

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	CPPB/18/25



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 19 September 2025

**Highland Community Justice Partnership
Revised Terms of Reference and Annual Return 2024-25**

Report by: Kevin Flett (HCJP Manager)

Summary

The Board is asked to approve:

1. The HCJP Terms of Reference, revised June 2025 (reflecting changes in the partnership's structure);
2. The HCJP Annual Return 2024-25, prior to submission to Community Justice Scotland by 26 September 2025.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Community Justice Scotland Act (2016), delegated responsibility for the implementation of Community Justice to Community Planning Partnerships and as a consequence the Highland Community Justice Partnership (HCJP) was established in April 2016.

Following publication of the Highland Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (HCJOIP) in June 2024 the HCJP undertook a review of its structures with a view to better support the delivery of outcomes. A process of development with HCJP partners resulted in a revised structure where two delivery groups would be formed, reporting to a Strategic Group which would continue to be directly accountable to the HCPP Board. The delivery groups bring together a wider range of partners involved operationally in delivering justice services across Highland. In addition to supporting delivery of the HCJOIP, the new structures align to the Aims and Actions of the National Strategy for Community Justice, and support reporting to Community Justice Scotland (CJS).

The revised Terms of Reference reflect these new structures, as well as aligning to the HCPP Board Terms of Reference, updated in February 2024 (including the appointment of Independent Chairs).

- 1.2 On behalf of the HCPP Board, the HCJP provides an annual return to CJS. The requirement is not for detailed statistical information, but a descriptive narrative highlighting aspects of partners' activities during the year.

It is also a requirement for the CJP to produce and publish a public facing Annual Report, this will be completed for publication before the end of December 2025. The Annual Report is more focussed on local delivery, and draws on information provided by CJS in the Indicator Report produced by them at the end of November each year.

2. Highlights

2.1 Whilst the revised Terms of Reference build on the previous terms (February 2022), and do not alter the existing lines of accountability within HCPP, the most obvious change relates to the creation of the two delivery groups. The Diversions and Interventions Group focuses on the delivery of diversions, early interventions, community interventions and public protection arrangements. The Transitions and Communities Group focuses on the delivery of services to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence, in particular those who are moving back to their communities having completed a sentence.

The Strategic group comprises a membership representing the statutory partners set out in the Community Justice Scotland Act (2016), with additional representation from the Department of Work and Pensions, the Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership, the Highland Violence against Women and Girls Partnership and Victim Support Scotland.

As regards the appointment of an Independent Chair, the wording was amended to reflect the updated HCPP Board Terms of Reference.

“The HCJP (through its Strategic Group) will appoint an Independent Chair following the processes agreed by the Highland Community Planning Partnership Board. The role will be remunerated. The appointment will be agreed by the HCPP Board.”

2.2 The Annual Report outlines significant work being done by justice partners across Highland, key features of which include:

- Delivery of comprehensive justice services across Highland by statutory and third sector partners;
- Progress towards better public understanding of a ‘community first’ approach to justice through the use of local and social media, where the evidence is presented that community sentences are more effective than custodial sentences;
- Increased partnership working, especially in terms of operational delivery and cooperation;
- Willingness to identify and find solutions for challenging issues. This is evidenced in strong partnership approaches in custody settings, in the delivery of a wide range of interventions to address offending behaviour and in addressing identified weaknesses and gaps in what is offered in Highland (for example Restorative Justice and listening to the voices of Victims and others with lived experience of the justice system);
- A commitment to embrace innovation and fresh approaches (for example use of Albyn Housing Society’s FitHome technology to support individuals integrating back in to their communities and working in partnership with industry to create opportunities for employment).

3. Challenges

- 3.1 Not all partners fully engage with the activities of the HCJP, and this inhibits progress in particular areas and limits full collaboration. This is particularly true at a strategic level.
- 3.2 Each year the HCJP highlights the precarious financial position of third sector activities. As we seek to develop new initiatives (for example around Restorative Justice and engagement with people who have lived and living experience of the justice system) the question has to be faced, how such initiatives will be resourced on a sustainable basis going forward.
- 3.3 Though significant work has been done over the year to promote community justice, public awareness and understanding is often shaped by negative stereotypes, reinforced by an unsympathetic media.

These challenges, among others, have been identified, and are among the priorities which shape the delivery plans of the HCJP groups going forward.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- i. Approve the HCJP Terms of Reference (revised June 2025)
- ii. Approve the HCJP Annual Return 2024-25, for submission to Community Justice Scotland

Author: Kevin Flett

Date: 11 September 2025

**Appendices: 1. Terms of Reference (revised June 2025)
2. HCJP Annual Return 2024-25**

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

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.

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.

1. Community Justice Partnership / Group Details

Name of local authority area/s	Highland
Name and contact details of the partnership Chair	Name: James Maybee Email: CJPChair@highlandtsi.org.uk Telephone: 01349 864289
Contact for queries about this report	Name: Kevin Flett Email: kevin.flett@highlandtsi.org.uk Telephone: 07454983516

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

I can confirm that this is an accurate record of the activity of the Highland Community Justice Partnership over this reporting period, and confirm that it has been ratified by the partnership members, and the wider Highland Community Planning Partnership Board.

Date: 10 September 2025

Name: James Maybee

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.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP) Board provides oversight and scrutiny of partnership activities, including those of the Highland Community Justice Partnership (HCJP).

The first half of the year 2024-25 brought significant change in the leadership of and support for the CJP. The new manager was appointed in June 2024 and the new Independent Chair in September 2024.

Following the publication of the Highland Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) in June 2024, the focus shifted to the creation of new structures for the HCJP and the development of outcomes focussed delivery plans.

There have been significant changes to the structure of the HCJP over the period 2024-25. As indicated in last year's annual return, there was a planned development process which allowed for all partners to fully engage. Many contributed positively to the process with the outcome being a partnership with the potential to support a renewed focus on delivery.

The overarching purpose was to align the work of the HCJP to the Aims and Actions of the National Strategy for Community Justice so as to support delivery improvement and clearer accountability in reporting, whilst still recognising the place of the HCJP within local planning and delivery structures.

The HCJP remains locally accountable to the HCPP Board. The HCPP Board take an active interest in the work of the HCJP, with clear channels for communication in place which provide opportunities to update on progress. The HCJP Independent Chair attends and reports to the Board, providing assurance on the implementation of the Highland CJOIP. Functionally the HCJP continues to be hosted by the Highland Third Sector Interface, which supports the HCJP staff and independent chair in fulfilling their responsibilities.



In addition to its statutory membership, the HCJP have elected to include representation on the Strategic Group from:

- Department of Work and Pensions
- Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership
- Highland Violence against Women and Girls Partnership
- Victim Support Scotland

To support outcome delivery, two standing (Delivery) groups have been formed.

- i. The **Diversions & Interventions Group** focuses on the delivery of diversions, early interventions, community interventions and public protection arrangements.
- ii. The **Transitions and Communities Group** focuses on the delivery of services to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence, in particular those who are moving back to their communities having completed a sentence.

In addition to the two standing groups, short-life working groups are created ad hoc to take forward defined pieces of work on behalf of the Strategic Group.

The two delivery groups met for the first time in February / March 2025, with the original HCJP meeting for the last time in its then current form in March 2025, before convening in its strategic role in June 2025.

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

Geographic and Service Delivery Barriers

Highland's vast and rural geography presents an enduring challenge. The sheer size of the area makes it difficult to ensure consistent service delivery, particularly in remote communities. This impacts almost every stage on the continuum of an individual's justice journey from their initial contact with justice services to the availability of support for individuals transitioning from custody back into the community.

There is significant impact on those who are the victims of crime, particularly around the degree of vulnerability experienced by victims in remote communities, where support can be many hours away. Changes in personnel has made engagement with victims' organisations difficult, but this has been identified as a strategic priority for the coming year.

Also identified is the impact of geography on the families of those who are imprisoned. Visiting prisons in the central belt as well as HMP Grampian can be as challenging (in some situations more challenging) for families in peripheral Highland communities than in some parts of Scotland's island communities. Whilst the number of women from Highland in prison is small, the distances involved mean that family life can be severely disrupted and maintaining family links are particularly difficult.

Workforce and Recruitment Pressures

Difficulties in recruitment, especially in more remote areas, persists. This can contribute to gaps in provision, which in turn affects the ability of partners to deliver consistent support and maintain engagement across the partnership area. This is true for both statutory and third sector partners. For example, in the course of the year Justice Social Work has moved towards being fully staffed, but the process of achieving and maintaining such a status is challenging.

Financial Uncertainty

Uncertainty over funding, particularly for third sector partners continues to be acute. The uncertainty facing the Custody Link Project was referred to last year, and though funding was identified to sustain the service for a further year, the

lack of continuity undermines the ability of the service to deliver, with an ongoing need to review if referrals may need to be suspended at times.

Engagement and Partnership Participation

Whilst there has been some improvement in attendance at Partnership meetings, lack of active participation in Partnership activities by a number of statutory partners limits collaboration and development. Early indicators are that the restructured partnership will support a more focussed approach, especially for partners in an operational context. Maintaining and developing this early potential will require continued attention and effort. However, the challenge of engaging with some partners at a strategic level remains.

Complex Needs of Individuals

Many individuals who come into contact with the justice system face overlapping challenges—mental health, drug and alcohol use, housing instability, and trauma. Previous HCJP needs assessments have identified health and wellbeing as requiring action, and there is evidence this continues to be so. For example, the recent Health Needs Assessment undertaken by the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership highlighted the mental and physical health challenges faced by many in the care of the prison service.

Female Offending and Trauma-Informed Approaches

Following on from HCJP commissioned research, highlighted last year, further work has been undertaken to identify options for the reinstatement and redevelopment of a JSW woman's programme. This included some research on the availability of and approaches taken across Scotland undertaken by the HCJP Senior Development Officer. Gaps in the JSW team have made it difficult to progress plans to develop activities which address the particular needs of women within the justice system.

Reporting cycles

The lag in issuing performance information by Community Justice Scotland made meeting deadlines difficult especially in fulfilling the need for local accountability. There had been some confusion and anxiety across a number of CJs as to the format and content of the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

However, the HCJP Board were able to be flexible in their approach to agreeing publication of the report, and there was support and understanding from CJS colleagues around the timing of publication, yet it remains a challenge to ensure that the HCJP meets its obligation to report within local and national cycles.

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.

1. Custody-centred services

As will be evidenced later in this return, there is a well-developed approach to custody based services in Inverness. Partnership working between Police Scotland, NHS Highland and the Third Sector Custody Link Project continues to be strong. The presence of the Third Sector within the custody setting facilitates improved access to support for individuals who present with a range of vulnerabilities.

2. Public Understanding and Stigma

As a consequence of the initiative to widen opportunities for unpaid work and support the continued development of Community Payback Orders in more distant parts of Highland, opportunities emerged to develop positive links with local press which has progressed alongside the wider use of social media to inform public understanding and present positive stories of the benefits brought to local communities through unpaid work teams. This has been of tremendous benefit, but sits against wider societal perceptions that remain largely negative towards any form of 'punishment' which is not custodial and therefore perceived to be 'soft'.

3. Organisational and structural transition

As outlined above, the Partnership has undergone significant structural changes to align with the National Strategy for Community Justice. The process of development in itself was helpful in terms of bringing a number of partners together to reflect on the purpose of the partnership and its effectiveness or otherwise, resulting in a deepening understanding of the impact of the partnership approach.

There was also value in broadening the reach of the partnership. With focus moving beyond a single group, to include the delivery groups for partners who wish to proactively engage with the HCJP, there is opportunity to widen representation, especially at an operational level. For comparison, the invitation list to the original HCJP meeting sat at around 22 (with an average of 14 attending each meeting), now the combined lists for the strategic and delivery groups sits at over 30 (with an average combined attendance of 26 [omitting duplicate attendance] at the three group meetings). Included in this broader attendance is representation from NHS (custody and prison based services), housing and employability services (including Housing association provider and

large employers) and third sector organisations involved in a range of justice focussed activities.

4. Strengthened partnership links

In the course of developing the partnership, links with other partnership bodies has been strengthened.

We have always been fortunate to have positive and supportive links with the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP). Not only do the HADP commission or fund justice focussed services (for example the Custody Link Project and the Harm Prevention Officer post within Police Scotland), there are well developed strategic links between the HADP and the HCJP.

There are clear links with MAPPA. The HCJP independent chair is also the independent chair of MAPPA in Highlands and Islands. There is cross representation on the HCJP and Highland Community Safety and Resilience Delivery group, and the independent chairs of the Highland Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership and the HCJP are members of each other's partnerships. Links have also developed with the Adult Support and Protection service.

Priority Action One

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution¹

Local Evidence

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

5. What activity has taken place to increase successful completion of diversion?

Justice Social Work continue to complete diversion suitability reports based on the assessment of individual needs in order to identify priorities to be addressed and the interventions which may be appropriate.

Interventions have included the use of in-house programmes such as Decider Skills and SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) which people can access if required. Individuals residing in the inner Moray Firth area can also complete their diversion while continuing work and receive support from third sector organisations where appropriate.

Young people aged 16 to 17 would normally complete their diversion with the Highland Council's Youth Action Service using their expertise in provision of interventions to young people. The Diversions and Interventions Delivery Group at their March meeting identified the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, as presenting issues which will need to be addressed particularly around the impact upon the interface of Youth Action and JSW. The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration is also involved in this discussion in terms of the potential impact on the Children's Hearings system.

Within the Diversions and Interventions Delivery Group, there has been the opportunity for partners to reflect on the way that Diversion from Prosecution works within the Highland context. Discussion about the length of time it can take for Diversions to come through to JSW and the use of Diversions for people with a significant history of offending and non-compliance with orders etc. There is also the

¹ National Indicator:

Number of diversion from prosecution:

- assessments undertaken
- cases commenced
- cases successfully completed

opportunity to seek clarification of how the central marking process works, and how this sits alongside local processes.

Police Scotland report continued use by officers of alternatives to prosecution and direct measures as disposals for offences and monitors the use of these regularly. The publication of the Lord Advocate's guidance on the use of direct measures for adult offenders was particularly welcomed by Police Scotland colleagues.

What impact has there been as a result?

The wider range of interventions aimed at addressing individual needs more effectively enables delivery to be much more person centred and focused.

The opportunity to reflect on the use of Diversion from Prosecution will continue to be helpful, especially as it relates to the continuing high number of diversion suitability reports for individuals already sentenced to Community Payback Orders or even custodial sentences as well as individuals with significant offending histories.

JSW continue to find that diversion works best for individuals who have some or no prior convictions, especially young people and women.

Police report that the numbers of people being kept in custody to appear before the court continues to reduce, freeing up court time and providing better outcomes for both victims and accused persons.

Priority Action Two

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people in police custody receive support to address their needs²

Local Evidence:

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

6. What activity has taken place to support people in police custody to access support?

The continued partnership working between Police Scotland, the NHS and the Third Sector presents unique opportunities to engage with individuals who find themselves in police custody. This is focused in the custody suite at Burnett Road in Inverness, which has the additional benefit of proximity to the Inverness Justice Centre.

The Custody Link Worker Project (CLink) continued to support individuals throughout the year, often addressing issues which are complex and multi-layered, as evidenced in the summary report below.

Custody Link Project

Anticipated Activity	Actual
The target was to engage with over 100/120 referrals in the 12 month period.	144
Regular 1:1 contact with individuals to understand what is going on in their life as explained and experienced by them, this will repeat as often and for as long as required within the span of the project – there is no time limit to this service	144
Where necessary to ensure safety and stabilisation, we will seek emergency interventions for food, electricity, housing and other basic needs.	65 interventions
Organisations and community groups will feel more supported and enabled to understand the needs and opportunities connected to supporting people with experience of custody	52 organisations
Existing services will make changes to better suit people with experience of being in custody and where required to develop new ways of working	Unable to quantify

² National Indicator:

- Number of referrals from custody centres

Anticipated Outcomes
1. Reduce the instances that someone comes into custody, including reducing the likelihood that the pattern of behaviour that could become escalated and lead to a custodial sentence is reduced.
2. Enable, encourage and motivate individuals to make positive changes to their life circumstances i.e. reducing or stopping problematic use of drugs or alcohol, by engaging with appropriate services.
3. Individuals access support services that they would otherwise not be aware of or inclined/confident to engage with as a result of social inequality of opportunity, stigma or lack of trust in statutory services.

Custody Healthcare

Within the custody setting, NHS nursing staff continued the development and implementation of the MATPACT tool (**M**edication **A**ssisted **T**reatment **P**revention **A**nd **C**are **T**oolkit). Supported by the HADP, the aim was to increase number of referrals to appropriate health services, support a reduction in the number of drug related deaths for those who have been in custody within 6 months, increase the number of referrals to outreach teams, increase number of take-home naloxone kits distributed and increase the number of blood borne virus testing. These aims fitted into the organisational strategic vision and that of the national MAT standards. The impact and outcome of this work would improve user experience allowing for a person-centred focus and would ultimately reduce the number of drug related deaths.

Police Custody staff continue to value the close cooperation and partnership working with the CLink project, as well as the positive relationship that exists with NHS colleagues in the custody setting.

There is a high degree of trust and mutual respect which underpin close working practices and improved outcomes for individuals experiencing this part of the justice system. Police colleagues have noted the positive benefits (including health benefits) of increased referrals and the reduction in the risk of individuals returning to police custody.

Harm Prevention Officer (HPO)

The HADP fund this post, which covers mainland Highland. The aim of the HPO role is to identify those deemed to be at substantial risk of death due to alcohol or drug use and to collaborate with relevant partners and individuals to reduce this risk.

Target population is primarily adults, although young people have been supported when appropriate.

During the year the HPO has reviewed police systems and engaged with partner agencies and affected individuals to reduce risk. Interactions have been mainly self-generated or from partner agencies. Total number of engagements for the reporting period is 97, broken down as follows:

- Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service : 27
- Community Mental Health Team : 10
- Housing : 5
- Direct contact with vulnerable people : 13
- Inverness Engagement Service : 16
- Custody Link Project : 3
- Scottish Ambulance Service : 1
- Social Work : 4
- Addictions Counselling Inverness : 1
- Royal Northern Infirmary : 5
- Salvation Army : 3
- New Craigs : 2
- HMP Inverness : 1
- Housing First : 1
- Highland Third Sector Interface : 2
- Education : 1
- Criminal Justice Social Work : 1
- University of Highlands & Islands : 1

What impact has there been as a result?

Mutual trust and respect continues to be high, and police colleagues report better understanding of the impact of arrest and custody on individuals, as well as a growing understanding of the impact on Victims of release from custody. All contributing to more reflective practice and better informed decision making.

For the CLink project, during the period April 2024 to March 2025, 47 individuals completed their engagement and at 31 March, 72 individuals remained as active cases. Over 70 individuals were supported with substance use with referrals made to a range of local residential and community alcohol and drug services. In addition, individuals were encouraged to self-refer and seek assistance. The CLink project continues to note that around 70% of referrals seek help with substance use.

The project has continued to reflect on and develop its processes. For example, individuals have greater control over identifying their priorities and how they wish to address them. They also have greater choice and control over how they engage with their link worker and the frequency of this contact. There is no set programme or length of time specified and any actions or referrals made by a Link Worker are agreed in advance with the individual. These key aspects of the approach ensure that at all times the service is trauma informed and person-centred.

The CLink project has also engaged with Police Scotland in the review of the national arrest referral process for all custody centres in Scotland. The process aims to improve access to support for detained individuals with a “vulnerability”.

Also worth noting is that the CLink project was recognised as the Chief Constable’s Partner of the Year for 2024, which was testimony to the hard work and commitment of the team, as well as to the value of the partnership approach which has developed within the Inverness custody setting in recent years.

Custody Link Case Study

‘The individual had been arrested on suspicion of driving whilst under the influence of drugs. Analysis of their blood sample confirmed a significant presence of drugs in their system. The individual also had serious long term health conditions and was estranged from family support. There was a history of drug use for 4 years and unemployment for 3 years.

Following referral from police custody staff, support was arranged with a CLink worker. When initially in contact with their CLink worker the individual had little optimism about the future and believed they would be dead in six months.

Counselling and support were offered by the Highland Alcohol and Drug Advice and Support Service (NHS). The CLink worker remained in contact, helping with a number of issues prior to the case coming to court. The individual’s health improved through the support and treatment received. They managed to find full time work, and at court, evidence was presented to the Sheriff of their positive engagement, including a letter of support from their employer.

The individual received a one year driving ban and a fine. Subsequently, family relationships have been re-established, they remain substance free and in full time employment.

The CLink worker received the following message:

“thank you for all your help you truly have saved my life I think I would be dead if you didn’t reach out to me....thank you so much for everything, I’m delighted I took the help when it was offered”.’

NHS custody Healthcare staff report increasing access to the right services for individuals. There is also a sense that there is a cultural shift in reducing stigma, as well as positive benefits for the staff team. Police perspectives have changed as data results have helped reframe drug-related harm to police, facilitating discussions about the underlying reasons why people use drugs, and showing drug related harms are not just about health.

There has been generally positive feedback from individuals who have experienced the service -

Patient Experience = Driving Excellence



The Harm Prevention Officer reports:

1. Increased number of individuals being diverted into treatment/support.
2. Pro-active engagement with those believed to be cuckooed by organised crime groups.
3. Improved police engagement with members of the public affected by alcohol and drugs.

The main benefit has been early intervention for vulnerable people as many incidents are reviewed within 24 hours of police attendance.

Incidents involving drug overdoses are referred to the NHS for consideration of assertive outreach (area dependant) so that the appropriate support can be discussed and risk reduced. The family of the affected person are often included in this support and availability of naloxone is heavily promoted.

Police report that a 'byproduct' of this pro-active police involvement is the improved relationships that police have with partners as well as those who may have previously been hostile towards police.

Priority Action Three

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people are assessed for and successfully complete bail supervision³

Local Evidence

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

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

Having a dedicated team of Justice Social Work Officers and a Social Worker means that completing assessments and providing Bail Supervision Services has been more consistent over the year.

Some of the challenges around the use of Bail Supervision have been identified by the Diversions and Interventions Delivery Group as needing to be addressed in coming months. The lack of clear risk assessment and the potential impact on victims of individuals being released on bail need to be better understood as well as the perception that breaches are not always responded to timeously.

What impact has there been as a result?

JSW team members continue to find that Bail Supervision works very well for young people and for women. However, the issues identified above will be a focus for this coming year.

³ National Indicator:

Number of:

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

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.

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 sentences⁴

Local Evidence

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

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?

Justice Social Work continues to offer a wide range of interventions across the Highland area. In the course of the year the following programmes have been offered:

Moving Forward 2 Change
The Caledonian Project
Drug Testing & Treatment Orders (DTTO) (and DTTO 2)
SMART Recovery
Decider Skills
Community Payback Orders (CPOs)
Management of Unpaid Work

Justice Social Work operates across Highland, seeking to offer the full range of interventions regardless of the geographical challenges.

For example though the team delivering Caledonian and MF2C is based in Dingwall, these interventions have been offered at a number of locations from Caithness in the far north to Lochaber and Skye in the south and west.

⁴ National Indicator:
Percentage of:

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

There continue to be some limitations around CPO requirements that could be employed, particularly around treatment for Mental Health and for drug and alcohol use which could be of real benefits to individuals.

There are also referral pathways to third sector providers whose input could be beneficial to individuals.

All people completing a statutory order would normally be offered the opportunity to provide anonymised feedback, but this has proved to be a challenge, and is currently being reviewed. Partnership working is underway between JSW, HCJP and the Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) to consider fresh approaches to collecting lived experience / user views and establishing user involvement.

Over the year, the HCJP Senior Development Officer post has been funded, with part of the remit being to support the development of CPOs across Highland, with a focus on opportunities for unpaid work.

Awareness raising efforts have increased the community uptake of the unpaid work squads. Communities have responded very positively and tangibly to the news stories that have been pushed out on social media and the local press. The increase in demand has at times stretched the Community Payback teams especially when coupled with the increase in numbers of clients, also with higher tariffs. CPO Officers express concern over young and first-time offenders mixing with more seasoned offenders. Questions have been raised about offering opportunities for personal development to individuals completing unpaid work requirements, but there seems to be a lack of clarity about how this might be achieved within current processes and constraints. Over the past year there has been resources put into training the CP Supervisors, and also a Senior CPO role has been created to strengthen the delivery of the service across Highland.

A further piece of research was done to conduct a desktop study compiling examples of Women's Programmes around Scotland. This was circulated to JSW/ CJS/ COSLA/ SG and the National Women's Justice Network, and is being used to support the design of a women's programme in Highland.

Though the DTTO team is based at the Justice Centre in Inverness, the intervention and accompanying support is offered across Highland. Central to the DTTO criteria is that the individual has a history of offending because of substance dependence and is also at risk of receiving a custodial sentence. The DTTO2 (funded by HADP) is a form of early intervention, aimed at people who are not dependent on drugs and are more likely to respond to intervention, for example, individuals aged 16 and older who may be facing their first drug charge and females with less entrenched drug use.

For DTTOs there is one social work and two health appointments each week, whilst for DTTO2 it is one social work and one health appointment each week. The DTTO team have a more focussed caseload – this is true for social work and health staff,

who report the positive benefits of more regular and consistent engagement with individuals as well as the benefits of working in partnership.

The service seeks to build on a process of risk and needs assessment, a co-produced support plan and review as well as ongoing support for individuals in attending court to report on progress. Beyond the completion of the order, ongoing support to address drug use is offered by the Drug and Alcohol Recovery team.

What impact has there been as a result?

Over the past year the Senior Development Officer has worked across Highland to raise awareness and develop relationships. Under the direction of the JSW manager and CP officers in more rural areas there has been engagement with community groups through presentations, conversations and preparation of social media information.

Trips to CPO workshops and projects have been followed up with Facebook posts and press articles which have generated a lot of local interest, raised awareness, built trust and generated CPO projects and placements for the teams. The individuals completing orders have also spoken of the benefit they feel from this coverage and appreciate the visibility. This activity clearly boosts the Facebook following and demonstrates that it is a useful tool for spreading positive news stories around community justice and engaging communities in all parts of Highland.

With the role being based within the HTSI this offers links in to third sector and community organisations, providing a way in to make initial contact and supporting more collaborative approaches. With the increasing demand for community sentences, however, Community Payback teams are stretched. It was also identified that though some clients move on positively after their order is completed, many clients are at a loss afterwards.

Raising public awareness of the benefits of community payback helps to increase public awareness and to reduce stigma.

The impact of DTTOs is wide and varied. The DTTO team point to a reduction in drug use and offending and improved health and wellbeing in most, if not all, clients. There is clearly marked improvement in how individuals cope and deal with Care and Protection issues with the support of the team.

It is envisaged that there will be continued work to strengthen relationships with housing partners, particularly with Housing First and FitHome. (See Priority Actions 7 & 8 below for further information).

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.

During the year exploratory work has been undertaken by the Senior Development Officer to assess the level of interest across Highland for the provision of Restorative Justice (RJ).

A real interest has been identified across a range of statutory and third sector partners resulting in a working group being established including Justice Social Work, Action for Children, Victim Support Scotland, Custody Link Project and HCJP with the aim to research, raise awareness, train up and collaborate with partners to explore what model of provision might be achievable and sustainable in the Highland context. Support has been received from CJS and from Space to Face, a RJ organisation based in Shetland.

Both HMP Inverness and Action for Children have, in the past, explored RJ with some of their clients. Four organisations have agreed to fund a staff member to attend RJ facilitator training in 2025. And plans are in place to offer a unique event in autumn 2025 at University of Highlands & Islands including CJS, Space to Face Shetland and The GESE Theatre Company to deepen understanding and to build momentum. This will be reported on next year.

Priority Action Seven

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

Nationally determined outcome:

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

Local Evidence

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

11. What activity has taken place to support people to access health and social care support after release from prison?

The Highland Community Integration Plan (HCIP) continued to be delivered as a partnership approach involving Scottish Prison Service, NHS Highland and Justice Social Work, along with a number of third sector agencies who provide community support. The focus of the model is on those living in the inner Moray Firth area who have known drug and alcohol issues. It continues to be successful in terms of supporting those who are returning to the community from prison to assess their needs and tailor plans to support them on their release.

For those opting to engage with the HCIP, planning normally begins at 6 weeks prior to release, attended by partners including NHS, Social Work (prison and community based), local authority housing, New Routes, and other third sector agencies

As part of the risk assessment process, there is particular attention to the risk of suicide. Should such a risk be identified a case conference will be held to clarify the relevant factors relating to the release that need to be addressed. The case conference will involve relevant partners to shape the direction of the plan and the support required.

Also in use within HMP Inverness is the locally developed assessment and outcomes tool, *My Compass* broadly based on the Justice Outcomes Star.

Throughout the year Families Outside have highlighted the issues faced by the families of those who are imprisoned. These are particularly acute in Highland, especially in more remote parts of Highland. There is also the impact on the families

⁵ National Indicator:

Number of transfers in drug/alcohol treatments from:

- custody to community

of women from Highland who are imprisoned, who face long journeys to visit and to maintain family contact.

Under priority Action Eight, there is further description of the FitHome initiative developed by Albyn Housing Society. However, at this point it is worth noting the work done to support individuals who have a history of substance use issues who would be at higher risk of reoffending and drug-related harm. As part of pre-liberation planning and assessment, work is done to identify individuals who may benefit from the use of technology. Support is given to identify housing and to familiarise them and support workers with the FitHome technology which underpins continuity of care and support for vulnerable individuals following release from prison.

The creation of the Transitions and Communities Delivery Group has provided a forum for partners to come together to share thinking and explore opportunities for collaboration. The group will also support the transition to the new Voluntary Throughcare service.

What impact has there been as a result?

The HCIP model and the My Compass tool have continued to support a structured approach to preparation for liberation from prison, which aims to avert the uncertainties often faced by those re-entering their communities.

The use of the FitHome technology has demonstrated:

- Significant drop in substance use related ICU visits.
- Early detection of overdose via the use of FitHome sensor monitoring by a client's drug & alcohol nurse.
- No clients returning to prison on charges brought against them during their stay in a FitHome equipped property.
- Increase in partnership working and development of new partnership framework with partner organisations across Highland.

Priority Action Eight

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

Nationally determined outcome:

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

Local Evidence

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

12. What activity has taken place to support people to access suitable accommodation following release from prison?

As part of using the Highland Community Integration Plan (HCIP), Housing partners (including local authority housing) play a central role in its delivery. For people on licences, Justice Social Work and the Highland Council's Housing Department work very closely together when liberations are taking place. Both services normally plan ahead of time where the person is likely to present as homeless, etc. For cases where the individual is a Registered Sex Offender, Police, Housing and Justice Social Work, work together compiling Environmental Risk Assessments. The *My Compass* assessment tool used in HMP Inverness identifies housing issues at an early stage, and how to address these.

HMP Inverness has good links with housing providers and with the local CAB which supports planning for liberation. Upcoming planned liberations (Home Detention Curfew, parole etc) are communicated to relevant partner agencies to support suitable accommodation planning. Liberation meetings are held 6 weeks prior to release to ensure any potential issues are communicated with partners.

An example of innovative practice has been the ongoing development of the use of FitHome technology by Albyn Housing Society:

'Albyn Housing Society has worked with partner organisations, the Scottish Prison Service, Justice SW, Police Scotland, NHS Highland, and the Highland Council to provide vulnerable individuals leaving prison with Scottish Short-term Secure Tenancies and installing FitHome suites into those properties.

⁶ National Indicator:
Number of:

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

The technology includes non-invasive sensors that monitor movement, door and window usage, kitchen usage, and toilet use. Additionally, and unique to this client group, the package includes a ring doorbell camera that enables individuals to manage their door, minimising the risk of unwanted visitors. The FitHome technology requires a minimum of two carers/support staff to have access to it. These need to be agreed with the client prior to release.

The ring door bell is an additional service that was requested by clients who have already tested the technology. The data from this door bell is for the use of the client only and is not shared.

The data is presented on a live interface and enables the viewer to recognise daily patterns and changes from normal behaviour. This technology and associated support provide vulnerable clients a secure and safe environment that encourages a reduction in reoffending and risk-taking behaviour.

Employment, training, and/or educational opportunities are also offered to the clients after a period of adjustment.

Albyn have worked with partners to develop an allocation process that works to identify individuals who are leaving prison or are at risk of returning to prison. Through a consensus approach to allocation, Albyn identifies these individuals and works to find them housing, and equip it with the FitHome technology.

The inclusion of the ring doorbell allows the individual to monitor their doorway from their TV and/or mobile device, which helps improve door keeping skills especially for those who may be taken advantage of by county lines. At the beginning of their tenancy Albyn also work with the Highland Council and third sector partners to ensure individuals' new homes are equipped with new furniture and other necessities.

Every effort is made to allocate individuals homes in neighbourhoods where reintegration will be as smooth as possible, reducing the risk of reoffending and helping them to adjust to life in mainstream society. Throughout their tenancies, there is regular communication between partners to ensure the needs of the tenants are met and any issues are addressed promptly. Additionally, the FitHome technology offers individuals a sense of security and comfort that properties without the technology lack.'

What impact has there been as a result?

Implementation of the HCIP has contributed to better partnership working, improved communication across a range of partners, more personalised approaches to planning and improved staff knowledge and understanding.

The impact of the FitHome initiative includes anonymous feedback:

- "I think the project is brilliant, I feel safer in my flat, and also when I've been out as I know if anyone has broken in"

- “My friend recently died of an overdose as he had nothing like this to support him”
- “It has helped to settle me back into living on my own, I feel safer especially with the ring doorbell. I now have a few support workers and that helps too”

More generally there is evidence of:

- Improved tenancy sustainment and reduction in reoffending.
- Increased partnership working has benefitted the tenants through an enhanced housing allocation partnership and more coordinated support practices.
- The presence of FitHome technology has provided a sense of safety and stability for clients that normal properties/tenancies lack. This has resulted in life saving interventions, reduced offending, and sustained tenancies for longer.
- 8 of the 10 original clients remained in their homes and have not re-offended. They are over 2 years in their homes now. 1 of the remaining 2 managed to maintain their tenancy for over 10 months, which was seen as a significant improvement from previous releases. The remaining client went back to prison after 18 months due to an offence that had been committed 4 years earlier, prior to his allocation of a FitHome. He has advised that his return to prison was the first time he saw prison as a punishment.

Priority Action Nine

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

Nationally determined outcome:

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

Local Evidence

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

13. What activity has taken place to support people to access employability support?

HMP Inverness has a strong relationship with the local DWP team and Job Centre+. This includes the provision of a prison work-based coach, who attends the Links Centre on a regular basis and organises scheduled quarterly employability events.

Café 1668 is a social café in central Inverness operated by HTSI to offer nourishing food and a safe space for all. The Café offers hot food and drinks free of charge to those in need on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and has staff who can support, identify and signpost people to services which are relevant to their needs. The Café has hosted individuals who are fulfilling their Community Payback Orders providing opportunities to learn hospitality and other skills.

One Highland GP writes:

‘Cafe 1668 is an invaluable resource for those who are vulnerable for a variety of reasons. For those attending the Homeless Healthcare Service, and those attending the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service in Inverness, Cafe 1668 forms part of our signposting and also a location for outreach services to

⁷ National Indicator:

Percentage of:

- those in employability services with convictions

make contact with people. Aside from the provision of food, which is a core need for people who are struggling with poverty, there is also the opportunity of social connection, which is vital to the mental health and wellbeing of those who experience severe and multiple disadvantage.'

With regard to employability, HMP Inverness and the Scottish Drugs Forum have worked together during the year to develop a pilot for the SDF National Traineeship programme to be offered within the prison setting.

The prison based pilot will enhance the employability activity of SDF in Highland through a bespoke 12-month programme of training, work experience and vocational learning delivered to prison residents with lived or living experience of substance use that are due for liberation. This provides transitional support while creating a pathway into the existing model of National Traineeship which will equip trainees to be qualified members of the social care workforce.

With the support of HMP Inverness, local placement providers and partners, participants will be equipped with skills, confidence and support to transition into paid roles and manage this while based within the community. It will deliver employment, training, vocational learning, practical experience, and support needed for participants to succeed through these partnerships also.

The programme will provide a level of pastoral support in throughcare for liberated prison residents, provide a meaningful and purposeful focus for their employment and development in the community by providing a pathway to engage these individuals and sustain more positive outcomes including reducing reoffending.

This programme aligns closely the Highland Community Justice Improvement Plan's strategic foci of 'Helping Me Realise My Potential' and 'Helping Me To Avoid Reoffending'. Additionally, it links strongly with National Priority Action number nine to 'enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment'.

The programme will run into year 2025-2026, and evaluation will take place on completion of the pilot.

What impact has there been as a result?

2024-25 has been a developmental year as regards employability. Working towards the creation of the new Transitions and Communities Delivery Group has engendered renewed engagement with employment/ employability partners. Already there has been active participation from DWP, Skills Development Scotland, Highland Council Employability Service, Justice Social Work, Highland Council Economy and Regeneration, Highland Council Adult Learning, University of the Highlands and Islands, the Scottish Drugs Forum and from industry partners, Amey and Balfour Beatty. Also, the DWP has continued to focus on work coaching, with a number of larger employers (including Balfour Beatty and G&A Barnie Group) offering placements for individuals.

Priority Action Ten

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

Nationally determined outcome:

More people access voluntary throughcare following a short term prison sentence⁸

Local Evidence

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

14. What activity has taken place to support people to access voluntary throughcare?

HMP Inverness continued to work in partnership with APEX offering specialist Disclosure advice for participants with an offending background, as well as Throughcare Mentoring services, Drug & Alcohol recovery provision through SMART Recovery, SMART Family & Friends and Mental Health provision through Decider Skills and outdoor Greenspace Regeneration projects and Employability upskilling through training courses and job focused practice.

Some Statutory Throughcare provision was also available through the Justice Social Work team.

What impact has there been as a result?

It is recognised that the provision of voluntary throughcare in Highland has been limited and preparation for the delivery of the new National Voluntary Throughcare service is anticipated to significantly improve outcomes in this area of activity.

⁸ National Indicator:

Number of:

- voluntary throughcare cases commenced

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

Please refer to 3. above, Governance Arrangements

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?

HCJP has struggled over the past 2-3 years to meaningfully engage with victims' organisations and to ensure participation in HCJP structures and activities.

As part of the restructuring of the HCJP, it was central to the planning process that engagement with victims organisations would be a priority, and that Victim Support Scotland would be named as a strategic partner within the new structures.

It has also been evident that the partnership has struggled to gather the views and perspectives of individuals and their families.

Two strands of work have been undertaken to seek to address this deficit. Our quarterly Community Justice Forums have sought to ensure that organisations and individuals with lived or living experience are encouraged to attend and contribute. For example the in person forum held in November 2024 included lively discussion from a number of people with lived experience (mainly as family members) around the issues of justice, antisocial behaviour and support for individuals who have used drugs and have been in contact with the justice system.

During the year we also engaged with organisations who have an understanding of working with people with lived experience. There has been limited contact with Next Chapter Scotland (who were then invited to speak at our May 2025 Third Sector forum) and also with the Scottish Drugs Forum, who have a strong track record in engaging with those with lived experience of using drug services, and who already have a presence in Highland through a contract with the HADP.

It is envisaged that SDF will offer some support and advice going forward as we seek to develop process to allow the HCJP (including partners in Justice Social Work) to engage with stakeholders who have a range of experiences of the justice system.

One example of a partner learning from and responding to the experiences of victims, was been Police Scotland's 'Operation Anfield' which arose in response to County Lines activities and associated 'cuckooing'.

Police Scotland report: 'During the course of our interactions with vulnerable victims of crime and exploitation, there are a number of measures we have identified to bolster their home security and enhance their own personal safety. Our officers have enhanced training to identify ways to protect vulnerable properties and individuals, These include providing mobile phones, CCTV doorbells, enhanced locks, personal attack alarms and other security measures.'

Police Scotland presented a proposal to the HCJP for a small pot of funding to purchase 40 safeguarding kits which the team will issue to victims of crime assessed as being particularly vulnerable. These kits include a Pay as you go mobile.

This proposal was agreed to by the HCJP and the initiative will run through into year 2025-2026.

What impact has there been as a result?

The limitations in this area of work is apparent, and has become a priority for the coming year.

Priority Action Thirteen

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

Nationally determined outcome:

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

Local Evidence

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

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

The HCJP Senior Development Officer has undertaken a range of activities to raise public awareness and address issues of stigma.

The HCJP 'Highland Justice Services and Interventions' website continued to expand during 2024-25. It signposts people to organisations who can assist them at whatever stage of the justice journey they are at. It is intended as a place holder for justice services and interventions that can assist those who have offended, those affected by crime and families of either. Click [here](#) to visit the site.

Our Highland Community Justice information campaign went out on both Facebook and X raising awareness of community justice and highlighting various justice related themes. You can view a pdf of the slides [here](#).

The HCJP Facebook presence continues to effectively engage with communities around Highland exceeding 700 followers at the end of the 2024-2025, a 58% increase over the period. For example, in March 2025 after a visit to the CPO team and local beneficiaries in Fort William, the town moved from 9th up to 3rd place in terms of numbers of followers. Partner visits around Highland and coverage of local stories have also added localities to the demographics data which were not previously listed. Only Inverness and Dingwall were listed at the start of 2024 and now there are eight additional places listed.

⁹ National Indicator:

Percentage of people who agree that:

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

Audience

Export

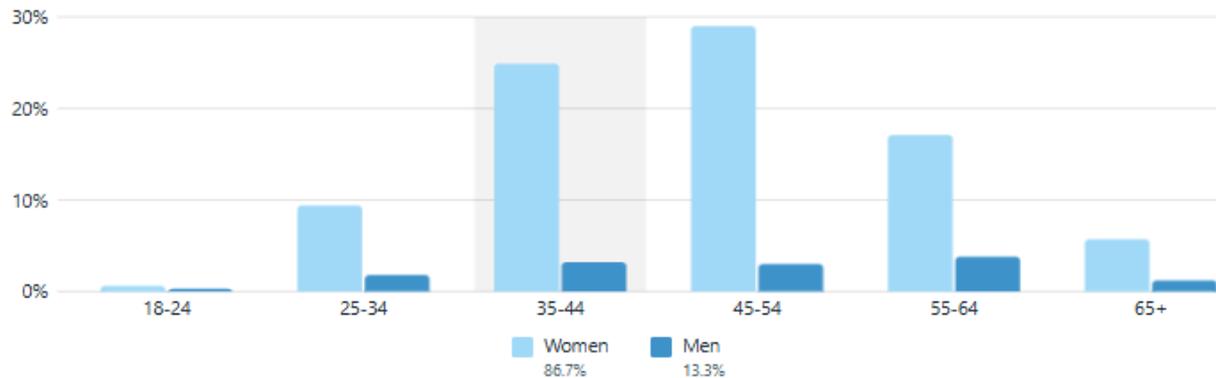
Demographics Trends Potential audience

Followers

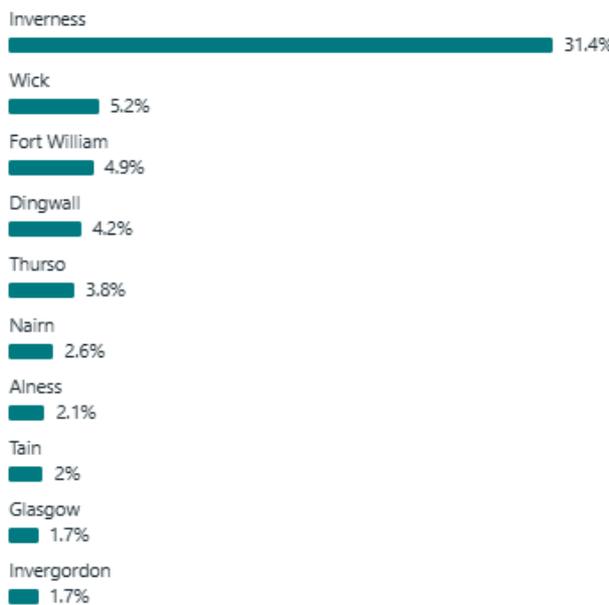
Lifetime

768

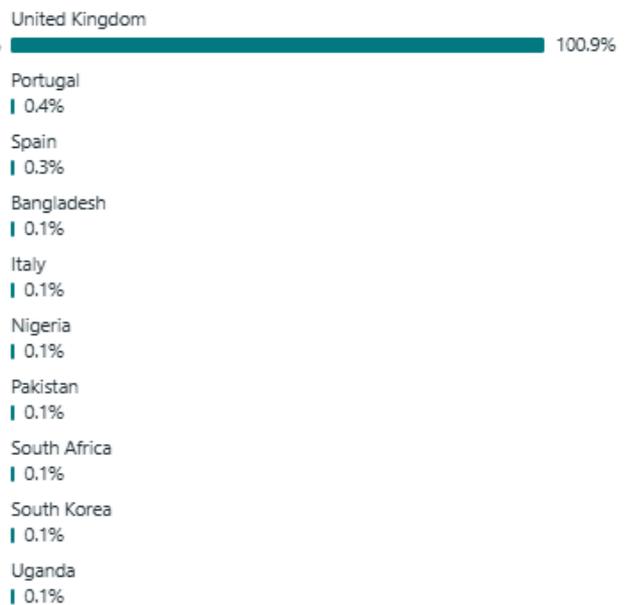
Age & gender



Top towns/cities



Top countries



Following planned visits to CPO workshops / teams and other partners around Highland, press articles were prepared and a number were taken up and published in local papers as well as appearing online. These included: **West Highland Free Press**, **John O’Groat Journal & Caithness Courier**, **Ross-Shire Journal**, **Lochaber Times** and **Inverness Courier**.

In addition there have been numerous visits to and contacts with community groups, men's sheds, churches and others right across Highland, all of them presenting opportunities to speak about the community first approach to justice.

Amongst the places visited:

Fort William (Lochaber Hope, New Connections, Caol Community Centre, Greenfingers Community Garden)

Skye (St Columba Church, Raasay Heritage Trust, The Lump & Graveyard)

Caithness (Thurso Development Trust, Thurso Grows, Community Hub Café, Staxigoe Hall)

Inverness area (Food Stuff, Newstart Highland, Incredible Edible, Cafe 1668, Inverness Men's Shed)

Ross-Shire (Isobel Rhind Centre, The Field, Kiltearn Community Council, Evanton Development Trust)

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?

The next steps for the partnership are reflected in the delivery plans which have been developed for 2025-26 for our Strategic and Delivery Groups, summarised as follows:

Strategic Group Actions

1. Fully implement new HCJP structures and update Terms of Reference.
2. Prepare for a self-evaluation exercise, including review of data and information gathered.
3. Support improved engagement with the Victims of Crime, and victim support organisations, including:
 - a. Ensuring that the views and perspectives of victims are present in planning and practice;
 - b. Improved awareness of the needs of victims;
 - c. Identification of gaps in provision;
 - d. Improved information for victims and others.
4. Support the potential roll out of restorative justice,
 - a. Deliver a RJ event autumn 2025;
 - b. Support a working group to design appropriate models for RJ in Highland.
5. Continue to build on the research into women's experiences of justice in Highland:
 - a. Support the development of a women's programme within JSW.
6. Develop processes to gather the views and experiences of those who have experience of the Justice System (including narratives, case studies etc).
7. Create HCJP Communications Plan,
 - a. Community focus using media/social media;
 - b. Internal communication across partners.

Diversions and Interventions Delivery Group Actions

1. Develop agreed local processes to support the use of DfP and Direct Measures within Highland, especially in regard to the implementation of new National Pathways.
2. Monitor and support developments in Youth Justice (particularly the interface between Youth and Adult Justice services).
3. Review existing processes and pathways for individuals from arrest to potential court appearance, including:
 - a. Processes and relationships between partners in custody settings (Police, NHS, CLink);
 - b. impact of existing initiatives (e.g. MATPACT, Health assessment, MH services);
 - c. Identify and address barriers to services which may exist (e.g. Alcohol and drug services, mental health services).
4. Address perceived challenges in the use of (supervised) bail in Highland, to underpin:
 - a. Clarity in terms of expectations and responsibilities;
 - b. Agreement around communication and processes.
5. Build on existing pathways and opportunities for community disposals, including:
 - a. Review the impact of the Senior Development Officer (SDO) role;
 - b. Continue to explore opportunities for women in Highland who are involved with the justice system.

Transitions and Communities Delivery Group Actions

1. Review current use of Highland Community Integration Planning processes to ensure:
 - a. pathways are in place which support continuity of health and social care provision for individuals on liberation (Including access to GP's and other primary care settings);
 - b. better collaboration between housing providers to support better housing outcomes,
 - i. monitor the outcomes linked to the provision of FitHome technology by Albyn Housing Society;
 - c. opportunities are maximised for Employability and Training (including links with Employability Partnership and other forums),
 - i. Opportunities for learning (literacy and numeracy, adult education, further education;
 - ii. Vocational training;

- iii. Employment Opportunities (including links to industry);
 - iv. Access to benefits and financial advice & support.
2. Support the establishment of the Upside Service in Highland,
 - i. ensuring strong links with partners;
 - ii. establishing clear processes (including relationship with statutory throughcare provided by JSW).
 3. Deliver improved engagement with families and dependents affected by imprisonment, using the opportunities presented with the planned opening of HMP Highland to:
 - a. Improve awareness of the needs of families;
 - b. Identify gaps in provision;
 - c. Improve the information available to families and others;
 - d. Support improvement in families' experiences of travel to prison.

There are two main risks identified to the implementation of the actions outlined above.

The first relates to lack of buy in from partners. As already noted, not all partners fully engage with the activities of the HCJP, and as this appears to be a problem across many partnership areas, perhaps the solution partially lies in action and leadership on a national basis to ensure fuller participation.

The second relates to resources, particularly the availability of funding.

Every year the HCJP highlights the precarious financial position of the Custody Link project. As we seek to develop new initiatives (for example around Restorative Justice and engagement with people who have lived and living experience of the justice system) the question has to be faced about how such initiatives will be resourced on a sustainable basis going forward.



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Justice Partnership Terms of Reference

Background

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 placed new responsibilities on the Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP) which came into full effect on 01 April 2017.

As a consequence, the Highland Community Justice Partnership (HCJP) was created as a distinct partnership within the HCPP, with direct responsibility for the development and delivery of the Highland Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (HCJOIP) and for the preparation of annual returns and reports as required by section 23 of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 for submission to Community Justice Scotland (CJS).

Purpose

The HCJP will be directly responsible for:

- i. Producing a Highland Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (HCJOIP) which identifies areas for development of community justice in Highland and activities/actions which contribute towards delivering the outcomes set within the National Strategy for Community Justice, the National Delivery Plan and Performance Framework.
- ii. Engaging and consulting with communities, victims, people with lived experience of the justice system, third sector organisations, and public sector agencies on the development, delivery and review of the HCJOIP.
- iii. Co-ordinating multiagency planning processes (including the Third Sector) which align organisational resources against the delivery of agreed outcomes.
- iv. Identifying opportunities for sharing resources between partners in order to achieve the outcomes set within the National Delivery Plan and Performance Framework.
- v. Reporting to provide assurance to the HCPP Board on the progress of the HCJOIP.
- vi. Providing guidance and support for the HCPP in respect of all duties as outlined in the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, which, while delegated to the HCJP, are still ultimately retained by the HCPP.

Governance

The HCJP as a partnership is accountable to the HCPP and as such will be required to provide assurance to the HCPP on the progression of the HCJOIP. They may from time to time be required to provide assurance in person as well as through written reports.

The HCPP retains ultimate responsibility for the development, implementation and review of the HCJOIP and associated responsibilities as per the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

The HCJP will be hosted by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI), which will be responsible for the management of finance, personnel and general administration. This will include the recruitment of, and support for the HCJP Chair, Manager and other posts as may be established.

Structure and Membership

The HCJP is a distinct partnership within the HCPP, with agreed structures to better support outcome delivery and strategic accountability.



The HCJP Strategic Group

The HCJP Strategic Group will oversee the work of the partnership as a whole, and be directly accountable to the HCPP for the purposes outlined above.

As a strategic group, membership will consist of representatives nominated by those bodies which are statutorily responsible under the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, namely:

- Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service
- NHS Highland
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Prisons Service
- Skills Development Scotland
- The Highland Council – Elected Member
- The Highland Council – Housing Services
- The Highland Council – Justice Social Work

In addition, the following partners will nominate members:

- Department of Work and Pensions
- Highland Alcohol & Drug Partnership
- Highland Violence against Women and Girls Partnership
- Victim Support Scotland

The chairs of both the Delivery Groups will also be full members.

Members may send a substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting.

As host agency for the HCJP, the HTSI, will attend Strategic Group meetings, reporting on matters of finance, personnel and administration as required.

Delivery Groups

To support outcome delivery, two standing groups (Delivery Groups) will be formed.

- i. The **Diversions & Interventions Group** will focus on the delivery of diversions, early interventions, community interventions and public protection arrangements.
- ii. The **Transitions and Communities Group** will focus on the delivery of services to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence, in particular those who are moving back to their communities having completed a sentence.

The terms of reference for both groups will be reviewed by the Strategic Group on an annual basis.

In addition to the two standing groups, short-life working groups may be created to take forward defined pieces of work on behalf of the Strategic Group.

Leadership and administration

The HCJP (through its Strategic Group) will appoint an Independent Chair following the processes agreed by the Highland Community Planning Partnership Board. The role will be remunerated. The appointment will be agreed by the HCPP Board.

The Chair will provide leadership and guidance to the HCJP and act as their public representative, as well as providing assurance to the HCPP and CJS as required and appropriate.

In addition, on an annual basis the HCJP Strategic Group will appoint one or more Vice Chairs, who will deputise in the absence of the Chair and represent the HCJP when necessary.

The HCJP strategic and delivery groups will normally meet quarterly, with additional meetings or short life working groups arranged as required.

The Community Justice Partnership Manager and other members of the HCJP support team will attend meetings called by the HCJP and its constituent groups. Their role will be to provide administrative support as well as ongoing information on the Partnership's developments and responsibilities.

Review

These terms of reference will take effect from the 01 July 2025 and be reviewed annually.

11 June 2025