



Working together to make a real difference

Orkney Community Justice Partnership - Executive Summary – Annual Report 2021/22

Foreword

Orkney Community Justice Partnership is pleased to present this local report, drawn from the return provided to Community Justice Scotland, each September, as part of the annual reporting cycle.

Community Justice (CJ) was revamped in 2016 with a move to more local arrangements. It remains a collection of individuals, agencies and services that work together to support, manage and supervise people who have committed offences, from the point of arrest, through prosecution, community disposal or custody and alternatives to these, until they are reintegrated into the community. CJ is about smart justice, where people who have broken the law are held to account and supported to reconnect and contribute to their communities.

Such actions are captured within the annual return to Community Justice Scotland (CJS). This in turn informs [CJS's national report](#). Following the IJB in March 2022, it was agreed to provide this document, which summarise the template report to assist with interpretation of local activity.

Background

Local communities and the third sector are a vital part of CJ, which aims to prevent and reduce reoffending and the harm that it causes, to promote desistance, social inclusion, and citizenship. Partners work collaboratively to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the report. The content of the original report on community justice outcomes and improvements in our area was agreed by the Community Justice Partnership and was then shared with our Community Planning Partnership through our local accountability arrangements. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act, 2016 placed a duty on community justice statutory partners to produce a Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP).

The local plan expired in March 2021, however an extension statement was published to reflect the current landscape. Namely that the National Strategy for Community Justice (the Strategy), was recently revised and published. Furthermore, CJS revised the Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (OPIF),

which was submitted to Scottish Government for approval. Finally, the community planning cycle will see the renewal of the Orkney Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) in April 2023. Revision of any one of the three elements above requires CJ partnerships to review their own CJOIP. In parallel to the expected publication of the three aspects above, work continues on a Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA), which will inform the development of Orkney's next CJOIP.

CJS Partnership Recommendations

During the last reporting cycle (2020/21), four recommendations were made for consideration by Community Justice Partnerships (CJP):

1. 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.
2. Consider using more specific impact and evaluation data, alongside life stories, to demonstrate progress against person-centred outcomes in the 2021-22 annual return. For example, Community Payback Order (CPO) exit questionnaires, Public Social Partnership (PSP) and third sector outcome data.
3. 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.
4. 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 and that all national partners understand and comply with their individual responsibilities to support partnerships in achieving their aims (section 35).

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There has been no change to governance arrangements within the Partnership during the preceding year, although there have been some changes in personnel occupying roles, who were welcomed into the group and encouraged to contribute where possible.

As with all other local authority areas this year's Community Justice reporting continued to have been significantly impacted by the pandemic with many partners, particularly non-statutory groups, reporting challenges they faced to remain operational. All partners highlighted ongoing adaption in service delivery to reflect, firstly the implementation of restrictions and thereafter their easing. Some concerns were identified about a raised expectancy level being placed on some organisations with an increase in demand for service, without providing the resource to fulfil those expectations. Agencies reported a growth in client support around domestic abuse, relationships breakdown and mental health challenges when compared to the previous year.

In response to the four recommendations from CJS for Partnerships to consider, Orkney continued to benefit from the strong bonds within the partnership, with

excellent working relationships visible. Particularly evident amongst our third sector organisations and the long-established interfaces between them and the statutory partners. This avoided duplication and helped maximise low staffing models to achieve best possible outcomes in the circumstances.

During this reporting period local Third Sector groups led on initiatives in Orkney such as:

- Peedie Birds Campaign – Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS).
- Support from ORSAS to the Tak- A- Stand Instagram campaign to raise awareness of sexual violence and harassment.
- Relationships Scotland (Orkney) – Substance Misuse Support & Outreach Worker.
- Orkney Domestic Abuse Forum in conjunction with Orkney Public Protection Committee combined inter-island bid to the Equally Safe Fund, which saw the successful creation of Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts, working together in Women’s Aid - Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles. (Three separate local authorities).
- Development of Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) offering mental health support to vulnerable individuals.

Benefit was also derived from external support organisations such as Families Outside and Apex, with Throughcare support to prisoners and their families. This support was crucial in removing stigma and worry, particularly from the families left behind and was recognised as contributing to help those who touched the justice system from reoffending.

Innovation was also to the fore with organisations changing their engagement processes to more online supported delivery methods and many recognising that, whilst it changed the interaction, it offered clear dividends and benefits. Many remote and rural communities are keen not to lose these as we see a desire to return to more traditional pre-pandemic contact arrangements. This also provided greater connectivity for training and allowed rural staff to better engage with national forums, whilst keeping costs, both financial and time, to a minimum.

The existing plan outlined key local needs and priorities and the actions to address these. This will be replicated in our new CJOIP. The report reflected the set national outcomes and demonstrated local activity and proposed strategies to evidence progress. The report was designed to capture a range of important data in a way that highlighted key aspects of community justice activities, outcomes and improvements over the specified period without it being onerous or time and resource demanding. In addition, the response to COVID-19 impacted significantly on our ability to deliver on some community justice activities, although some level of service was maintained.

Development work continued around Community Payback activity, with a desire to increase holistic support to those undertaking sentences in the community. Limited disruption was experienced in this sector, as a consequence of the pandemic, however innovation had a part of play and opportunities were explored and

developed in relation to technological avenues. It is hoped to build on these in subsequent years.

The SNSA was an initial step in the formation of any new CJOIP. Data mapping was undertaken with the formation of demographic profiles to understand the needs of those who touched the justice system. Following a Needs Analysis, with analytical support it helped identify gaps in service provision, which will inform any new plan. This has been achieved with wider partnership engagement and will continue to do so to ensure future planning is drawn from as wide an 'audience' as possible.

Partnership input will always vary, and efforts continue to maximise engagement, and effective contribution to CJ from all. A reminder of Partner's responsibilities was woven through many CJS circulations and correspondence. Locally, the OCJP continued this theme and welcomed partners inclusion in forums and submissions at every opportunity.

National Outcomes

Aligned to the relevant National Strategy, seven outcomes remained the focus for Partnership activity during the reporting period. As with many forums, limited progress was made against them whilst most resources were focussed on addressing the pandemic response. However, despite this, some activity was achieved. As with previous years, the Structural Outcomes were demonstrable easier compared to the Person – Centric ones.

STRUCTURAL OUTCOMES - What we deliver as partners

Outcome 1 – Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice. Needs assessments were undertaken and the subsequent publication of documents to advocate CJ at every opportunity. Participation alongside Restart Orkney with the repair of furniture and promoting the value of the work undertaken by those engaged in community sentences assisted in demonstrating the value of CJ. Alongside visible activities, this continued to compliment any public facing reports.

Outcome 2 – Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way. Valuable contributions, particularly from third sector agencies offered support to those in the community suffering from addiction and/or living in challenging circumstances. Whilst some joined up working was achieved further efforts continued to ensure a more collaborative approach to leverage resources. Addiction and mental health support remained pivotal in this area, with early benefits in projects such as the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) and substance outreach work. In addition, Families Outside provided some local training to professionals and support to prisoners and their families.

Outcome 3 - People have better access to the services that they require, including welfare, health and wellbeing, housing and employability. Pathways developed for support to relevant individuals in the community. Due to low crime levels the relevant affected group was small, however nonetheless they were present, and work continued to support them. Particularly those engaged with the justice system who were at risk of compromising the services listed above on

account of their circumstances. Some of those who were furthest from the labour market included those with convictions. Strong engagement with the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) developed opportunities and encouraged those in the justice system into employment to divert them away from reoffending. Housing providers were well placed to offer Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone (SHORE) - agreed Scottish wide standards.

Outcome 4 - Effective interventions are delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending. Again, low crime levels equated to low numbers of opportunities, however nonetheless early discussion undertaken, where appropriate, to resolve criminal justice experiences at the lowest level. In order to maintain confidence and protect the interests of people who have been victims of crime, it is important that the interventions available reflect the appropriate level of risk and the nature and severity of the offence and should be robustly and consistently applied and delivered. Consideration also given to “other activities” particularly for vulnerable service users.

PERSON CENTRIC OUTCOMES – Changes to Users

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 three person-centric outcomes, (5,6&7), as with other community justice partnerships were harder to measure, however some positive messages identified from those who received a community sentence and the value of support they received from community payback supervisors. Demonstrating positives from these therapeutic relationships and helping some to work through the reasons for offending with a view to promoting desistance from future criminality.

Valuable work undertaken around housing support to ensure affected individuals could maintain their tenancy and where relevant that benefit eligibility checks were undertaken to ensure persons receive monies they were entitled to. Opportunity going forward to develop closer working relationships in this area, although no evidence to suggest there has been anything other than effective activity.

Employment and assistance with finding it has also been effective in this area. Employment opportunities remained available in Orkney, although any encouragement to those not in the labour market, was only of benefit with good support networks established involving LEP, Skills Development Scotland and other key contributors.

The Year Ahead

There has been no doubt in recent years activities of the Partnership have been curtailed due to the need to prioritise the pandemic response. However, with a refocus of the Partnership and the easing of restrictions it is hoped to make more progress in support of CJ in Orkney. In addition to the development of a new local plan, which aspires to include SMART objectives. The new CJOIP will reflect the recently published National Strategy, alongside the soon to be published Outcome Performance Improvement Framework. Priorities for the year to come are seen as:

- Development of Safe & Together, allowing more focus on Perpetrator intervention.
- Completion of the SNSA activity.
- Renewed engagement with CJ contributing partners, locally, to ensure greater understanding of obligations, duties and responsibilities

Community justice continues to be an important partnership within community planning to ensure measures are considered that reduce and prevent reoffending, with the aim of rehabilitating members of our community who enter the Justice System. Our continued focus on this will maintain public confidence and improve the quality of life for all our residents, continuing to make Orkney a safe and thriving place to live and work.

Stephen Brown – Chief Officer – Chair Orkney Community Justice Partnership