need to evidence impact and outcomes systematically, in ways that describe people's progress.
- Methods are mixed, limiting any potential for aggregation – however, any aggregation of impact would have limited utility at a local or national level.
- There are specific challenges for areas with small populations in evidencing impact and presenting case studies.
- There is evidence that areas work collaboratively to help people have better lives free of offending.

Person-centred outcomes

National outcomes 5, 6 and 7, described by the 2016 OPIF as the 'person-centred' outcomes, are aligned to a body of research evidence that shows that reduced re-offending is primarily driven by an individual finding their way to a healthier, happier and safer life. This person-centred focus is at the heart of the model of community justice launched in 2016.

Reporting in previous years has identified that progress of person-centred outcomes cannot be meaningfully aggregated across Scotland to make performance inferences. In essence, a person-centred outcome is progress on something which is inherently important to a single person. Each person presents in services with unique barriers, problems and trajectories.

Typically, progression measurement tools are used within a single service. Therefore, the true picture of progression for individuals within systems of services, the places they go and the people they see over a long period of time are much harder to illustrate, particularly when relying on standard performance management indicators.

These considerations contributed to last year's recommendation for partnerships to use more specific impact and evaluation data, alongside life stories, to demonstrate progress against person-centred outcomes.

Outcome monitoring methodology

The main methods used to evidence progress against this outcome were exit questionnaires, most commonly used when people were exiting a statutory order supervised by social work. These give an insight into how people perceive the service they receive. But alone, they are limited for showing a broader shift in outcomes and impact. In some areas, interagency information sharing was used to follow up subsequent outcomes in the slightly longer term.

Many areas describe using outcomes monitoring tools (such as the Justice Star). These tools have a dual purpose: to assist structured conversations and develop therapeutic relationships between service user and worker, and to gain insight into progress in identified areas of need. At an individual level, the use of these tools is important and can help service users to recognise and articulate their goals and achievements.

Life stories

There were many case studies through which people explained their experience of service delivery, and their involvement with community justice over their lives; what they thought and felt; and how they changed.

The case study or life journey approach presents some challenges. When population numbers are small, such information might identify individuals. For small island communities, it was noted that, although it was not possible to provide detailed information about people's experiences, workers said they could clearly see progress as a result of effective interagency working within a relatively small field.

Most areas used statutory justice involvement to identify and respond to unmet needs as part of engagement with justice social work, or as part of throughcare before and after liberation from prison. The strongest examples identified multi-agency collaboration to address a broad range of needs and to support service users to positive destinations, and included means to monitor and follow up on progress.

[Life chances are improved through needs, including health, financial inclusion, housing and safety, being addressed](#)

Examples given covered a wide range of services aimed at responding to unmet needs. Most were linked to progression through stages of the justice system, from arrest through to support after leaving custody.

In Dundee, Positive Connections engages with people in prison up to eight weeks before planned liberation to identify relevant issues. It liaises with agencies and services over the help the individual will need on release, to provide a person-centred and holistic approach to gaining the best outcomes. Staff use a 'sticky approach' to assisting, advocating for and advising individuals in their accommodation, and can do so for 12 months following liberation.

Positive Connections provides both a preventative and a responsive service: preventative by putting assistance in place to enable the best possibility of staying liberated and addressing the issues that have caused historic tenancy failures; responsive by engaging or signposting if the individual starts to struggle with issues. Once a level of independence is reached, the staff withdraw and/or refer to more specialised support agencies. The service is in place for up to 12 months, and can be restarted if required.

[People develop positive relationships and more opportunities to participate and contribute](#)

The majority of areas linked this outcome to activities aimed at supporting people into readiness for employment. Interventions included practical support for CVs, interview skills and training, and person-centred holistic approaches.

Some areas linked employability activity with statutory orders. For example in Clackmannanshire, justice social work collaborates with Apex to support clients with employability and in completing CPOs.

Individuals' resilience and capacity for change and self-management are enhanced

For example, in Fife, the TURN Men's Group works holistically with service users to promote skills, support social inclusion and ultimately address factors which affect the likelihood of offending behaviour. With face-to-face contact suspended due to Covid-19, the group reverted to online support, with service users using weekly Microsoft Teams sessions for mental health check-ins.

Development of an improvement tool

CJS has considered the challenges and has collaborated with partners to propose a model where there is assurance that mechanisms are in place to capture person-centric outcomes, and that these mechanisms influence service design and delivery.

4.5.2 Talking point

Person-centric outcomes

Person-centric outcomes - identified by the person, describing their aspirations for their journey - should develop for a long time after people have been discharged from supervision. Employment, suitable housing and healthy community relationships may not be practical outcomes for many people within the timespan of their supervision. Measuring longer-term outcomes, even beyond exiting community justice services and interventions, would likely provide a better understanding of desistance, but is more difficult to plan and monitor.

Appendix: Progress on recommendations from last year's report

1. Recommendations: the Scottish Government should:

- Continue work with the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and the judiciary to explore how decisions about remand can be consistently recorded and reported.

The Scottish Government recently introduced legislation which includes a proposal to require courts to record the reasons for refusing bail (Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill). The Bill is going through the parliamentary process.

The Scottish Government continues to work with all stakeholders to develop a programme of work to strengthen alternatives to remand. That includes developing a better understanding of why people are remanded. It has commissioned research, with the '[Decision-making on bail and remand: interim findings report](#)' published in July 2022.

- Consider how best to support access to meaningful and appropriate data for planning, delivery and evaluation purposes (for example clearer 'data capture' protocols and sharing pathways with agreed reporting timelines).

The Scottish Government is considering proposals for the revision of the OPIF from CJS and the most appropriate mechanisms for collecting and sharing indicator data, including what future developments may be required.

- Support partners to meet their statutory responsibilities. The Scottish Government should consider revising statutory guidance in light of the new strategy and revised OPIF.

The Scottish Government will consider revising the statutory guidance for the exercise of functions in sections 19 to 23 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, as part of, and following the consideration of, proposals for the revision of the OPIF.

2. Recommendations – Community Justice Scotland should:

- Support Social Work Scotland (SWS) in the standardisation or revision of the CPO questionnaire.

CJS commenced work with SWS in March 2022 and formed a working group which first met in August 2022. The working group comprises several local justice social work representatives, SWS justice policy and practice lead, and representatives from the Scottish Government and CJS. SWS is leading this work.

The working group is developing a new service user questionnaire to replace the current CPO exit questionnaire. Decisions will be made about the possible extension of use of the feedback questionnaire from CPO to other orders and licences, and the frequency of completing questionnaires (rather than at the end of sentences). The working group will consider barriers to successful implementation, and will create, pilot and consult on a consistent nationally-agreed questionnaire that allows local and national analysis of information. A new questionnaire will be implemented by October 2024.

- Support CJ partners to achieve the ambitions in national outcomes one and two. CJS will support the sharing of practice and experiences for leveraging resources (see section 35 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016), and explore with the Scottish Government a joint project to promote and enhance participation, including people with lived experience.

CJS has provided a briefing to partners to support the leveraging of resources. The newly introduced 'link improvement lead' model being piloted aims to support improvement in section 35 'duties to co-operate' and the delivery of priority action 11 in the National Strategy for Community Justice.

Exploratory work to enhance participation in community justice for people with lived experience commenced in summer 2022. Internally, CJS undertook a programme of activity aimed at upskilling CJS staff in engaging with people with lived experience of trauma in a way that supports psychological safety for everyone involved. This began in September 2022, and will continue into the next reporting year with the aim of being mainstreamed into standard CJS staff training.

CJS has approached the Scottish Government to initiate collaborative work to develop this area further, incorporating trauma-informed approaches.

- Support partners to meet their statutory responsibilities. CJS will monitor performance in line with statutory requirements, review guidance and other support mechanisms to enable robust planning and reporting in light of the new strategy and revised OPIF, and consider what additional templates and guidance are required to support partners to meet their statutory responsibilities.

During 2021-22 CJS endorsed the approach that meets our statutory duties under the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 in performance monitoring for improvement.

Following publication by the Scottish Government of a new Community Justice Performance Framework, we intend to do further work in 2022-23 on statutory performance reporting. We have supported this approach through a link improvement lead pilot which will be evaluated in due course.

The first iteration of the OPIF was published in 2016 alongside the first National Strategy for Community Justice and the accompanying statutory guidance. Together, the three companion documents describe the strategic direction required to deliver and monitor improvement in community justice outcomes in Scotland.

In 2020, as required by the Act, CJS carried out a review of the OPIF and recommended to Scottish Ministers that the OPIF be revised in order to better meet the needs of community justice partners to develop an evidence base, drive improvement and demonstrate progress towards outcomes. CJS developed recommendations for specific revisions during 2021.

Findings from engagement activity demonstrated the need for revision to better support the range of audiences who use the framework. This includes local community justice partners, CJS and the Scottish Government.

The findings evidenced the need to:

- better link the framework to national and local improvement planning and activity in addition to supporting local reporting ([section 23](#)) and national reporting ([section 27](#)) requirements under the 2016 Act
- provide greater direction to support partnership contribution and collaboration in achieving shared community justice outcomes
- better support centrally co-ordinated data provision
- understand progress as a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators

- ensure the individual and person-centred support is at the heart of outcome ambition
- better demonstrate alignment and shared outcomes with the range of partner/partnership frameworks interfacing with community justice

3. Recommendations: partnerships:

Although recommendations were published only six months before partners were required to provide their returns, there are clear signs of work developing which can continue to be supported by the new national strategy and OPIF implementation.

- Partnerships should build on work undertaken within the reporting period relating to third sector identification and engagement, and apply lessons learned to ensure they have established mechanisms to identify and engage with victim organisations as well.

Local partners described engagement with victim organisations through structural and partner connections to violence against women and girls partnerships and involvement with Victim Support Scotland and other local organisations such as those which specialise in addressing gender-based violence. More third sector organisations are involved through community planning connections, contracting arrangements and other development work such as research, planning and service design.

Many partnerships described specific third sector roles in local community justice boards such as membership, chairing or vice-chair roles. These roles were held by representatives from organisations including third sector interfaces, Apex, Cyrenians, Families Outside, rape crisis centres, Resilience Learning Partnership, Sacro, Turning Point Scotland, Wise Group, Women's Aid, Victim Support Scotland and Kairos Women.

Some partnerships described either having or developing plans for community justice forums for more detailed and meaningful third sector engagement in their local areas. These provide more robust channels for sharing information between statutory partners and third sector organisations. Similarly, regular direct engagement between third sector organisations and the community justice co-ordinator is seen as valuable.

The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum hosted a workshop for partners to develop engagement methods and produced a report with guidance for partnerships. This is a valuable resource.

- Recommendation 2: CJPs should consider using more specific impact and evaluation data, alongside life stories, to demonstrate progress against person-centred outcomes in the 2021-22 annual return. This could include, amongst other things, data from CPO exit questionnaires, public social partnership and third sector organisation outcome data, and outcome data from statutory services.

Most areas showed progress towards the recommendation in last year's annual report about impact and evaluation data to demonstrate progress against the person-centred outcomes.

It is challenging to make national inferences based on any aggregation of the data gathered to evidence the impact of this activity. Nonetheless, it is clear from the data that the community justice workforce understands the need to recognise and to describe the impact of interventions. Partnerships have taken steps to do so, and many described individuals' experiences of services as well as relationships and community.

- Recommendation 3: Partnerships should undertake (or evidence the work already undertaken) to understand the future need and demand on their services: in particular, but not constrained to, recovery from the pandemic.

Many partnerships reported having completed or starting or planning development for an evidence base to support post-pandemic planning through research such as strategic needs and strengths assessment activities and other evidence gathering.

The strategic gaps and challenges reported vary broadly from area to area. However, the issues most commonly mentioned are:

- increasing complexity of need among people presenting at services, exacerbated by the pandemic
- decreasing availability/capacity of specialist services to help address complex needs, particularly mental health and substance recovery services
- recruitment, retention and wellbeing of the community justice workforce
- the cost-of-living crisis for people who experience long-term poverty
- systemic backlogs in court business and unpaid work after the pandemic
- information gaps which inhibit analysis for strategic planning. While there is still missing data, the systemic shocks caused by the pandemic have undermined the validity of certain numerical data. The capacity for strategic planning has also been inhibited by pandemic responses. There are many unknowns within structural policy development such as the National Care Service, reforms to the women's prison estate, the cost-of-living crisis and diminishing funding of public services
- structural issues with remand, diversion and bail supervision

- drug-related deaths, mental health and gender-based violence remain overlapping concerns between community justice and other policy areas
- there is still a gap in the extent to which the voices of people being convicted, victims and their families are heard – vital for meeting community justice outcomes
- digital exclusion remains a problem for service users. Although partners have tried to mitigate this, gaps in access will need to be continually monitored for services which have moved to mixed-digital models
- access to victim services is an ongoing issue
- other gaps and challenges include supporting electronic monitoring, relationships between key workers and service users, demographic challenges to universal services, access to universal services, rurality issues, stigma, provision of restorative justice, suicide, implementing MAT standards, getting and keeping trust from service users who experience life at the hard edges, communication between services, liberation from court, third sector sustainability, and educational attainment of service users

Some partnerships describe combining the expertise of people with lived experience with the strategic experience of partners to better understand community justice evidence.

Other partnerships describe plans to develop similar authentic co-production.

- Partners should note their collective statutory responsibilities under the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 to ensure that:
 - all partners are aware of the statutory obligations, and that clarity and agreement is sought over partner expectations and contribution to ensuring these are met
 - all national partners understand and comply with their individual responsibilities in supporting partnerships achieve their aims (section 35)

Developing engagement, participation and contribution from all statutory partners in all local areas is an ongoing challenge but local partnerships have responded constructively to this recommendation:

- 11 partnerships noted that development or information sessions with partners about this recommendation has either taken place or is planned

- eight partnerships mentioned reviewing terms of reference or operating arrangements
- three partnerships described developing induction processes for new partners
- four partnerships described targeted work with specific statutory partners
- others described strengths in their existing arrangements

The new National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) sets out priority actions for leadership. CJS will report on developments and progress in due course.

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