

# **Community Justice Scotland**

## **Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba**

**Community justice outcome activity across Scotland:  
Local area annual return template  
Reporting year April 2024 – March 2025**

**April 2025**



# Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

## 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 gather information and 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.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 the area, and such community bodies or other persons as partners consider appropriate. CJS expects that completion of this template will be a collaborative effort.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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: Lorraine Hunter-Curtis Email: <a href="mailto:Lorraine.hunter@orkney.gov.uk">Lorraine.hunter@orkney.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 01856 873535 extension 2680

### 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.

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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, delivery of services, or other as relevant.

#### Challenges / Negatives

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

This reporting year has undergone further transition with a new Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP), although now in final draft, requires final approval from the Community Justice Partnership. This work was left outstanding with the outgoing Community Justice Planning, Performance and Information Officer leaving post. Unfortunately, this role remained vacant from December 2024 until October 2025 which proved challenging in terms of reporting on planned activities within and across the partnership.

The CJOIP is expected to provide many benefits to the partnership in Orkney, it will support greater alignment to national direction and incentives but will also support formulation of a new strategy and performance framework which compliments the continuous learning and development approach of self-evaluation as outlined by the Care Inspectorate guidance documentation.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

Geographically there remains a challenge, and as with previous years and indicative of remote and rural communities it can be harder to access appropriate support services, which are more readily available in larger, centrally located local authority areas. 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.

Complexity of clients' needs have continued to grow, therefore as with our last report, partners have continued to see heightened need for their services, most acutely felt amongst some third sector representatives. For instance, 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 address this as detailed below.

Women's Aid Orkney (WAO), also report challenges around a rise in demand for their services seeing a 26.75% increase compared to 2023/24. The average period refuge accommodation was used was 108 days with occupancy reaching 79% (862 of 1095 days). Uncertainty around funding remains a huge concern, a view shared by other partners, Women's Aid Orkney (WAO) have remained proactive in seeking funding with significant work progressing on fundraising activities.

This challenge has become more complex over 2024/25 with an indication from Scottish Government that services such as ORSAS and Women's Aid are likely to become statutory services. Although this would resolve the issue of funding, members have written an open letter to Scottish Government highlighting a variety of concerns they have regarding this approach.

Smaller communities make 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. Justice Services has continued to complete exit interviews/questionnaires where appropriate to do so, the findings of these surveys show mostly positive interactions with a clear indication that the work has supported to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The service will continue to report on and explore ways to capture the experiences of service users in a sensitive way, maintaining confidentiality of clients.

Previously it was highlighted that there was a challenge with ongoing local media scrutiny, which was felt to be intrusive, particularly around cases involving sexually inappropriate behaviour. The recognised impact was firstly causing survivors to



## **Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

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. This creates challenges in small communities, on various levels in respect of the impact on defendants but also those convicted of an offence in both the short and long term. For instance, the victims' and their families can become the target of unwanted attention and although perpetrators and their families can also experience this, this exposure can impact on their future employment opportunities. This was a topic of discussion amongst partners not only at the OCJP but across the partnership, and engagement with our media providers were offered during this period. As a result the reporting has become slightly more trauma informed and although it remains a challenge it appears, following support provided by service providers across Orkney, this is to a lesser extent.

Cost to families travelling to prison remains a challenge for Orkney, as with other remote communities. Work was therefore ongoing with Families Outside and Scottish Government and this included the submission of a letter to three of the cabinet secretaries with joint responsibility, which OCJP endorsed. Work continues with Families Outside to support families to maintain contact with family members who have been removed into custody. Instances remain low but the work has been received positively by the OCJP.

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. 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. Some partner agencies have reported a requirement to issue redundancy letters to staff which are withdrawn upon confirmation of funding. This is unsettling for staff and unsustainable for partnerships where the third sector play a significant role in supporting service users, victims and families.

Police continue to highlight challenges around inefficiency in the court process, with significant financial costs experienced on a regular basis through the sending of officers to Glasgow/Edinburgh etc for court when the trial does not go ahead. In addition, this creates local court uncertainty with officers' shifts changed months in





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 partners/hip faced in the reporting year. You may include how the partners responded to these.*

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 with the ADP partnership meetings occurring regularly and with rejuvenated focus in early intervention and prevention. 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. In July 2024 the ADP reported the recreation of a Peer Support working group of the core ADP group and saw support staff associated to Relationship Scotland Orkney, the Blide Trust, Right There and ODAT (NHS) come together to foster closer working relationships which will benefit justice experienced individuals with addictions which is hoped that potentially could result in a reduction in rates of offending.

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. Staff take confidence in the regularity of the meeting and have echoed positive working relationships improved as a result of this meeting.

Partners continued to remain engaged with community justice in Orkney with strong attendance at partnership meetings until the point where meetings ceased following the Community Justice Planning, Performance and Information Officer departing in December 2024. The group have not met since this time but following recent recruitment it is hoped the group will be quickly re-established to continue the positive partnership working seen in previous years.

Partners continue to report enhanced abilities 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.

Due to the small geographical size of the local authority area close working relationship amongst partners exist and continue to develop, these relationships help





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 which is 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, 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 the individuals' chances of reoffending with structured holistic support.

The Towns Board have led a considerable volume of voluntary support activities for vulnerable persons in our community, including those who have experienced justice systems over 2024/25. This has been noted by members at Community Justice meetings and equally by Councillor's in Orkney.

Community Learning and Development (CLDE) advised of partnership working which had been undertaken with Action for Children, Stromness Community Centre and Pickaquoy Centre to offer free activities for kids on Friday afternoons when schools finish early. This proactive approach to encourage young people to become involved reduced the chances of them becoming involved in offending or general anti-social behaviours.

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. 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.



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

## Priority Action One

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

### Nationally determined outcome:

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

### Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Orkney is Scotland's smallest local authority and as such our numbers will be lower than mainland authority areas by a considerable distance. In some instances, this is beneficial as a community which sees low levels of crime and offending rates and greater opportunities for resilient relationships and enhanced partnership working. However, this also translates to fewer examples throughout the priority actions.

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<sup>1</sup> National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed



## **Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

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.

Conversely, 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). Closer working with Children's services and the Public Protection Lead Officer continue to strengthen Orkney's approach to youth offending. Information will be provided in 2025/26 reporting.

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 previous reporting period there were 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. This has continued within the current reporting period and continues to lead to successful outcomes.

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) which has continued as a regular part of partnership working. SFRS provide 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.



## **Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

Diversion also assisted an individual to enter further education and led onto throughcare/aftercare support with a positive destination.

A strong working relationship continues to exist between the justice services team and the local SFRS community safety advocate, with coproduction of further safety inputs, to those subject to a 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 a CPO allow for the recording of the individuals' views in respect of the service in meeting their needs and the needs of the community. 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 due to be approved in the near future.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### Priority Action Two

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence:

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

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

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

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

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

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 people managed within regional custody suites, fully staffed with not only detention personnel, but, increasingly this has developed to ensure the co-location 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.

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<sup>2</sup> National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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. Specialist support for interviews of accused, perpetrators and victims has continued to be offered by the Appropriate Adult service which has strengthened with greater numbers of Appropriate Adults employed by the Local Authority.

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. All 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 and within the previous report 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. The ADP has continued to strengthen its position with regular meetings and progression of strategic workstreams to support Orkney.

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

### Priority Action Three

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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<sup>3</sup> National Indicator:

Number of:

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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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

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

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

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

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

During the reporting period there has been a sustained 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 (March 2024) began with ten male prisoners, serving a mixture of Remand, Short-Term Prison (STP) sentences and Long-Term Prison (LTP) sentences. This rose slightly throughout the year culminating in March 2025, with thirteen male prisoners. The focus remains on reducing figures for Remand and STP, where suitable for bail monitoring or a community sentence. Almost all of Orkney prisoners are now serving LTP sentences.





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 can be 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/individual needs.

During the relevant financial year for Relationship Scotland Orkney:

- 43 adults attended for support or counselling with drug/alcohol issues (either around their own substance use or that of a loved one), attending 338 sessions of support.
- 79% of clients identified at least one risk factor at intake, of which 69% identified mental health as a risk, 20% identified suicide as a risk; 19% domestic abuse (male and female victims); 19% alcohol/drugs; 4% smoking and 2% other addictions (including gambling).
- 10 referrals from Children & Families Social Work and 1 from Criminal Justice Social Work ; 48 from Health Professionals and 18 from Schools (others were mostly self-referral, onward referral from another part of the service or referral by a family member/ex-partner)
- In partnership with the NHS Orkney Drug and Alcohol Team, we launched a Drop-In service for adults seeking help with alcohol / drugs in February 2025. In the first 7 months there have been 43 attendees, 17 of whom attended a Peer Support Group which runs alongside the Drop-In at the same venue. It now regularly attracts 8-9 people each week. The number visiting the Drop In includes 15 people who have not previously engaged with local alcohol/drug support services; and 9 family members/friends have come along to support a loved one. 62% of visits related to alcohol use (total 150 visits) and 19% to drug use (46 visits). The Drop-In has provided easier access to services including a conversation with a CPN or Counsellor, onward referral where appropriate, collecting prescriptions, injecting kits, Naloxone, Blood-borne Virus testing etc It has led to sustained involvement from some people who have previously struggled to engage with services.
- 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. Increasingly we work with people who are or have been involved with the criminal justice system, or who are victims of crime.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

Relationship Scotland 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.

**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/UPW service, where it was more appropriate to do so. This ranged from working in reception, kitchen, gardening or general maintenance at the premises. This opportunity was viewed positively, with a client indicating enhanced self-worth and 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.

The Community Law Clinic (established in 2023) in conjunction with Robert Gordon University offers 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 people were inhibited on account of costs from obtaining this type of service. 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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 in the previous report is now part of embedded practice which considers 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 2024 – 31 March 2025

Less than five cases were supported by Families Outside consisting of:

□ <5 families.

Supported by Helpline: <5

Referral Source: There were less than five referrals from sources such as education, victim support and self-referral.

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.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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. They 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 continued to be 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.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 set by the National Strategy and Performance Framework, there is no statutory obligation to report on progress and CJS do not expect many local areas to have driven priority activity in relation to progressing it as part of their community justice duties. However we recognise that some local areas, for example those involved with any pilot projects, may have information that is relevant and useful to share with CJS and others. If relevant, please use this question to inform us about any significant local activity to undertaken progress this area, and any associated impact.*

Prior to the 2023/24 reporting year 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. Planning for presentation to the local Community Justice Partnership from GeoAmey and G4S has been planned for 2025/26.

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.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

**Please also consider updates as provided in response to question seven for those services accessed by people on bail or those undertaking a community**

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<sup>4</sup> National Indicator:

Percentage of:

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





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

sentence. There will be some overlap of service and support provision, however it is equally relevant to both questions.

During the previous 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, during the previous reporting period 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 was considered for Orkney, with Advance-D currently being progressed. Further reporting on the progress of Advance-D will be available in next years report.

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. 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.





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 was 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.

34 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 and provided their voice, to understand their lived experience of a community sentence, all clients felt their experience of a community sentence was a positive one. Three clients did not feel it would reduce their chances of reoffending. Conversely, 100%, 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:

- It has been a good experience
- It has made me reflect on certain issues
- I have learned to socialise with people better
- I have learned practical skills
- It helped with social anxiety
- I enjoyed the experience,
- Overall it was a good experience overall been good
- The experience had a positive impact
- I am confident I won't reoffend
- Found it very positive
- Improved physical strength
- Enjoyed painting and talking to people and not feeling so isolated
- Changed my attitude towards helping the community
- Painting, learning how to do it properly



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

- Sanding, and upcycling a project
- Thinking and behaviour changed, now more resilient mental health- keeps you sane
- Self-reflection on actions and behaviours which led to the offending - attitude change
- Helped recognise problems and resultantly improved coping strategies
- someone to talk to about problems
- made realise to think before I act
- Supervision has changed my thinking and behaviour
- Able to talk and find solutions which has helped understanding and reduced the likelihood of it happening again
- Process allowed them to reflect on past behaviour relating to substance use

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 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

#### **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 set by the National Strategy and Performance Framework, there is no statutory obligation to report on progress. CJS do not expect many local areas to have driven priority activity in relation to progressing it as part of their community justice duties. However we recognise that some local areas, for example those involved with RJ pilot projects or who commission their own RJ services locally, may have information that is relevant and useful to share with CJS and others. If relevant, please use this question to inform us about any significant local activity to undertaken progress this area, and any associated impact.*

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,



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

and discussions with Space2Face a RJ provider in Shetland with initial development of a RJ process. Consequently, local progress has been made with support from Community Justice Scotland and Space2Face with training due to be delivered to identified individuals later this year.

Further details will be provided in the annual return for 2025/2026.

### Priority Action Seven

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

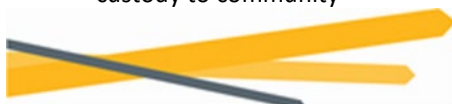
Geographical terrain for remote and rural communities has presented challenges around access to services, however it has also offered a close-knit well-connected

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<sup>5</sup> National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

partnership where accessing services can be achieved on account of strong professional relationships, where service providers are known on a personal basis. 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. Orkney and national partners have sought to strengthen information sharing abilities with both localised and national information sharing mechanisms with services such as Police Scotland.

As discussed above, prisoner releases back to Orkney are not common with 7 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.

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 in prisons specifically over 2023/24, 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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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 remained 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 has been published which is supporting the position in recent years.

### Priority Action Eight

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

- *Scottish Prison Service*
- *Housing Services*
- *Other housing providers/landlords*
- *Justice Social Work*
- *Health*
- *Third Sector*

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<sup>6</sup> National Indicator:

Number of:

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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

- *Any other partners as relevant*

Orkney, like most local authorities in Scotland, has sustained challenges around housing provision, with consideration for declaring a local housing emergency only 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 only one individual required accommodation on release which mirrors that of recent years where there has typically been only one application per year. This 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 employment<sup>7</sup>

#### Local Evidence

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

### 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.*

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<sup>7</sup> National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

*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*

Sustained strong links exist between the OCJP and LEP. With the community justice coordinator role becoming vacant it is hoped recruitment would support continuation of this role 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 work has been commented upon previously by some of those who undertook a community sentence and as a result they gained free access to additional support, which they found of value.

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 2024-25, 13 individuals, who disclosed having criminal convictions, engaged with the CLDE team. Of those 6 left the service and 7 continue to work with the team. Of the 6 who left the service, 2 entered employment and 2 entered further education with UHI Orkney. In addition, 5 people gained recognised qualifications to support them on the employment journey.

Discussions continued 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.





## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### Priority Action Ten

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>8</sup> National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

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. Despite the low numbers feedback has been positive thus far.

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. In preparation for National Voluntary Through Care Service (now called Upside) coming into effect preliminary discussions were held with The Blide Trust in relation to creating a pathway with SACRO, and relevant partners, to support individuals' return to the community from custody. Work has progressed in this area and will be reported during the next reporting period.

### 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*



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

*activity. If any self-evaluation activity has been undertaken, this may support development of this answer.*

During this reporting period a CJOIP was developed however was not approved due to the Community Justice Co-ordinator role becoming vacant. Consequently, alignment will not fully take place until next year, however actions and initiatives continue to be implemented whilst formal approval is pending. 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.

In addition, Justice Services in the spirit of coproduction and partnership working have continued to support the Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender Based Violence and Abuse (VAWG) via the funding of the safer Orkney website. The VAWG partnership was established to tackle gender-based violence against women and girls, however despite the recognition that this is a crucial area, due in part to the partnership not attracting specific allocated funding, development of certain aspect has proved challenging at times. As such with a number of members sitting upon VAWG 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 if were it not for this additional financial support from Justice Services. At the start of this year relationships were further strengthened as the Service Manager for justice services assumed the role of chair for the VAWG.

A Self-Evaluation process to aid and support quality improvements was completed and presented to the partnership. Unfortunately, due to staffing issues progress was not as anticipated however 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 going forward.

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.



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

### 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 the potential to inadvertently identify an individual. As such, 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 remain vital to collecting opinions and views of those who have experience of the justice system. While the clients voice is also captured through an additional questionnaire which further supports the service to meet the needs of those involved in the justice arena.

The aforementioned interviews form part of Self Evaluation activity and feature in discussions regarding improving 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.

Local partner organisations who support justice experienced individuals and key stakeholders, particularly client facing justice services workers, also play an important role 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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

been used in the development of, firstly the SNSA, and subsequently 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 we hope to achieve going forward.

### Priority Action Thirteen

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

#### Nationally determined outcome:

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

#### Local Evidence

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

### 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*

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, had 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

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<sup>9</sup> National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

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



## Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

of meetings had been raised to the recommended standard, however following the community justice role becoming vacant in December 2024, unfortunately, we have been unable to maintain this momentum.

That said, encouraging additional members onto the OCJP also led to greater representation on other local partnerships in Orkney which has ensured that the work of community justice continued to be 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, several local media campaigns were undertaken over the reporting period, with purposes ranging from aspects such as distribution of posters provided by Community Justice Scotland, which explained what community justice was with individuals advocating the valuable impact that it had on their lives. While, the service manager participated in an interview which raised the profile of the work of the community justice partners and the positive impact community pay back orders have for both attendees and the community.

These campaigns, 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 ongoing 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?*





## **Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template**

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.

The development of a perpetrator programme for those convicted of domestic abuse in addition to ensuring the availability of restorative justice in Orkney is on-going. Both projects however are dependent on a stable workforce to ensure consistent optimum delivery, however in small teams this can present a risk. Despite this challenge individuals' were identified to participate in these training opportunities in the coming year.

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, has continued. Diversion from prosecution has continued to grow and is an area that we look to develop further.

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.

Public reassurance and understanding of community justice will continue to be an ongoing and continuous 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.

Finally, there is recognition that following the delay in recruiting to the Community Justice Co-ordinator role the development and progression of many of these activities perhaps witnessed a slower pace. However, due to the strong relationship between and across the partnership work continued to progress and it is anticipated this will gather further impetus with recruitment to the Community Justice role going forward.





Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland  
Local Area Annual Return Template

Appendix 1: Community Justice Data Reporting (Section 26 Reporting)  
Data Set 1- National Indicators with Baseline Year (2017-2018)

National Indicator	Current Year	Previous Year	Pre-Covid Year (2019-20)	Baseline Year	Desired Indicator Direction	Current Indicator Direction	Local Progress	National Progress	CJS Statement	Local Comment
Number of diversion Assessments undertaken	14	>5	>5	5	Increase	Increase	✓	✓	The number of diversion assessments undertaken shows an increase compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The increase is in line with the desired direction	This is a positive direction, and one services aim to maintain and improve upon.
Number of Diversion Cases Commenced	7	>5	>5	5	Increase	Increase	✓	✓	The number of diversion commencements shows an increase compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The increase is in line with the desired direction.	This is a positive direction and something services continue to consider where appropriate. Services will work to maintain and improve this measure.
Number of diversion cases successfully completed	0	>5	>5	>5	Increase	Decrease	✗	✓	The number of diversion completions shows a decrease compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The desired direction is to increase.	Many of the Diversion Cases Commenced completed out with the reporting period. This will show in next year's report.
Percentage of community Payback orders successfully completed	96%	95%	87%	80%	Increase	Increase	✓	—	The percentage of CPO completions shows an increase compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The Increase is in line with the desired direction.	This is positive movement; local services would work towards maintaining and improving this measure.
Percentage of drug treatment and testing orders successfully completed	0%	0%	0%	0%	Increase	No Change	—	✓	The percentage of DTTO completions shows no change compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The desired direction is to increase.	The DTTO service is unavailable in Orkney.
Number of homelessness applications where prison was the main applicant become homeless from	0	0	0	0	Decrease	No Change	—	✓	The number of homeless applications where prison was the property the main applicant became homeless from, shows no change compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The desired direction is to decrease.	The measurement shows a record of 0. Orkney is unable to improve in this measure with 0 being the ideal position for this measure.
Number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced	1	1	0	1	Increase	No Change	—	✓	The number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced shows no change compared to both the baseline year and the previous year. The desired direction is to increase.	Staff are proactive in offering and supporting clients to access throughcare support. As it is a voluntary support service, clients are offered but understand it is not mandatory. Views are captured within exit questionnaires and continue to encourage clients to make use of the support provision.



Community justice outcome activity across Scotland: Local Area Annual Return Template

Data Set 2- National Indicators without Baseline Year

National Indicator	Current Year	Previous Year	Desired Indicator Direction	Current Indicator Direction	Local Progress	National Progress	CJS Statement	Local Comment
Number of referrals from custody centres	0	0	Increase	No Change	—	✖	The number of referrals from custody centres shows no change where the desired direction is to increase.	Orkney does not have a custody centre.
Number of assessments reports for bail suitability	13	7	Increase	Increased	✓	✖	The number of assessments undertaken shows an increase in line with the desired direction.	This is an increase and positive position.
Number of bail supervision cases commenced	9	7	Increase	Increased	✓	✓	The number of commencements shows an increase in line with the desired direction.	This is an increase and positive position linked to previous measure.
Number of bail supervision cases completed	6	>5	Increase	Increased	✓	✓	The number of completions shows an increase in line with the desired direction.	This is a positive increase, linked to the previous two measures.
Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatment from custody to community	0		Increase	No Emerging Pattern		✓	Insufficient data to identify any direction.	Insufficient data to identify any direction.
Percentage of those in employability services with convictions		10%	Increase	No Emerging Pattern		✓	Insufficient data to identify any direction.	Insufficient data to identify any direction.
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			Increase	N/A		✓	No Data	No data is available either locally or nationally on this measure.

