

Stephen Brown (Chief Officer)
Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership
01856873535 extension: 2601
OHACfeedback@orkney.gov.uk



Agenda Item: 15

Integration Joint Board

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2024.

Subject: Orkney Community Justice Partnership's Annual Report.

1. Purpose

1.1. This report presents Members with the annual return sent to Community Justice Scotland (CJS) from Orkney Community Justice Partnership (OCJP) along with a summary report for awareness.

2. Recommendations

The Integration Joint Board is invited to note:

2.1. The Community Justice Local Area Annual Return for 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.2. The impact of justice services on improving outcomes for those subject to court disposals locally.

2.3. The priority areas which will be the focus of the next reporting year, as follows:

- During the forthcoming years there will be an embedding of the new Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan along with a proposed annual action plan, which should help direct partner activity, with a focus upon SMART objectives. This will assist partners to consider their role, through an adjusted community justice lens, reflecting the new strategy and performance framework.
- In parallel there is a planned self-evaluation project to ensure opportunities to improve and develop the services we deliver are identified and exploited to maximum benefit.
- Finance remains a barrier, or risk, to the partnership, with component and contributing partners reporting challenges around funding arrangements and the difficulties or uncertainties which they come with due to annual funding settlements versus multiyear planning initiatives. These present hurdles to long-term sustainability around some initiatives or support processes.

- Activity in train considering the development of a perpetrator programme for those convicted of domestic abuse in addition to ensuring the availability of restorative justice in Orkney. Both projects however are reliant upon finance, within a fiscally challenging time frame, which is also a risk.
- As with every forecast there remains a desire to enhance or increase support to those who are navigating the justice system, with a view to reintegrating them back into a community. Employment and upskilling those who undertake a community sentence, through 'Other Activities' remains a focus for the justice team as this can help reduce the chance of reoffending where self-worth or self-belief can be restored. In addition, developing opportunities for unpaid work with local employers, where there is potential for employment post sentence. Diversion from prosecution will continue to be an area that we look to develop.
- It has also been recognised that the number of women clients entering Justice Services is on the increase, so development of additional women's support services is an aspiration. A good gender balance has been struck within the Justice Team, which is a beneficial first step.
- Finally, public reassurance and understanding of community justice will continue to be a focus for the partnership. The local community need to have faith in the process and see tangible benefits to this policy, where it is appropriate to do so.

2.4. The Executive Summary, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, which summarises the Annual Return.

3. Background

3.1. CJS was established to provide assurance to Scottish Ministers on the collective achievement of community justice outcomes across Scotland. CJS also provides strategy, training and insight to support partners to prevent/reduce reoffending, making communities safer.

3.2. CJS works with partners to drive change by identifying improvements and challenges in the criminal justice system. They also identify worldwide expertise, best practice and opportunities for commissioning and introduce fresh ideas which inspire innovation and change.

3.3. At a local level, strategic planning and service delivery is the responsibility of local Community Justice Partnerships. The statutory partners are required to produce a local plan for Community Justice, the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan, including engagement with and involvement of the Third Sector in the planning, delivery and reporting of services and improved outcomes.

3.4. Section 20 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 states that the statutory Community Justice partners must:

- Have regard to the national strategy, the national performance framework, the local outcomes improvement plan for the area (This is the plan that is prepared and published under section 6(1) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015), and any Guidance issued by Scottish Ministers.

- Consult with CJS, such community bodies and other persons in relation to their area as they consider appropriate. Third Sector service providers will fall under the definition of ‘community bodies’.
- Consider which community bodies are likely to be able to contribute to the preparation of the plan and make all reasonable efforts to secure their participation. Where a community body wishes to participate in the preparation of the plan to any extent, the Community Justice partners must take such steps as are reasonable to enable it to do so.

3.5. The OCJP is chaired by the Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, and papers are available for public scrutiny [here](#).

4. Key Findings

4.1. During the reporting period 2023/24, OCJP was able to contribute to all 13 Priority Actions, set by CJS, and efforts continue to develop this response in the years to come to ensure maximum advantage can be gained for the local area. This has been a transition year moving to a new strategy and performance framework for Community Justice.

4.2. Despite limited access to support services due to geographical challenges, the partnership has continued to maximise support opportunities for the benefit of victims, survivors and justice experienced individuals to reduce reoffending.

4.3. New initiatives have been introduced with an innovative approach to achieve Best Value from limited funding in the promotion of community justice. Partners across a diverse sector have meaningfully contributed, with a collaborative approach evident.

4.4. Partners experienced challenge in relation to timely funding provision, and the associated obstacle of annual funding arrangements for longer-term projects, which impacts on sustained and settled activity.

4.5. Some agencies are continuing to see heightened need for their services and clients presenting with more complex needs.

5. Contribution to quality

Please indicate which of the Orkney Community Plan 2023 to 2030 values are supported in this report adding Yes or No to the relevant area(s):

Resilience: To support and promote our strong communities.	Yes.
Enterprise: To tackle crosscutting issues such as digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty.	Yes.
Equality: To encourage services to provide equal opportunities for everyone.	Yes.
Fairness: To make sure socio-economic and social factors are balanced.	Yes.

Innovation: To overcome issues more effectively through partnership working.	Yes.
Leadership: To involve partners such as community councils, community groups, voluntary groups and individuals in the process.	Yes.
Sustainability: To make sure economic and environmental factors are balanced.	No.

6. Resource and financial implications

6.1. The Justice Social Work Services grant allocation for 2023/24 was £294,538 which covers a range of services and programmes.

6.2. In addition to the core funding there is also a financial allocation of £62,500 to support collaborative work across Community Justice Partnerships. This funding has continued into financial year 2023/24. This funding is primarily used to fund a 35-hour per week Community Justice Planning, Performance and Information Officer.

7. Risk and equality implications

7.1. There are no risk or equality implications directly arising from this report, however reduced or constrained future funding allocations could affect the OCJP's ability to deliver its statutory functions, as well as its aspirations such as additional women's support services to meet increasing demand.

8. Direction required

Please indicate if this report requires a direction to be passed to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.

9. Escalation required

Please indicate if this report requires escalated to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.

10. Authors and contact information

10.1. Stephen Brown (Chief Officer), Integration Joint Board. Email: stephen.brown3@nhs.scot, telephone: 01856873535 extension 2601.

10.2. Darren Morrow (Head of Children, Families and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer), Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership. Email: darren.morrow@orkney.gov.uk, telephone: 01856873535 extension 26111.

10.3. Sharon-Ann Paget (Service Manager (Public Protection / Criminal Justice)), Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership. Email: sharon-ann.paget@orkney.gov.uk, telephone: 01856873535 extension 2660.

10.4. Matthew Webb (Community Justice Planning, Performance and Information Officer), Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership. Email: matthew.webb@orkney.gov.uk, telephone: 01856873535 extension 2615.

11. Supporting documents

11.1. Appendix 1: Orkney Community Justice Annual Report 2023/24.

11.2. Appendix 2: Executive Summary Report 2023/24.

Community Justice Scotland
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

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

April 2024

1. Background

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

2. Statement of Assurance and Data Usage

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

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

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

3. General principles of the template

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

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

4. How to fill in the template

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you have any queries about completing the template, then please email CJSImprovement@communityjustice.scot.

1. Community Justice Partnership / Group Details

Name of local authority area/s	Orkney Islands Council
Name and contact details of the partnership Chair	Name: Stephen Brown Email: stephen.brown3@nhs.scot Telephone: 01856 873535 extension 2601
Contact for queries about this report	Name: Matt Webb Email: matthew.webb@orkney.gov.uk Telephone: 07554228919

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

In terms of the Section 27, Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, (hereafter referred to as The Act) duty to submit an annual return to Community Justice Scotland, I can confirm that this submission has been agreed by members of the Orkney Community Justice Partnership (OCJP) as an accurate record. We also confirm that as part of the Section 23 duty to publish a public-facing annual report on progress towards national and local outcomes, this report, along with a local summary report will be made available on the Community Justice webpage, which is hosted on the Orkney Islands Council website.

The report will also be laid before the Integrated Joint Board for noting.

Date:...27 September 2024

Name:...Stephen Brown, Chief Officer – Chair OCJP

3. Governance Arrangements

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

There has been no material change to the Governance structure during the relevant reporting year, however new Terms of Reference have been adopted by the group, which includes a refreshed list of stakeholders to the partnership.

OCJP primarily reports to The Integrated Joint Board (IJB) and ultimately the Chief Officers Group (COG), through both verbal and written reports. The Chair of OCJP remains a member of the Orkney Partnership Board (OPB) and any relevant reports can be shared through this link.

National accountability remains with the submission of an Outcome Activity Annual Report (OAAR) to Community Justice Scotland (CJS), which details progress and intended activity against the CJOIP, taking account of any national recommendations and discharges Section 23 and 27 requirements as laid out in The Act. Once the OAAR template has been submitted to CJS, a summary report is prepared and laid before the IJB.

4. The year overall

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

Challenges / Negatives

Describe some of the negative impact(s) and/or challenge(s) your community justice partnership faced in the reporting year. You may include how the partnership responded to these.

This reporting year has been one of transition as a new Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) was under development. Whilst it was partially aligned, many of the actions and activities were still structured to the previous plan as we moved over to a new strategy and performance framework. This challenge should be overcome with a full alignment to the new local CJOIP.

As with previous years and indicative of remote and rural communities it can be harder to access appropriate support services, which were more readily available in larger, centrally located local authority areas, so geography remained a challenge. However, there is no remedy and the local response to this can be considered a positive as is reflected in comment below. Addiction and mental health resources in particular are in greatest demand.

Some partners continued to see heightened need for their services, most acutely felt amongst some third sector representatives. Partners report seeing clients presenting with more complex needs. This extended the length of time required for the counselling journey and saw waiting lists in some third sector organisations continuing. Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS) reported an increase in survivors looking for their support amongst 13-15 years and 16-19 years groups. Consequently, they have waived their waiting lists for those under 18 years and adults engaged with the justice system to provide early intervention for the most vulnerable, which is a positive step.

The lack of access to a perpetrator programme for instances of domestic abuse continues albeit there have been some suggested remedies to this as detailed below.

Women's Aid Orkney (WAO), also report challenges around a rise in demand for their services, with women, children and young people requiring of their support, however also clients presenting with more complex needs, which they are struggling to support as a standalone agency. In some instances, this has led to disjointed support whilst waiting for other services inputs. They also report challenges around 'move on' accommodation, with clients having to stay longer in the Refuge, which can lead to greater social isolation and in some cases a return to the perpetrator. Accommodation has also had an impact on their ability to accept referrals at times. Uncertainty around funding remains a huge concern, a view shared by other partners.

Smaller communities made it difficult to report on lived experiences due to concerns of compromise of persons identities, which contributed to difficulties in encouraging persons to speak up about their experiences, positive or otherwise, in relation to community justice.

Furthermore, a challenge with ongoing local media scrutiny, which was felt to be intrusive, particularly around sexual violence cases. The recognised impact was firstly causing survivors to vocalise an unwillingness to report instances to police, not because of the investigative and subsequent court process but rather the local media reporting that was the norm and how they felt this would be reported in the local newspaper. Moreover, as with most small communities, the impact on defendants or those convicted of an offence and how they were reported upon in the media. Leading to challenges further down the line when it came to employment opportunities. This was a topic of discussion amongst partners not only at the OCJP, however it was reflected in other partnerships challenges and was escalated to executive level in an effort to resolve.

Cost to families travelling to prison remains a challenge for Orkney, as with other remote communities. Work ongoing with Families Outside and Scottish Government including the submission of a letter to three of the cabinet secretaries with joint responsibility, which OCJP endorsed. More reporting in subsequent year.

Staffing posts is a challenge across the entire partnership, however policing reported the loss of the full time Preventions and Interventions Officer role due to staff restructuring on account of fiscal pressures. The role has now been absorbed by an officer who will perform it on a part time basis in conjunction with their other core duties, which reduces the capacity for intervention and diversionary activities to be undertaken.

Justice services also have experienced delays in accessing the right support, at the right time on occasions for some clients, which can have an impact on engagement with their community order. This is further impacted with the requirement for a GP referral, rather than a self or justice social worker direct referral to the mental health team. However, once access has been gained to support services locally, these have been found to offer consistent beneficial support.

A number of partner agencies reported ongoing challenges around funding arrangements, which are awarded on an annual basis. This does not lend itself to sustained and settled activity with the lack of certainty having an impact on what can be achieved, and longer-term visions being realised. Specifically Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and, No One Left Behind (NOLB) activity, experienced significant challenges at all levels of provision including planning and service delivery due to delays in Orkney Islands Council receiving the grant offer letter from Scottish Government. The grant offer letter, which details funding allocations and grant conditions, was only received in late July 2023. Uncertainty around allocations, delays in receiving grant offer letters and the persistence of only receiving annual funding to deliver on a three-year plan have caused significant challenges. Late confirmation of funding allocation and conditions, combined with a hard stop of March 2024, makes allocating and distributing funds in a significantly reduced time scale extremely challenging, with little lead in time and even less delivery time. Effectively the LEP had to mobilise, deliver and report on an annual allocation within an eight-month period.

Police highlighted challenges around inefficiency in the court process, with significant financial costs experienced on a regular basis sending officers to Glasgow/Edinburgh etc for court when the trial doesn't go ahead. In addition, local court uncertainty with officers' shifts changed months in advance to attend trials, which has an impact on service delivery and contributions to community justice by extension.

Positives / Opportunities

Describe some of the positive impact(s) / opportunity(ies) your community justice partnership faced in the reporting year. You may include how the partners responded to these.

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

Following on from last year's challenges around staffing on the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), positive recruitment and staff returning has seen greater activity in this area, which has allowed for the development of local initiatives to support individuals, families and the wider community affected by alcohol and / or drug dependency and related harms. This will continue to deliver upon the national Drugs Mission set by the Scottish Government and enhance and coordinate local activity in Orkney in relation to alcohol and drug issues affecting the community, including those who have touched the justice system as a consequence of their addictions.

The continuation of the court user group, after it was reinstated last year, facilitated close discussion amongst prosecutors, sentencers, defenders and justice services to hear justice experiences from support services working with those individuals. This forum helps promote community justice in action and allows for the voice of the client or lived experiences to be aired.

Partners continued to remain engaged with community justice in Orkney with strong attendance at partnership meetings. The frequency of meetings to monitor progress and support the partnership also met national expectations, which has been maintained. A hybrid style of meeting is now well established as the norm, which allows partners to meet in person. However, also keeps open the opportunity for meaningful online attendance from partners who are unable to join in person or third parties who can provide inputs and presentations to the partnership, where travel, time and expenses were previously a barrier, sometimes subconsciously.

Partners also report still being able to engage nationally with virtual invitations and welcome the continuation of this. This is highlighted in particular to ensure the voice of remote and rural communities is heard and to encourage this to remain an option of continuing good practice, even if the reasons for its initial introduction are not as relevant. **The benefits allow a levelling up for remote and rural communities to remain engaged nationally on a more regular basis.** This is an important message and is highlighted with a request that comment is made in the CJS annual report about this.

Due to the small geographical size of the local authority area this engendered a close working relationship amongst the partners, which helped the network build further on last year's progress by negotiating access to limited resources. In addition to the Creative Change Collective (formerly Street Cones), Grace Chocolates and RCA Trust inputs on gambling, further work and presentations have been provided to networks in Orkney by the OCJP with partners' support. Specifically inputs from Families Outside around amplifying the voice of the child where a relative is navigating the justice system and considerations for families responding to imprisonment of a family member. More acute in remote and rural settings. Further

work has been developed with Fast Forward on gambling and gaming addiction. This has included some focused work with clients undertaking a community sentence where 'Other Activities' have been developed and can count against 'hours awarded'. These have enhanced learning and employability skills as well as safety advice and addiction support. All with the intention of aiding community reintegration and reducing their chances of reoffending with structured holistic support.

As part of the self-evaluation process the Chair introduced a new standing agenda item to encourage partners to report on matters that have gone well in their respective organisations since the last meeting. This encouraged attendees to think more of how they approach their work through a community justice lens, with the added benefit of capturing information throughout the year rather than a retrospective memory trawl whenever the annual return is called for. A good example of this was an update from Scottish Prison Service around the availability of a supplement to assuage costs for families from Orkney as part of the assisted visit scheme.

Priority Action One

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution¹

Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

¹ National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed

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

Orkney is Scotland's smallest local authority and as such our numbers will be lower than mainland authority areas by some considerable distance. In some instances, this is beneficial as a community which sees low levels of crime and offending rates. However, this also translates to fewer examples throughout the priority actions. Additionally, there are less support services available, with geographical barriers a challenge in some instances to access the right support in a timely manner on some occasions. Consequently, low occurrences present challenges to fully describe lived experiences as circumstances need diluted to avoid identifying individuals.

The advantage of a small geographical area encourages close partnership working and Orkney benefits from strong working relationships across the CJP, particularly with third sector engagement and support.

Local police, as key stakeholders in the partnership, confirm that all youth offenders are 'gatekept' through a divisional youth offending single point of contact to reduce instances of criminalising individuals where direct measures or diversion are an option. Recorded police warnings are also a first consideration for those 18 years and over, where appropriate. Direct measures remain a primary consideration for police before escalation to a standard police report (SPR) being submitted to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Where a SPR is submitted consideration for diversion rests solely with COPFS. As alluded to above a close working relationship exists between the local procurator fiscal and the justice services manager, which ensures a smooth pathway for discussion and onward allocation where relevant. The direction of travel in recent years has seen increasing numbers of cases being referred to justice services for consideration of diversion, with an assessment undertaken, then commencement of a case through to successful completion. However, with such small numbers fluctuations can occur. Promotion of diversion remains a priority consideration for the area.

During the relevant reporting period there have been three such instances considered locally, all of which resulted in individuals successfully completing diversionary activities. This included addiction support and mental health mentoring to enhance individual resilience and self-worth. The development of employment opportunities and further education also strengthened the individuals outlook and future opportunities, which have contributed to reduced likelihood of reoffending. On

the assessment of local cases, diversion from prosecution has been successful with no reoffending.

It is also worth highlighting in addition to more traditional local support services who assisted with this, there was a particularly supportive input from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) who provided excellent support, guidance and mentoring in relation to fire raising offences. Their expertise and experience allowed for a greater understanding of the potential consequences of such offences, which significantly reduced recidivism. Diversion also assisted an individual to enter further education and led onto throughcare/aftercare support with a positive destination.

Furthermore, a strong working relationship has been developed between the justice services team and the local SFRS community safety advocate, with coproduction of further safety inputs, under 'Other Activities' to those issued with an unpaid work (UPW) or community payback order (CPO). The use of virtual reality (VR) headsets, with associated VR videos has again provided the opportunity for proactive inputs on road and personal safety. This is not limited to those whose convictions were road traffic related and reached a wider 'audience' across Orkneys justice clients, to promote a safety message. During which there have been notable self-reflections from individuals convicted in relation to driving whilst under the influence of alcohol about the consequences of their actions after some of these inputs.

Exit interviews from those undertaking CPO/UPW allow for the recording of the views of those who undertook diversionary activity. This has been developed from a paper-based system to a searchable database as part of the Self Evaluation process. Mechanisms do exist to capture the views of staff supporting the delivery of diversion from prosecution, which is again easier due to the size and scale of service delivery, however this forms part of the action plan in the new Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) for Orkney.

Priority Action Two

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people in police custody receive support to address their needs²

Local Evidence:

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

² National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres

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

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

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

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

In recent years Police Scotland has adopted a national process for safeguarding individuals who have been arrested and taken into police custody. This has seen them managed within regional custody suites, fully staffed with not only detention personnel, however, increasingly this has developed to ensure the colocation of medically trained support from NHS nurses. Additionally, with the introduction of The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 there has been a move to a presumption of liberty, which has seen a reduction in the numbers of people being arrested and taken into police custody.

Due to the remote nature of the local authority area, in relation to the primary regional custody centre in Inverness, any custody staffing requirements for Orkney utilises local officers, who whilst trained, are not full-time custody officers. Oversight is provided by Inverness Custody Centre, however there is no access to the custody referral programme and any medical support requires to be sought locally from NHS Orkney. Signposting for support, both local and national, is facilitated by local police who continue to distribute the Z-fold cards, which direct service users to available support services.

In addition, police remain strong referral partners on the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) pathway, accounting for approximately 95% of referrals. The service provider, The Orkney Blide Trust, a local mental health support charity, and police have a productive relationship, with all officers trained in the referral process. Any new officers are DBI inducted within a short time of arrival in Orkney. This has seen a significant increase in DBI referrals and whilst it is recognised that not all individuals referred will have touched the justice system, a significant proportion of them have

previous convictions and benefit from this additional support. In addition, the increased use of DBI diverts clients away from criminal justice intervention through a more holistic, compassionate community-based support further reducing the likelihood of the outcome resulting in instigation of a criminal justice process.

As detailed above the local ADP has resumed local intervention work with a renewed focus around Alcohol Brief Intervention activities, which are being reintroduced to the custody process. In addition, smoking cessation advice information is also available.

Local police senior management remain a strong contributing partner in the OCJP and promulgate any addiction and support information to local officers for awareness.

The Community Justice Coordinator is also a member of the national MATSIN justice forum, which provides access to information around medically assisted treatment standards, which is also being developed locally by the ADP. Relevant information is thereafter shared with Partners.

Priority Action Three

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision³

Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

³ National Indicator:

Number of:

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

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

During the reporting period there has been an increase in the number of assessments of individuals to test their suitability for bail, with a subsequent increase in cases commenced and completed. Whilst this has not seen all cases run to completion, it is a positive direction of travel with greater use of high-quality bail services an available option rather than reliance on Remand (into custody). As with other local justice data the numbers are low, however, represent a significant percentage change. Caution should be exercised around this due to small numbers. This is also subject of discussion at the court user group to remind those who deliver justice services that this remains a viable option.

An assessment of monthly custody figures for Orkney, issued by Scottish Prison Service (SPS) shows that the year (April 2023) began with six male prisoners, serving a mixture of Remand, Short-Term Prison (STP) sentences and Long-Term Prison (LTP) sentences. This rose throughout the year culminating in March 2024, with ten male prisoners. The rise in prisoner numbers can be attributed to several Solemn prosecutions which, in some instances had been delayed because of COVID-19, being concluded. The focus remains on reducing figures for Remand and STP, where suitable for bail monitoring or a community sentence. Most Orkney prisoners are now serving LTP sentences.

In regard to support for those on bail or undertaking a community sentence the following agencies and support groups form part of the OCJP and contribute as follows:

Relationship Scotland Orkney –continue to offer opportunities to individuals who have been bailed away from the family unit, which is usually a consequence of the particular offence. Where appropriate they will facilitate contact between a ‘bailed’ parent and children to help maintain that vital relationship. It is recognised that strong positive family structures and relationships contribute to reducing reoffending. Addiction support is also available to help those on bail with assistance to reduce or abstain with support and counselling tailored to local needs.

During the relevant financial year for Relationship Scotland Orkney:

- 22 people attended for support with drug/alcohol issues (either around their own substance use or that of a loved one), attending 196 sessions.
- 84% of clients identify at least one risk factor at intake, of which 78% identify mental health as a risk, 18% domestic abuse, 17% alcohol/drugs/other addictions.
- Anecdotally there is an increased risk from gambling, and in future this will be incorporated into the data collection to understand more about this area of risk to individuals, relationships and families.
- Three referrals from Criminal Justice Social Work (similar to the previous year) and eight from Children and Families Social Work.
- Work closely with Social Work and Mental Health Colleagues to support individuals, with particularly close working relationships to the Orkney Drugs and Alcohol Team, with whom they are exploring ways to make drug and alcohol support and counselling more accessible to those who need it (e.g. via a Drop-In clinic), as statistics suggest there are significant numbers of people consuming at harmful levels in the community who are not currently seeking/accessing support.
- Work is primarily about early intervention and prevention, to help people before they reach a point of crisis, but we often find people coming for help at the point of relationship breakdown when they are facing a combination of significant pressures - e.g. relationship conflict, financial pressures, homelessness/housing difficulties - which in turn adversely impact their mental health.

Right There - provide support to individuals who are accommodated within local authority Young Persons Supported Accommodation facilities specifically catering for 16 – 25-year-olds who are homeless, some of whom are navigating the justice system. They have maintained their assistance to relevant young people, some with chaotic lifestyles, to make criminal justice appointments and offer them support whilst they navigate the judicial process. They continue to offer support staff during the day to avoid them being drawn back into harmful and potentially criminal situations with enhanced supervision available. Support includes addiction advice in relation to alcohol and drugs. Strong professional relationships have been maintained with the justice services team.

Orkney Blide Trust - offers mental health, addiction and therapeutic support to members. Referrals can be made from criminal justice, police, social work, health and other agencies where a risk assessment is undertaken, and support offered. A number of members have touched the justice system and receive vital support from this key third sector mental health charity. The Blide offers a safe space, which has also been utilised during the reporting period as an alternative to the mainstream CPO/UW service, where it was more appropriate to do so. This could range from

working in reception, kitchen, gardening or general maintenance at the premises. This has enhanced self-worth with a client expressing his gratitude for the mental health support offered to him by the charity. Furthermore, it allowed him to feel he had contributed something to an organisation which had helped him at a time of crisis in his life whilst undertaking a community sentence.

A community law clinic has also been established in conjunction with Robert Gordon University offering free advice and guidance to people from the Orkney community who are on a low income including Blide Trust members (clients). Areas of law include housing, employment and family as well as criminal law, where clients have been unable to engage the services of a legal representative. In many instances inhibited on account of costs. The qualified lawyer and legal students do not represent members at court, however, provide free confidential legal advice.

DBI process as described above, which is facilitated locally by Orkney Blide Trust.

ODAT – Orkney Drugs and Alcohol Team – NHS led Self-Management and Recovery Trained (SMART) support meeting where clients are supported with addiction advice. Staffed by a GP, who specialises in addictions, three community psychiatric nurses (CPNs) and two support workers, working with individuals to access support in abstinence or harm reduction in addictions. Providing a safe space and confidential advice. CPN support has also been utilised as part of the prisoner release pathway established in Orkney to manage those returning to Orkney from custody and compliment any voluntary throughcare activity.

Learning Link – pilot programme established to consider referring clients who are undertaking a community sentence to spend part of their unpaid work hours attending at the leaning link where they could be provided with free SQA accredited modules to enhance English, Maths and digital skills along with employment advice and CV report writing. This was in conjunction with Skills Development Scotland and Community Learning Development & Employability (CLDE) teams to fill any knowledge gaps and make them better equipped to enter the labour market.

Families Outside - only national charity in Scotland working exclusively on behalf of families affected by imprisonment. They speak to thousands of families each year, providing information and support on issues such as housing, finance, and emotional support.

Families of people in prison are innocent victims of crime. Children who suffer a member of their family being imprisoned are now recognised by the Scottish Government as experiencing an adverse childhood experience. This can have later life implications on their physical and mental health unless they are provided with the appropriate support and protective factors. People in prison who maintain positive relationships with families are six times less likely to reoffend.

The following information covers support in Orkney over the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Six cases were supported by Families Outside consisting of:

- one professional – regarding supporting a family in their care.
- five families.

Supported by Helpline: three families.

Supported by RFSC: two families.

Referral Source: four families self-referred and one came from Third Sector

Funding support has been provided by the OCJP to contribute to the work of Families Outside, which in addition to the support provided locally offers training to professionals around wider impacts of imprisonment for families. The main issues for families of those imprisoned are reflected in the national research “Paying the Price” (<https://bit.ly/459dY84>) conducted in 2022 (which included families living in rural and island communities), and in our more recent follow on report “No Easy Journey” (<https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2024/03/Designed-Travel-Report.pdf>) This has highlighted the disproportionate impact the cost of imprisonment has on those living in island communities.

There has been attendance at OCJP during this period ensuring that the voices and needs of families are considered in local plans and initiatives. This led to the delivery of training for professionals from across Orkney sponsored by the OCJP.

The training delivered two sessions, firstly examining the overall impact of imprisonment on families and secondly focussing on children and how professionals can uphold children’s rights when they are impacted by imprisonment. The training was attended by 29 staff from multiple sectors in Orkney. There is considerable appetite for the children’s session to be delivered virtually in the following financial year.

Example of positive feedback from the sessions delivered to professionals in Orkney:

- “Really beneficial training. Really opened my eyes to this topic, which I hadn’t really thought much about. Thank you.”
- “I have a better understanding of the process people have to go through now for my work”
- “We need to make sure head teachers know about this”
- “Thank you so much, I feel better able to support families/young people who may have been affected by the issues raised. My empathy and understanding of this has really increased”

The Connecting Families team deliver a monthly online participation group for adults, this is open to anyone in Scotland, regardless of the stage of the justice journey their family member is at. People can attend each session or drop in and out. There has been engagement from Orkney to make use of this.

Grace Chocolates – a social enterprise supporting women that have experienced the justice system, and who are looking to make positive changes in their lives. The

provide a combination of mentoring and wellbeing support in addition to in-person workshops to help women being released from prison to reintegrate back into communities. Taking advantage of the online support service, women undertaking a community sentence in Orkney have been referred for this free additional support, which compliments any local in person support. Funding assistance has been provided by OCJP to help with this initiative.

Fast Forward/RCA Trust – free to attend in person and online session arranged by the OCJP for professionals in the community to raise awareness around gambling and gaming addiction, facilitated by Fast Forward and RCA Trust. Links to criminality and offending highlighted to feed this addiction with work ongoing to ensure gambling addiction is recognised as harmful as substance addiction. This has also been shared across the wider community justice network and an introduction to key stakeholders within Scottish Prison Service to look at enhancing gambling support within prison system. Introductions facilitated by the OCJP.

Justice Services - small team of social workers, community payback supervisors and community justice coordinator enjoy a close working relationship with the above local agencies and refer clients where appropriate through agreed pathways. The benefits of support are reported in the response to question nine as drawn from client responses, with acknowledgement of the value of this local support.

Priority Action Four

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

No nationally determined outcome.

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

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

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

Prior to this reporting year (2023/24) electronic monitoring had not been a consideration in Orkney, however developments in partnership working amongst GeoAmey, the Court, COPFS, Justice Services and the local police have provided an opportunity to consider this disposal. Consequently, in addition to any bail

supervision report submission electronic monitoring (EM) is now a consideration in every instance, outlining this additional option. This has seen an increase demand placed upon the small team of justice social workers.

Geography can prove problematic on occasions with the short time scale available to research, prepare and submit an EM report around suitability of same. This can be particularly impactful where the domicile is on an outer island, however despite this there has been an increase during this reporting period, which had continued to grow. Again, caution must be exercised that due to the justice profile of the local authority area it again involves small numbers.

In addition to monitoring of an individual on bail, it has also been used in reverse circumstances to safeguard a vulnerable victim, offering reassurance and preventing an individual on bail from attending near a particular location. This approach reduced the need for Remand as an option, keeping prison places for only those who are truly in need of them and offering peace of mind and safeguarding to the victim whilst the justice process was concluded.

This is expected to be a developing area in subsequent reporting years.

Priority Action 5

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access services to support desistance and successfully complete community sentences⁴

Local Evidence

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

⁴ National Indicator:
Percentage of:

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

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

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

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

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

Please also consider updates as provided in response to question seven for those services accessed by people on bail or those undertaking a community sentence. There will be some overlap of service and support provision, however it is equally relevant to both questions.

During this reporting cycle it was recognised that Orkney had limited opportunities to work with perpetrators of domestic violence other than one to one interaction between clients and their criminal justice social worker during supervision. This however was restricted, and exploration was undertaken with a NHS Highland domestic abuse programme, which was delivered within HMP Inverness as part of a perpetrator programme.

The aim being to move the sessions from in person (in prison) group sessions to an online perpetrator group in the community. Further examination identified the need for a parallel support programme to be in place for family members and survivors, ensuring corresponding support, particularly after each perpetrator sessions. In addition, local in person support for perpetrators working through the programme. Challenge was also identified regarding online anonymity, with concerns that this could impact on those taking part in the sessions where they were identifiable to each other in remote and rural settings. This opened up considerations around the possibility of an inter-island approach or wider geographical reach to encourage perpetrators who were not known to each other to take part in sessions to facilitate openness and engagement with the programme.

The foregoing presented some challenges to a successful delivery, however as part of the research for this further engagement was undertaken with the Caledonian and

Advance – D programmes. These have been long established, and both provided parallel support programmes to families and survivors. In addition, encouragement was provided by Scottish Government for the thirteen local authorities, where Caledonian was not an option, to reconsider this. The process for engagement in Caledonian and Advance – D is being considered for Orkney, however, will form part of reporting in a subsequent annual report due to timings.

For sexual offenders one to one engagement takes place with their criminal justice social worker during supervision due to there being no availability of group work services in Orkney. This makes use of material within the Moving Forward, Making Changes (MFMC) programme, which has recently been updated. Geographical challenges can be experienced on account of the expectation of a registered sex offender to travel to appointments, which can have an impact where they are required to undertake a journey from the outer isles. This also involves joint work with police as part of the monitoring process (MAPPA).

In regard to wider community sentence pathways, these are detailed above in response to question seven and support the needs of the local population on community disposals. However, excellent work has been undertaken by the small team of justice social workers and CPO supervisory staff to work with those who have touched the justice system and assist them to reintegrate back into the community. Exit questionnaires or voices of the client reports capture the views of those undertaking all or part of their sentence in the community and offer valuable insight to allow the justice services team to tailor activities to individual needs to ensure maximum benefit for the client.

Care had been taken to avoid identification of any individual, however this necessitated the need to dilute some comments. Full comments are able to be considered as management data during self-evaluation. Nonetheless a summation has been replicated below to highlight the value of this support, and to demonstrate the assistance provided to people and their lived experiences of serving sentences in the community. Some comments also recognise the part it has played in helping them to desist from reoffending, address their needs, and help them successfully complete their sentence.

52 separate responses were recorded from clients who undertook some form of community sentence, whether it be a community payback order, supervision and or unpaid work. Of those who completed questionnaires, to understand their lived experience of a community sentence, only two clients did not feel their experience of a community sentence was a positive one. One client did not feel it would reduce their chances of reoffending. Conversely, many of the clients, who provided their voice, 96%, felt the experience was a positive one, where they acknowledged new practical and social skills learned, existing skills developed, and support provided to them from the supervisors from all aspects of the justice team. Equipping some with better coping mechanisms. Again, the vast majority acknowledged the community

sentence allowed them to give something back to the community in which they had offended and helped some of them come to terms with the consequences of their actions. More so, the impact it has had on the communities in which they live. Specifically, some of the observations acknowledged the assistance provided to them as follows:

- Process allowed them to reflect on past behaviour relating to drugs.
- Many challenges in life however improvements experienced with alcohol, drugs, housing and mental health; now sober from drink and drugs.
- Supervisor never failed to tell the client how well they were doing.
- Links and introductions to Education/Training/Leisure/Mental Health support.
- Become a far better version of himself as a consequence of support.
- “Lost cause” before Supervisor helped turn his life around.
- Introduced to the proper use of tools – now undertaking an apprenticeship in joinery.
- Thinking and behaviour has changed, now more resilient in mental health. Now walks away rather than confronting situations with violence, which previously resulted in them getting into bother.
- Life chances have improved. Client knows where to find information on local activities of interest to them. Better able to deal with setbacks in life. More resilient and felt more constructive in approach to life.
- Treated fairly and with respect by supervisors.
- Self-reflection on actions and behaviours which led to the offending in the first place.
- Improvements in areas which had caused difficulty previously– confidence/coping skills/ education /training.
- Now in education and mental health improving dramatically. Able to talk to family which raised self-esteem. Doesn’t feel as negative about themselves as before.
- Able to talk about offending which has helped understanding and reduced the likelihood of it happening again.
- Reassured that client was doing the right thing with this positive influence in their life.
- Dealing with setbacks better and making the right decisions in life, which client found to be more constructive.
- Learned to budget and understand money better.
- Learned to have a positive mindset and control anger.
- Unlikely to reoffend – “It was a tax on my time”.
- Gaining better education was a personal achievement, developed English and Maths skills because of the Learning Link.
- Learned to speak to people more when feeling low. Mental Health has improved as a consequence. More confident in themselves to deal with

issues. Thinking has changed with support from their supervisor. Now stop and think about the consequences of their actions.

- “Doing my punishment and giving back to the community has taught me a lesson”.
- Support from the supervisor has me -” getting along with complete strangers, not usually something I’m very good at”.
- Client had mobility needs and acknowledged that the supervisors recognised this, and all needs were met.

The questionnaires allow for discussion amongst the wider justice team to consider observations from those who undertake a community sentence. Comments and reflections used to shape future service delivery.

Priority Action 6

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

No nationally determined outcome.

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

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

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

Restorative Justice (RJ) was not available during the reporting period in Orkney. However work was undertaken to develop the current pathway, which will be reported upon in a subsequent annual report. During the relevant annual reporting period engagement took place between the community justice coordinator and the pilot project, which was underway in the Lothians, to identify good practice and learning for implementation in Orkney. This developed further discussion with Thriving Survivors, a service provider and in turn discussions with Space2Face a RJ provider in Shetland with initial development of a RJ process. However, very much a challenge to progression was uncertainty around any funding which would be provided to facilitate RJ. Whilst an announcement is still awaited from Scottish Government on this, local progress has been made with support from Community Justice Scotland and Space2Face.

Further details will be provided in the annual return for 2024/2025.

Priority Action Seven

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to, and continuity of, health and social care following release from a prison sentence⁵

Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Geographical terrain for remote and rural communities has presented challenges around access to services, however it has also offered a close-knit well-connected partnership where accessing services can be achieved on account of strong professional relationships, where service providers are known on a personal basis.

⁵ National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community

This is not to blur the approach to support, however it just can be achieved on a more individual basis in many instances.

This has been enhanced with the refreshment of the information sharing protocol between Orkney Islands Council and Scottish Prison Service to allow for onward sharing of information about prisoners being released, with relevant third parties, who can offer additional support.

As discussed above, prisoner releases back to Orkney are not common with less than ten releases taking place during the relevant reporting time frame. Some were statutory releases, where the criminal justice social worker had primacy and managed the individual as part of supervisory conditions in the community through a well-established process.

However, for the first-time, standard release prisoners were supported as part of a newly developed prisoner release pathway. This allowed for voluntary throughcare support to be coordinated through the local community justice role. Whilst Voluntary Throughcare, specifically New Routes for males, and Shine for females, has been in operation for some time, the developed local pathway formalised this support.

Liaison links were established with Inverness and Grampian prisons specifically, however other establishments have also been involved in discussions depending on where the prisoner was being released from. Geographically, prisoners from Orkney are spread throughout Scotland, however prior to discharge efforts are made to release them via Inverness/Grampian where possible to assist with travel. Standing invites have been established for Case Management Board meetings, which allows for a 12-week notification period in most instances prior to release. This helps facilitate coordination between

- Local housing department.
- Justice services.
- Mental health services.
- Addiction support services.
- Employability.
- Learning support.
- Benefit eligibility checks (DWP/SSS).
- Throughcare support providers Apex (Inverness).

This engagement is coordinated by the local community justice coordinator. This is an entirely voluntary process, however, mirrors the statutory process as much as possible ensuring a joined up supportive approach is available to support individuals upon release and to minimise their likelihood of reoffending. Apex as the lead provider is crucial to supporting this, however due to their location in Inverness the development of a more local link has helped ensure access to support at the right time in the right place.

It is also worthy of acknowledgement that challenges still exists when prisoners return to Orkney with a delay in getting them re-registered with their local GP on

account of them having been registered in another area where they were incarcerated. This is despite legislation being amended to allow this. Scottish Government guidance to allow pre-registration with GP's is still being developed.

Priority Action Eight

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people have access to suitable accommodation following release from a prison sentence⁶

Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Orkney, like most local authorities in Scotland, is experiencing challenges around housing provision, with consideration for declaring a local housing emergency only

⁶ National Indicator:
Number of:

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

superseded by the decision of the Scottish Government to declare a national housing emergency.

As alluded to earlier in this report the number of prisoners returning to Orkney is low. Housing providers remain committed to delivering the SHORE standards and this remains a consideration as part of the prisoner release pathway discussed above.

During the relevant time frame no homeless application was made from any prisoner who was being released. In recent years this has usually seen only one application per year, which has been managed effectively locally.

Priority Action Nine

Enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment by ensuring increased access to employability support through effective education, learning, training, career services and relevant benefit services

Nationally determined outcome:

More people with convictions access support to enhance their readiness for employment⁷

Local Evidence

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

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

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

⁷ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions

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

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

Strong links exist between the OCJP and LEP. The community justice coordinator continues to be a representative on the LEP and the LEP Inclusion and Diversity subgroup to ensure the partnership is informed of relevant work by community justice and support provision planning and delivery to help to meet the needs of individuals with experience of criminal/community justice. Furthermore, the lead officer in Orkney for employability services continues to be part of the OCJP as a standing member so a two-way flow of information can be maintained. This is in recognition of the value that employment can have on supporting a justice experienced individual to not reoffend.

In addition, the Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) teams and justice services team have been working to strengthen relationships and work together to support individuals with experience of criminal/community justice to access relevant learning/training and employment opportunities. Both the strategic and delivery collaboration has led to a bespoke learning programme being designed that includes literacy, numeracy, digital and employability learning opportunities, facilitated through the local learning hub, the Learning Link. This is the work, which has been commented upon by some of those who undertook a community sentence and gained free access to this additional support, which they found of value. In one instance it also provided a gateway to a positive destination of further education.

This work continues to progress, and we are looking at appropriate referral pathways and delivery methods. The CLDE team have been working with the justice team to look at regular inputs within the community sentence work hub, which will be further developed during 2024/25 financial year. Improved links with both delivery teams have resulted in the sharing of relevant information and training opportunities for those with experience of criminal/community justice so they can engage where appropriate.

During 2023/24, 16 individuals, who disclosed having criminal convictions, engaged with the CLDE team. Of those ten left the service and six continue to work with the team. Of the ten who left the service, five entered employment opportunities and one was supported through the employer recruitment incentive scheme. In addition, three people gained recognised qualifications to support them on the employment journey.

Discussion also took place with local businesses to encourage thinking to develop around employment opportunities for those with convictions. Small communities can have long memories, which is an additional barrier to overcome for those convicted of offences. Particularly where local media reporting provides detailed information about those who have offended. This can be a challenge to overcome, however some local employers are receptive and remain in dialogue with the LEP and justice services.

Priority Action Ten

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence⁸

Local Evidence

- Mechanisms are in place for partners to support people serving short term sentences.
- Proportion of people liberated from short term custody:
 - i. made aware of support
 - ii. accepting support offer
 - iii. with a co-ordinated pre-release plan in place.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of people accessing voluntary throughcare to support improvement.
- Mechanisms are in place to understand the views of community justice partners in delivering voluntary throughcare to support the needs of people leaving short term custody.

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

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

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

- *Police Scotland*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Scottish Prison Service*

⁸ National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced

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

Please also consider the response to question eleven above as part of this.

During this reporting period less than five people have been supported with voluntary throughcare, delivered either by Apex under New Routes or as part of local authority throughcare support. The former took advantage of the new prisoner release pathway as a test of concept. So far this has been positive.

It should also be acknowledged that a strong working relationship exists between the OCJP and Apex, a third sector provider of Voluntary Throughcare. In addition to regular contributions at partnership meetings they are also key to the local prisoner release pathway and engage well with statutory and third sector partners to join up support.

Priority Action Eleven

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

No nationally determined outcome.

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

Local evidence:

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

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

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

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

During this reporting period a CJOIP was under development and as a consequence alignment will not fully take place until next year, however actions and initiatives have begun to be implemented. The new Plan will include a participation statement and build upon the Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA), which was updated during this reporting period and involved collaboration amongst all stakeholders to ensure they were provided with an opportunity to contribute.

Similarly, this report fulfils the duty of submission of an annual report on progress towards nationally and locally determined outcomes. This is also supported by a local summary version, which is presented to the IJB for awareness.

Furthermore, Justice Services in the spirit of coproduction and partnership working provided funding support for the development of web design for a Safer Orkney application. This was under the auspices of the Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender Based Violence and Abuse, established to tackle gender-based violence against women and girls, however unable to fund such a venture. With a number of members sitting upon this and the OCJP it was an ideal opportunity to promote the work of community justice across the wider Orkney partnerships and advocate for the concept of community justice. The application could not have been developed were it not for this additional financial support from Justice Services.

The partnership has also refreshed and developed the groups Terms of Reference, which did not materially change the governance structure, however, was a valuable exercise in reminding partners of their responsibilities towards community justice.

As alluded to earlier, Self-Evaluation discussions have taken place with the Care Inspectorate and processes identified for further consideration to support quality improvement in these areas. Under the direction of the Chair the inclusion of a standing agenda item will assist this process to ensure timely capture of good practice across the Partnership.

A diverse group of organisations make up the OCJP, with a healthy input from third sector and non-statutory representatives. No concerns have been raised around local representatives interfacing with national organisations. Where direct attendance

cannot be achieved due to staffing commitment and pressures of work, strong liaison has been maintained out with meetings to ensure a link, and more importantly the opportunity to contribute is maintained.

Priority Action Twelve

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

No nationally determined outcome.

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

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

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

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

The voice of lived experiences in small communities can be challenging to air, particularly in a public facing document as there is always the potential to inadvertently identify an individual. Consequently, great care has been taken to avoid any such instance, however partners are regularly reminded of the need to consider lived experience and ensure that such thoughts and opinions are considered in how we shape and deliver community justice in Orkney.

The exit interviews and questionnaires for those who undertake a community sentence are vital to collecting opinions and views of those who have experience of the justice system. These interviews form part of Self Evaluation activity and they also feature in discussions about how we can improve services for clients to enhance effectiveness. Such views and opinions are also helpful to share with the wider public in an effort to advocate for community justice and help them understand the value it can offer in appropriate circumstances. Small communities sometimes favour tough justice in an effort to see that perpetrators are punished for their transgression, perhaps as there is less anonymity in smaller communities.

Moreover, local partner organisations who support justice experienced individuals and key stakeholders, particularly client facing justice services workers, play their

part by articulating on behalf of their service users and wider support groups on their experiences of the justice system, including the punishment element. The value that those who have been through the system place on the support provided to them and where it has helped change their lives for the better is powerful and impactful. Support groups, as mentioned earlier in this report, regularly report this at partnership meetings and it has been used in the development of, firstly the SNSA, and now the CJOIP. However, it is recognised that direct input from those with a lived experience to influence how we deliver community justice in Orkney, is something to be striven for. Any opportunity to do so will be considered where it is identified.

Priority Action Thirteen

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people across the workforce and in the community understand, and have confidence in, community justice⁹

Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

⁹ National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

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

The Chair of the OCJP, as a senior leader within Orkney Islands Council, sits across numerous partnerships and boards in Orkney for both local authority and the NHS. This provides great reach to advocate for the work of community justice locally and advance the work of the partnership far and wide.

The local coordinator for community justice in Orkney, in conjunction with the Chair, has increased visibility and presence of community justice since coming into post by increasing the membership of the partnership in the first instance. Ensuring that the right people are around the table and can contribute locally through their day-to-day activities. Frequency of meetings has been raised to the recommended standard, however this had been symptomatic of no coordinator effectively being in post prior to this.

In addition to encouraging additional members onto the OCJP there is also greater representation on other local partnerships in Orkney to ensure that the work of community justice is advocated far and wide. Examples include the LEP and an associated Inclusion and Diversity subgroup, annual presentation of the report to the IJB. Representation across other partnerships focusing on countering domestic violence, ADP, Tobacco Cessation Group, MATSIN, Appropriate Adult services and SPS Case Management group meetings.

Furthermore, a local media campaign was undertaken to distribute posters provided by Community Justice Scotland, which explained what community justice was with individuals advocating the valuable impact that it had on their lives. This saw visual media displays, which are still evident today, throughout the local authority estate, including community centres and other local public areas, to gain maximum local community exposure. In addition, a number of training events have been undertaken throughout Orkney offering free guidance and information to the public and professionals alike. Hosted and promoted by the OCJP to broaden the reach, understanding and awareness amongst the local population about community justice. This has been promoted by Orkney Islands Council through the Corporate Communications team with reference to OCJP and carried on social media channels as well as through local media outlets. The training also included free gambling, gaming and vaping inputs from Fast Forward and Child Impact Assessments by Families Outside.

In addition, there has been a regular sharing of support services availability, particularly online support, across the wider Orkney care sector, again promoted by the OCJP, increasing visibility and awareness around community justice as a consequence.

A public facing page on Orkney Islands Council website, dedicated to community justice, remains available to access with regular updates uploaded for public consumption. This includes minutes of meetings, plans, statements and information and links to community justice initiatives to keep the public informed.

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

Reflective questions to consider in developing your answer:

What are the next steps for your partnership?

What opportunities are there?

What barriers and/or risks?

During the forthcoming years there will be an embedding of the new CJOIP along with a proposed annual action plan, which should help direct partner activity, with a focus upon SMART objectives. This will assist partners to consider their role, through an adjusted community justice lens, reflecting the new strategy and performance framework.

In parallel there is a planned self-evaluation project to ensure opportunities to improve and develop the services we deliver are identified and exploited to maximum benefit.

Finance remains a barrier, or risk, to the partnership, with component and contributing partners reporting challenges around funding arrangements and the difficulties or uncertainties which they come with due to annual funding settlements versus multiyear planning initiatives. These present hurdles to long-term sustainability around some initiatives or support processes.

Activity in train considering the development of a perpetrator programme for those convicted of domestic abuse in addition to ensuring the availability of restorative justice in Orkney. Both projects however are reliant upon finance, within a fiscally challenging time frame, which is also a risk.

As with every forecast there remains a desire to enhance or increase support to those who are navigating the justice system, with a view to reintegrating them back into a community. Employment and upskilling those who undertake a community sentence, through 'Other Activities' remains a focus for the justice team as this can help reduce the chance of reoffending where self-worth or self-belief can be restored. In addition, developing opportunities for unpaid work with local employers, where there is potential for employment post sentence. Diversion from prosecution will continue to be an area that we look to develop.

It has also been recognised that the number of women clients entering justice services is on the increase, so development of additional women's support services is an aspiration. A good gender balance has been struck within the justice team, which is a beneficial first step.

Finally, public reassurance and understanding of community justice will continue to be a focus for the partnership. The local community need to have faith in the process and see tangible benefits to this policy, where it is appropriate to do so.



Working together to make a real difference

Orkney Community Justice Partnership - Executive Summary – Annual Report 2023/24

Foreword

Orkney Community Justice Partnership (OCJP) is pleased to present the third annual local report, extracted from the return provided to Community Justice Scotland (CJS), each September, as part of the reporting cycle. This ensures that locally we comply with 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 CJS, which in turn informs the Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland Annual Report, published in March the following year.

Further strategic developments took place in the reporting year 2023/24, namely publication of a new [Community Justice Performance Framework](#) along with accompanying [Guidance and Technical notes \(Version 2\)](#) and the [Community Justice Improvement Tool](#). These complement the revised [National Strategy](#). This reporting year has been one of transition with the move to a new approach focusing on four national aims, 13 priority actions, ten national indicators and nine nationally determined outcomes. With the local community justice outcome plan (CJOIP) being developed it saw a partial alignment of actions and activities locally, which will continue to be refined in the coming years to ensure we maximise outcomes and benefits locally through a community justice lens.

Background

Local communities and the third sector remain 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 outcomes set out in this report with self-evaluation a consideration to ensure improvement year on year and help

focus partnership activity on areas of highest priority. An assessment is provided on whether each action has been met or not.

The content of the original report on CJ outcomes and improvements in our area was agreed by the OCJP and was then shared with our Community Planning Partnership through our local accountability arrangements. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act, 2016 placed a duty on CJ statutory partners to produce a Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP). Local activity is then undertaken, and outcomes measured and reported upon.

CJS Partnership Recommendations

During the last reporting cycle (2022/23), the CJS [Annual Report](#) made only one recommendation, namely that CJS, the Scottish Government and all partners work together to ensure that community justice across the public and third sectors is resourced in a way that matches the policy ambition of [The Vision for Justice in Scotland](#). This has been a consideration of the local partnership in Orkney, which continues to have strong synergy in working relationships.

Annual Report Summary 2023/24

A copy of the Orkney Outcome Activity Annual Report 2023/24 (Appendix 1), which was submitted to CJS is available for members information, however as agreed previously with the IJB a summarised version is provided. There has been no material change to local governance, however a review and refresh was undertaken of the Terms of Reference, with post holders reconfirmed in role. CJS sought contributions from partners about Challenges or Negatives as well as identifying Positives or Opportunities which presented throughout the reporting year, with a summary below.

Challenges/Negatives

As with previous years, and indicative of remote and rural communities, it can be harder to access appropriate support services, which were more readily available in larger urban local authority areas, so geography remained a challenge. Addiction and mental health support in greatest demand. Some partners continued to see heightened need for their services, most acutely felt amongst some third sector representatives. Partners reported seeing clients presenting with more complex needs with some reporting challenges around available accommodation, which impacted on their ability to support some individuals. Uncertainty around funding remained a concern, a view shared by many.

Lived experiences are central to developing community justice, however smaller communities made it difficult to report on such experiences due to concerns of identifying those who had been supported.

Furthermore, a challenge with ongoing local media reporting, which was felt to be over intrusive, particularly around sexual violence cases. The recognised impact was causing survivors to vocalise an unwillingness to report instances to police. Not because of the investigative and subsequent court process but rather local media scrutiny that was the norm and how they felt this would be reported in the local newspaper. Moreover, the impact on defendants or those convicted of an offence and how they were reported upon in the media. Leading to challenges further down the line when it came to employment opportunities. This was a topic of discussion amongst partners not only at the OCJP, however it was reflected across other partnerships and escalated for executive level consideration.

Cost to families travelling to prison remained a challenge for Orkney, as with other remote communities. Work ongoing with Families Outside and Scottish Government including the submission of a letter to three of the cabinet secretaries with joint responsibility, which OCJP endorsed.

Staffing across the partnership was highlighted, with police reporting the reduction of the full time Preventions and Interventions Officer role to a part time position on account of fiscal pressures. Other partners highlighted similar challenges.

Justice services experienced delays in accessing the right support, at the right time on occasions for some clients, which affected engagement with their community orders. This was further impacted with the requirement for a GP referral, rather than a self or justice social worker direct referral to the mental health team. However, once access gained to support services locally, these were found to offer consistent beneficial support.

A number of partner agencies reported ongoing challenges around annual funding arrangements. This did not lend itself to sustained and settled activity with the lack of certainty having an impact on what could be achieved, and longer-term visions being realised. Specifically Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and, No One Left Behind activity, experienced significant challenges at all levels of provision including planning and service delivery due to delays in Orkney Islands Council receiving the grant offer letter from Scottish Government. Effectively partners had to mobilise, deliver and report on an annual allocation within an eight-month period.

Positives / Opportunities

Following on from last year's challenges around staffing on the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), positive recruitment and staff returning has seen greater activity in this area, which has allowed for the development of local initiatives to support individuals, families and the wider community affected by alcohol and / or drug dependency and related harms.

The continuation of the court user group, after it was reinstated last year, facilitated close discussion amongst prosecutors, sentencers, defenders and justice services to hear justice experiences from support services working with those individuals.

Partners continued to remain engaged with community justice in Orkney with strong attendance at partnership meetings. A hybrid style of meeting is now well established, which allows partners to meet in person whilst still affording the opportunity for meaningful online attendance. Partners also report still being able to engage nationally with virtual invitations and welcome the continuation of this. This was highlighted to CJS to ensure the voice of remote and rural communities was heard and to encourage continuation of this good practice. **The benefit allows a levelling up for remote and rural communities to remain engaged nationally on a more regular basis.**

Due to the small geographical size of the local authority area this engendered a close working relationship amongst the partners, which helped the network build on last year's progress by maximising access to limited resources. In addition to the Creative Change Collective (formerly Street Cones), Grace Chocolates and RCA Trust inputs on gambling, further work and presentations have been provided to networks in Orkney by the OCJP with partners' support. Specifically inputs from Families Outside amplifying the voice of the child where a relative was navigating the justice system and considerations for families responding to imprisonment of a family member. Further work has been developed with Fast Forward on gambling and gaming addiction. In addition, 'Other Activities' in community sentences have been improved and can count against 'hours awarded'. These have enhanced learning and employability skills as well as safety advice and addiction support. All with the intention of aiding community reintegration and reducing reoffending with structured holistic support.

As part of self-evaluation the Chair introduced a new standing agenda item to encourage partners to report on matters that have gone well in their respective organisations since the

last meeting. This encouraged attendees to think more of how they approach their work through a community justice lens, with the added benefit of capturing information throughout the year rather than a retrospective memory trawl whenever the annual return is called for.

Priority Actions from CJS Strategy

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

As Scotland's smallest local authority our numbers are lower than mainland authority areas by some considerable distance. In some instances, this is beneficial as a community which sees low levels of crime and offending rates. However, this also translates to fewer examples throughout the priority actions. Additionally, there are less support services available, with geographical barriers a challenge to accessing the right support in a timely manner. However, Orkney benefits from strong working relationships across the CJP, particularly with third sector engagement and support.

Local police, as key stakeholders in the partnership make use of direct measures to reduce criminalisation. However, where a standard police report is submitted to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service consideration for diversion rests solely with them. A close working relationship exists between the local procurator fiscal and the justice services manager, which ensures a smooth pathway for discussion and onward allocation, where appropriate.

During the relevant reporting period there have been diversion instances considered locally, all of which resulted in individuals successfully completing diversionary activities. This included addiction support and mental health mentoring to enhance individual resilience and self-worth. The development of employment opportunities and further education also strengthened the individuals outlook and future opportunities, which have contributed to reduced likelihood of reoffending.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) also provided excellent support, guidance and mentoring in relation to fire raising offences. Their expertise and experience allowed for a greater understanding of the potential consequences of such offences, which significantly reduced recidivism. Diversion also assisted an individual to enter further education and led onto throughcare/aftercare support with a positive destination. Furthermore, a strong working relationship has been developed between the justice services team and the local SFRS community safety advocate with safety inputs delivered during community orders. During which there have been notable self-reflections from individuals convicted of driving offences and the consequences of their actions after some of these inputs.

Partially met, however Diversion remains a focus for partnership activity.

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

Due to the remote nature of the local authority area, in relation to the primary regional custody centre in Inverness, any custody staffing requirements for Orkney utilises local officers, who whilst trained, are not full-time custody officers. Oversight is provided by Inverness Custody Centre, however there is no access to the custody referral programme and any medical support requires to be sought locally from NHS Orkney. Signposting for support, both local and national, is facilitated by local police who continue to distribute the Z-fold cards, which direct service users to available support services.

In addition, police remain strong referral partners on the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) pathway, accounting for approximately 95% of referrals. The service provider, Orkney Blide Trust and police have a productive relationship, with all officers trained in the referral

process. Increased use of DBI diverts relevant clients away from criminal justice intervention through a more holistic, compassionate community-based support. It is recognised that not all DBI referrals relate to those who had touched the justice system.

As detailed above the local ADP has resumed local intervention work with a renewed focus around Alcohol Brief Intervention activities.

Partially met.

Priority Action Three - *Support the use of robust alternatives to remand by ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available and delivered effectively.*

During the reporting period there has been an increase in the number of assessments of individuals to test their suitability for bail, with a subsequent increase in cases commenced and completed. This is a positive direction of travel with greater use of high-quality bail services an available option rather than reliance on Remand (into custody).

An assessment of monthly custody figures for Orkney, issued by Scottish Prison Service (SPS) shows that the year (April 2023) began with six male prisoners, serving a mixture of Remand, Short-Term Prison (STP) sentences and Long-Term Prison (LTP) sentences. This rose throughout the year culminating in March 2024, with ten male prisoners. The rise in prisoner numbers can be attributed to several Solemn prosecutions which, in some instances had been delayed because of COVID-19, being concluded. The focus remains on reducing figures for Remand and STP, where suitable for bail monitoring or a community sentence. Most Orkney prisoners are now serving LTP sentences.

In regard to support for those on bail or undertaking a community sentence the following agencies and support groups form part of the OCJP and contribute as follows:

Relationship Scotland Orkney – provide opportunities to individuals who have been bailed away from the family unit, which is usually a consequence of the particular offence. Where appropriate, they will facilitate contact between a 'bailed' parent and children to help maintain that vital relationship. Addiction support also available.

Right There - provide support to individuals who are accommodated within local authority Young Persons Supported Accommodation facilities specifically catering for 16 – 25-year-olds who are homeless, some of whom are navigating the justice system. Addiction support also available.

Orkney Blide Trust - offers mental health, addiction and therapeutic support to members. Referrals made from criminal justice, police, social work, health and other agencies where a risk assessment is undertaken, and support offered. Several members have touched the justice system and receive vital support from this key third sector mental health charity. The Blide offers a safe space as well as a community law clinic. They also facilitate the DBI process.

ODAT – Orkney Drugs and Alcohol Team – NHS led Self-Management and Recovery Trained (SMART) support meeting where clients are supported with addiction advice including Community Psychiatric Nurse help.

Learning Link – clients undertaking a community sentence can be supported and provided with free SQA accredited modules to enhance English/Maths/digital skills/employment advice and CV writing.

Families Outside - national charity in Scotland working exclusively on behalf of families affected by imprisonment. Support provided to families in Orkney along with local training to professionals around wider impacts of imprisonment for families. The main issues for families of those imprisoned are reflected in the national research "[Paying the Price](#)" and "[No Easy Journey](#)". This has highlighted the disproportionate impact the cost of imprisonment has on those living on islands. Training also delivered in person to professionals on upholding children's rights when impacted by imprisonment.

Grace Chocolates – a social enterprise supporting women that have experienced the justice system, and who are looking to make positive changes in their lives. They provide a combination of online mentoring and wellbeing support in addition to in-person workshops to help women being released from prison to reintegrate back into communities.

Fast Forward/RCA Trust – free to attend in-person and online session arranged by the OCJP for professionals in the community to raise awareness around gambling and gaming addiction, facilitated by Fast Forward and RCA Trust.

Justice Services - small team of social workers, community payback supervisors and community justice coordinator enjoy a close working relationship with the above local agencies and refer clients where appropriate through agreed pathways.

Partially met with further focus anticipated in this area.

Priority Action Four - *Strengthen options for safe and supported management in the community by increasing and widening the use of electronic monitoring technologies.*

Prior to this reporting year (2023/24) electronic monitoring had not been a consideration in Orkney, however developments in partnership working have provided an opportunity to consider this disposal. Consequently, in addition to any bail supervision report submission electronic monitoring (EM) is now a consideration in every instance, outlining this additional option.

Partially met with further focus anticipated in this area.

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

Some of the responses in Priority Action Three should be considered as part of this response.

Orkney had limited opportunities to work with perpetrators of domestic violence other than one to one interaction between clients and their criminal justice social worker during supervision. This developed further engagement with Caledonian and Advance – D programmes. These have been long established and provided parallel support programmes to families and survivors. For sexual offenders one to one engagement took place with their criminal justice social worker during supervision making use of Moving Forward, Making Changes (MFMC) programme.

Excellent work undertaken by the small justice services team supporting those who touched the justice system and assisted them to reintegrate back into the community. Exit questionnaires or voices of the client reports captured views of those undertaking community sentences and offered valuable insight and lived experiences to allow the justice services team to shape future service delivery to maximum effect. 52 separate responses were recorded from clients who undertook some form of community sentence; only two clients did not feel their experience was a positive one. One client did not feel it would reduce their chances of reoffending. Conversely, many of the clients, who provided their voice, 96%, felt the experience was positive, where they acknowledged new practical and social skills learned, existing skills developed, and support provided to them from the justice team. Equipping some with better coping mechanisms. Again, the vast majority acknowledged the community sentence allowed them to give something back to the area in which they had offended and helped some of them come to terms with the consequences of their actions.

Lived experience quotes:

- Many challenges in life however improvements experienced with alcohol, drugs, housing and mental health; now sober from drink and drugs.
- Become a far better version of themselves thanks to the support; previously a “lost cause”
- Introduced to the proper use of tools – now undertaking an apprenticeship.
- Self-reflection on actions and behaviours which led to the offending in the first place.
- Improvements in areas which had caused difficulty previously– confidence/coping skills/ education /training.
- Support from the supervisor has me -” getting along with complete strangers, not usually something I’m very good at”.

Fully met, however work continues.

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

Restorative Justice (RJ) was not available during the reporting period in Orkney. However, work undertaken to develop a pathway and discussions at an advanced stage with a RJ provider to develop a local process. Very much a challenge to progression was uncertainty around funding which would be provided to facilitate RJ, with an announcement still awaited from Scottish Government.

Not met and is a priority for the subsequent reporting period.

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

Geographical terrain for remote and rural communities presented challenges around access to services, however it has also offered a close-knit, well-connected partnerships where accessing services could be achieved. This was enhanced with the refreshment of the information sharing protocol between Orkney Islands Council and Scottish Prison Service to allow for onward sharing of data on prisoners released. These are categorised as statutory (supervisory conditions with a justice social worker) or standard (no conditions) release.

A newly developed prisoner release pathway allowed voluntary throughcare (VTC) support to be coordinated through the local community justice coordinator role for standard releases to complement the statutory release process. Liaison links enhanced with prisons to inform discussions in advance of any release and help facilitate better links to services to support successful integration back into communities and reduce reoffending. Apex as the lead VTC provider is crucial to supporting this.

Partially met.

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

Orkney, like most local authorities in Scotland, experienced challenges around housing provision. As alluded to earlier in this report the number of prisoners returning to Orkney is low. Housing providers remain committed to delivering the SHORE standards and this remains a consideration as part of the prisoner release pathway discussed above. During the relevant time frame no homeless application was made from any prisoner who was being released. In recent years this has usually seen only one application per year, which has been managed effectively locally.

Fully met, however remains under consideration to ensure continued compliance.

Priority Action Nine - *Enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment by ensuring increased access to employability support through effective education, learning, training, career services and relevant benefit services.*

Strong links exist between the OCJP and LEP with key individuals represented on both Partnerships. This is in recognition of the value that employment can have on supporting a justice experienced individual to not reoffend. Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) teams and justice services team have been working to strengthen relationships and work together to support individuals with experience of criminal/community justice to access relevant learning/training and employment opportunities.

During 2023/24, 16 individuals, who disclosed having criminal convictions, engaged with the CLDE team. Of those ten left the service and six continued to work with the team. Of the ten who left the service, five entered employment opportunities. Due to data reporting guidelines some (less than five) were supported through the employer recruitment incentive scheme. In addition, some (less than five) people gained recognised qualifications to support them on the employment journey. Discussion also took place with local businesses to encourage thinking to develop around employment opportunities for those with convictions.

Partially met, however remains an area of focus.

Priority Action Ten - *Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services.*

Please also consider the response to Priority Action Seven.

During this reporting period less than five people have been supported with VTC, delivered either by Apex under New Routes or as part of local authority throughcare support. The former took advantage of the new prisoner release pathway, which has been positive thus far. Cognisant of the low numbers of prisoners being released back to Orkney. It should be acknowledged that a strong working relationship exists between the OCJP and Apex, a Third Sector provider of VTC. In addition to regular contributions at partnership meetings they are also key to the local prisoner release pathway and engage well with statutory and Third Sector partners to join up support.

Partially met, however remains an area of focus.

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

During this reporting period the CJOIP was under development and as a consequence alignment will not fully take place until next year, however actions and initiatives have begun to be implemented.

Furthermore, justice services in the spirit of coproduction and partnership working provided funding support for the development of web design for a Safer Orkney application. This was under the auspices of the Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender Based Violence and Abuse, which tackles gender-based violence against women and girls and had been unable to fund the venture.

As alluded to earlier, Self-Evaluation discussions have taken place with the Care Inspectorate and processes identified for further consideration to support quality improvement in these areas. Under the direction of the Chair the inclusion of a standing agenda item will assist this process to ensure timely capture of good practice across the Partnership.

Partially met.

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

The voice of lived experiences in small communities can be challenging to air, particularly in a public facing document as there is always the potential to inadvertently identify an individual. Exit interviews and questionnaires for those who undertake a community sentence help to understand the views of those who have experience of the justice system. These interviews form part of Self Evaluation activity.

Moreover, local partner organisations who support victims, survivors and justice experienced individuals and key stakeholders, particularly client facing justice services workers. They play their part by articulating on behalf of their service users and wider support groups on their experiences of the justice system, including the punishment element.

Partially met.

Priority Action Thirteen - *Support integration and reduce stigma by ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice.*

The Chair of the OCJP, as a senior leader within Orkney Islands Council, sits across numerous partnerships and boards in Orkney for both the local authority and the NHS. This provides great reach to advocate for the work of community justice. The local coordinator for community justice in Orkney has increased visibility and presence of community justice.

Furthermore, a local media campaign displaying posters provided by CJS, which explained community justice, with individuals advocating the valuable impact that it had on their lives. Additionally, several training events, sponsored and promoted by the OCJP, have been undertaken throughout Orkney offering free guidance and information to broaden understanding and awareness amongst the local population about community justice. Furthermore, there has been a regular sharing of support services availability, particularly online support, across the wider Orkney care sector.

A page on Orkney Islands Council's website, dedicated to community justice, remains available to access with regular updates uploaded for public consumption.

Partially met.

The Year Ahead

- During the forthcoming years there will be an embedding of the new CJOIP along with a proposed annual action plan, which should help direct partner activity, with a focus upon SMART objectives. This will assist partners to consider their role, through an adjusted community justice lens, reflecting the new strategy and performance framework.
- In parallel there is a planned self-evaluation project to ensure opportunities to improve and develop the services we deliver are identified and exploited to maximum benefit.
- Finance remains a barrier, or risk, to the partnership, with component and contributing partners reporting challenges around funding arrangements and the difficulties or uncertainties which they come with due to annual funding settlements versus multiyear planning initiatives. These present hurdles to long-term sustainability around some initiatives or support processes.
- Activity in train considering the development of a perpetrator programme for those convicted of domestic abuse in addition to ensuring the availability of restorative justice in Orkney. Both projects however are reliant upon finance, within a fiscally challenging time frame, which is also a risk.

- As with every forecast there remains a desire to enhance or increase support to those who are navigating the justice system, with a view to reintegrating them back into a community. Employment and upskilling those who undertake a community sentence, through 'Other Activities' remains a focus for the justice team as this can help reduce the chance of reoffending where self-worth or self-belief can be restored. In addition, developing opportunities for unpaid work with local employers, where there is potential for employment post sentence. Diversion from prosecution will continue to be an area that we look to develop.
- It has also been recognised that the number of women clients entering justice services is on the increase, so development of additional women's support services is an aspiration. A good gender balance has been struck within the justice team, which is a beneficial first step.
- Finally, public reassurance and understanding of community justice will continue to be a focus for the partnership. The local community need to have faith in the process and see tangible benefits to this policy, where it is appropriate to do so.

Stephen Brown
Chief Officer and Chair, Orkney Community Justice Partnership
October 2024.