



Working together to make a real difference

Orkney Community Justice Partnership - Executive Summary – Annual Report 2022/23

Foreword

Orkney Community Justice Partnership (OCJP) is pleased to present the second annual local report, extracted from the return provided to Community Justice Scotland, each September, as part of the reporting cycle. This ensures that locally we comply with the statutory responsibilities under Sect 23 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

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 [Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland Annual Report 2021-2022](#).

Significant strategic developments took place in the reporting year 2022-23, namely;

1. Publication of the Scottish Government's [Vision for Justice](#) in February 2022.
2. The publication of a revised [National Strategy](#) in June 2022.
3. The review of the OPIF culminating in the publication in April 2023 of the [Community Justice Performance Framework](#) and the accompanying [Community Justice Improvement Tool](#).

These significant strategic developments had substantial implications for local areas in their delivery of statutory obligations within community justice. Further, they had the effect of creating a de-facto transition year, where the National Strategy for Community Justice and reporting framework were not aligned. In recognition of this, the scope of the return template was reconsidered.

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 extension statements were 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). 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. Following completion of the Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA), focus has shifted to develop Orkney's CJOIP.

CJS Partnership Recommendations

During the last reporting cycle (2021/22), determination was made by Community Justice Scotland that no new recommendations would be made for this year, however the evidence raised seven 'talking points' instead. Some of these formed the subject of Community Justice Scotland workshops held throughout the subsequent year and used to inform improvement activity.

Annual Report Summary 2022/23

The reporting time frame still included very much a response impacted by Covid and as such Community Justice Scotland sought contributions from partners about Challenges or Negatives as well as identifying Positives or Opportunities which had been presented as a consequence of this.

Challenges/Negatives

Restrictions on the ability of partners to come together was still hindering group cohesion however this was overcome with continued reliance upon technology with Teams being instrumental in allowing the forum to continue to operate. Partners also advised on challenges to deliver services in their own specific sphere, with an acknowledgement of increased demand for service, which saw the development of waiting lists for some organisations for the first time. This was most acutely felt by third sector representatives who reported clients presenting with more complex needs, which was more resource intensive. All being achieved without any additional funding.

A turnover in membership of the Partnership also saw a loss of knowledge, however this was partially overcome with the introduction of a briefing document for new members onto the forum, which has assisted in explaining expectations.

The absence of a fully staffed ADP also presented some challenges, however commissioned service continued to deliver support to those most at need in Orkney. Remote and rural communities continued to experience challenges around access to addiction support, which is typically available in larger local authority areas. Supported accommodation waiting times were also identified due to the increases experienced. This added challenges for young people navigating the criminal justice system and was also mirrored in the wider housing stock. Other partners reported similar experiences due to the absence of full staffing in post and the challenges around recruitment, which impacted on service delivery. Whilst Orkney was a destination of choice there remained an ongoing difficulty around housing availability.

In addition, the absence of a perpetrator programme to work with domestic offenders was identified, however this is a placed based issued which all remote and rural communities struggle with. Work underway with a view to partially overcome this.

Lived experiences can be useful in helping to determine services and how best to deliver them. However, access to lived experiences can be more challenging in smaller communities due to increased likelihood of identifying the individual involved, which can cause a reluctance to engage. This was able to be partially overcome with reliance of contributions from partner organisations who were able to represent clients' experiences and shape service delivery accordingly.

Partners also reported challenges around governance arrangements due to short term funding arrangements, which were not conducive to establishing longer term support to those in need.

Despite the foregoing challenges there have also been some positives opportunities in Orkney.

Positives / Opportunities

The return of the court user group facilitated consideration about processes experienced by those navigating the justice system and allowed for wider discussion to take place including promotion of Community Justice first hand. Due to smaller numbers going through the justice system in Orkney, the impacts of Covid upon the court process and subsequent community-based sentencing had minimal impact.

Partners continued to remain engaged with Community Justice in Orkney with strong attendance at virtual partnership meetings. Partners engaged on discussions around the new Strategy and supporting products as well as coming together in multiple online workshops to understand changes and contribute collaboratively, particularly around the SNSA development.

Options were also developed around use of online support to individuals navigating the justice system, with support from initiatives such as Creative Change Collective (formerly Street Cones), Grace Chocolates and free RCA Trust inputs on Gambling.

Partners welcomed the ongoing access to and use of virtual technology, particularly for meetings and training. Whilst everyone shared the desire for a return to normality, hybrid working offered the best of both worlds for remote and rural communities. Partners reported continuing access to such inputs, particularly with the majority being held in the Central Belt of Scotland. This allowed more frequent engagement and offered significant costs savings in travel and accommodation as well as time. This was a particular benefit which Partners in Orkney were keen was recognised nationally with a view to it being adopted as continuing good practice. This was to encourage that meaningful hybrid meetings were an option rather than returning solely to face-to-face meetings.

By extension some partners, in particular Families Outside (FO), who offered support to the relatives of those serving a custodial sentence, identified the positives for remote and rural communities of progress with virtual prison connectivity. This was a mitigating factor to remote and rural communities in relation to the Report on the [Financial Cost of Imprisonment](#). Orkney continued to have a strong working relationship with FO as a key partner and support their initiatives to reduce any burden, financial or otherwise, on families of those in prison.

Victim Support Scotland (Orkney) reported benefits in supporting clients virtually who were living in separate remote communities. Technology allowed for virtual meeting to be held allowing multiple linked witnesses to be supported and advised about a forthcoming trial which they were required to give evidence in. Furthermore, courts appeared more amenable for some witnesses to give their evidence remotely. Whilst recognising this is not in every instance, it did make the process of giving evidence significantly easier and less time consuming and financially burdensome, particularly for those in remote communities such as Orkney. Police in Orkney echoed the benefit to allowing witnesses, including police officers, to give their evidence remotely, which expedited the justice process causing fewer delays and delivering justice quicker with less financial impact.

During this period there was restructuring by the Service Manager (Justice Services) of the Community Payback Supervisors, creating one full time member of staff (temporary post) and one part time member of staff. In addition, for the first time, one of the Supervisors was female. Given the increase in the number of women, almost double, who are touching the justice system, Orkney was better equipped to manage the supervision of female offenders, whilst offering a more diverse workforce to respond to client needs.

The Orkney Drugs Dog (ODD) charity continued to operate during this time and indeed grew with the acquisition of a second detection dog. ODD and was heavily supported in the Partnership by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, with accommodation. The ODD also worked closely with another Statutory Partners, Police Scotland and delivered a deterrent to counter the movement of drugs into Orkney.

Right There reported an enhanced level of partnership working between them and criminal justice social workers with greater collaboration, cooperation and communication experienced as both partners worked together to support young people who were engaged with the justice system. This ensured clients were supported to make all their meetings and with a more robust support network around them it offered structure to what had been a chaotic lifestyle. Post Covid recovery and

developing relationships contributed to this. In addition, other opportunities were explored around diversion, particularly where the young people who they were supporting were identified as being more vulnerable during the day when service provision was not readily available. A review of the service delivery model has taken cognisance of this.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) undertook a structured programme with young people who were coming to the attention of local police and had entered the justice system. This provided inputs on gang violence, knife crime, drug and alcohol misuse and the impacts on individuals and communities in order to encourage those young people to consider the consequences of their actions with the aim of reducing their reoffending.

Relationship Scotland Orkney reported an increase in referrals from Criminal Justice Social Work, in particular for support and counselling around alcohol and drug use.

National Outcomes

Aligned to the relevant National Strategy, seven outcomes remained the focus for Partnership activity during the reporting period.

STRUCTURAL OUTCOMES - What we deliver as partners.

Outcome 1 – Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice.

Reflection from the Partnership felt that there was still some way to go to ensure wider understanding of Community Justice across the community in Orkney. There remained a perception that community sentences were a soft option. In addition to comments on-line and in the media, this was evidenced through survivor support groups engagement and explanation to persons who they were supporting during this time.

This was enhanced with engagement at the Orkney Careers Fair with employers and the contribution they could make to community justice. Further enhanced through the Local Employability Partnership and an employer engagement event in conjunction with Skills Development Scotland at the New Hub on Bridge Street.

Community Sentences saw a doubling of the numbers issued at court and resultant exit interview identified the value experienced by the clients who undertook them.

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

Collaborative workshops were held across the partnership which assisted in the completion of the Strategic Needs and Strength Assessment (SNSA) and ensure contributions were heard from all available partners as we look to shape a new outcome improvement plan. During the year strong evidence was visible of the close working relationship which exists in Orkney across the Partnership and saw good use of the limited resource to support those most at need in the community.

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

In remote communities like Orkney challenges still exist in engagement with support, however during this year there were excellent examples of partner contributions with Right There developing online counselling, Families Outside continued to support relatives of those imprisoned. Relationships Scotland - Orkney worked to maintain family relationships where people who were engaged with the justice system found barriers to such. Work was also undertaken with the RCA Trust to share free awareness of gambling addiction and what support was available. Distress Brief Interventions, supported by the Blide Trust continued and saw a notable increase, particularly in the latter half of the

financial year. The LEP continued to be active in Orkney helping those furthest from the labour market back into employment.

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

Support to individuals navigating the justice system continued in an effort to reduce their reoffending and assist those convicted to reintegrate back into the community in Orkney. Some specific programmes such as the Creative Change Collective provided online support to those undertaking unpaid work locally. This helped to enhance feelings of self-worth and provided structure to their lives. This assisted with employment for one individual as a consequence. Grace Chocolates free support was also sought by the Partnership for women who had touched the justice system. This throughcare support provided online assistance and mentoring for local women who met the criteria. Additional work was also achieved in partnership with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to offer safety advice and diversionary activity for individuals navigating the justice system. Greater use of community sentences was also experienced with an increase from 29 to 60 against last year's figures, which is in line with the values of community justice.

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.

These three outcomes have traditionally been challenging to measure and report against. However, during this reporting year there have been exit questionnaires and comments from those accessing support in Orkney where they have identified self-progress against some of the outcomes. In addition, some partners who support individuals have reported on observations from those with living experience of the justice system and how they feel they have developed.

There are also examples where Other Activity supported people to reintegrate back into the community following a conviction. In some instances, this support has been online and external (Grace Chocolates/Creative Change Collective) where those taking part have been able to benefit from speaking with someone out with Orkney, which has offered a different perspective. Again, self-reporting however they have benefited by securing employment and developed not only themselves but positive relationships with others.

The Year Ahead

Priorities for the Partnership going forward are:

- The development and publication of a new Outcome Improvement Plan for the area, reflecting the new strategy for Community Justice (2022) and associated framework measurement tools, taking account of gaps and needs identified during the SNSA process. This will see a shift in focus where partners will be encouraged to report on progress against SMART actions to ensure meaningful progress and continuous improvement is demonstrated.
- Engagement with and adoption of self-evaluation following the release of guidance from the Care Inspectorate.
- Consider opportunities for commissioning of services under the banner of community justice in an effort to address identified gaps and needs.

- Following on from the publication of the Diversion from Prosecution Review to consider the 34 recommendations and explore additional prospects which can be exploited to avoid criminalising individuals where it is felt detrimental to do so.

All of which is to be achieved through a Trauma Informed lens.

Stephen Brown – Chief Officer – Chair Orkney Community Justice Partnership
December 2023