



Strategic Group Meeting

Wednesday 11 March 2026, 10:00-12:00

TEAMS Meeting

Minute of Meeting

1. Attendance

Present

Roddy Bailey (SDS); Maria Cano (THC JSW); Kate Costin (Police Scotland); Judy Hill (Police Scotland); Lesley MacFadyen (DWP); Kate MacLean (THC Elected Member); James Maybee (HCJP - Chair); Christopher Murray (Police Scotland); Kerry O'Hagan (SPS/Transitions Delivery Group); Karen Watson (Upside).

In attendance

Gabrielle Buist (HCJP); Kevin Flett (HCJP - Minutes); Alan Grant (Custody Link Project), Richard Thomson (Community Justice Scotland).

2. Apologies for absence

Marie Bain (NHSH); Caroline Black (DWP); Peter Mackenzie (HVAWGP); Ritchie Macrae (Police Scotland); Sarah Malhan (THC JSW/Diversions Delivery Group); Sheriff Sara Matheson; Frances Matthewson (HADP); Emma Todea (VSS); Scott Watson (SPS).

James led a round of introductions for the benefit of new faces. This is our first TEAMS HCJP meeting. Maria had requested that researchers from Edinburgh University join later to present on the Advanced D programme. This may extend the meeting beyond the scheduled finish, but members were encouraged to remain if they could.

		Actions
3.	Declarations of Interest – None declared	
4.	Minutes of 10 December 2025: The minutes were approved. Follow up actions Completed: 31; 33; 35 (item 8a); 36; 37 (Item 8b); 38 Ongoing: 4 (item 5a), 34 (Item 7a) Notes: Action 25 – We hadn't had any recent contact with UHI, Kevin will follow this up.	25. Reestablish contact with UHI (KF)

5.	Finance a. Memorandum of Understanding In view of Mhairi's departure from HTSI, this needed to be finalised for the current year and the coming year. Kevin will pick this up with Janet Miles (newly appointed CO, HTSI) and Maria. Janet is like to take up her post in May. b. It was agreed that we would seek to meet with Janet Miles as soon as is practical to review the current financial position of the CJP and to forward plan.	4. Janet and Maria to finalise (KF/JM/ MC) 39. Finance meeting TBA (KF)
6.	Custody Link Worker Project a. Alan reported that the project is currently supporting around 70 active cases, with 37 referrals received since January, significantly higher than similar projects elsewhere in the country. He outlined a number of recent case studies. b. Funding continued to be a challenge for the CLink project, and provisional steps had been taken in February to implement a closure process. A meeting of partners had been convened on 04 March (note of the meeting circulated) concluding with a number of agreed actions: • The HCJP (James and Kevin) will liaise with partners seeking to identify short term funding, • The HCJP will coordinate partners (HCJP and wider CPP) to identify sustained funding, which will underpin a commissioning/procurement process • The HCJP will initiate a service design process, consulting with partners on defining and developing a sustainable solution. • Kate will explore the possibility of the Clink Project/HCJP addressing the Health and SW committee in May to broaden understanding of the project. The ADP confirmed additional funding of approximately £40,000 for 2026-27, with clarification needed on whether this is in addition to or includes previous funding (Note:total available from ADP is £46k, including underspend from the HADP Local Improvement Fund). James indicated that further discussions are in progress, and is hopeful that the project can be sustained for the coming year. Richard explained that the Custody Link Worker project will be referenced as a model in a paper to the Criminal Justice Board, with a presentation scheduled for 31st March. Maria suggested that there was a need for independent evaluation to underpin future planning – this was agreed. She noted that universities may be more available for research commissions this year due to recent funding cuts. James noted that the 2023-2025 internal evaluation report for the Custody Link Worker project, containing impactful case studies, has not yet been circulated to the Partnership.	40. Complete actions agreed by partners, including convening working group to take forward commissioning processes (KF/ JM/ JSW/ HADP/ Police) 41. Circulate recent internal evaluation (KF)

	James discussed the need to gather evidence demonstrating public sector savings resulting from the Custody Link Worker project, particularly relating to health.	
7.	Senior Development Officer a. Restorative Justice An updated proposal paper had been circulated, outlining recent progress. Following the last HCJP meeting, there was a further opportunity to meet with Sheriff Sara Matheson and retired Sheriff David Mackie, who had offered to visit. It was acknowledged that if RJ approaches were to be established, confidence and understanding through the justice system were vital. Meetings had also taken place with Space2Face, colleagues in Orkney and with Lauren Emmerson (Children And Young People's Centre for Justice) to broaden our understanding. The working group met in January and decided not to proceed with the Space2Face model, instead looking to explore a wider multi partnership approach. Action for Children had indicated a willingness to host any initiative, as they are developing RJ approaches elsewhere in Scotland. Kevin has scheduled a meeting next week with Maria to further discuss the Action for Children offer and to explore how the RJ model could be developed. Maria was particularly keen to ensure that any potential delivery was available across Highland. b. Lived Experience/Engagement JSW had continued community engagement with open days in Inverness and Golspie. Further days are planned on an ongoing basis. Attendance varies according to location/rurality etc, but the contacts are positive. Gabrielle had worked with Andrew Macdonald (JSW Manager) and Bob Miller (Senior CPO) to run a client forum in Inverness. Two former clients attended, and the feedback/insight was really positive, highlighting the importance of person-centred approaches, trust-building, and housing as a barrier to participation. Further work was to be done to take this forward, and potentially extend beyond unpaid work clients. It was also noted that the Justice That Works report highlighted the need for mentoring services, and there may be some tie-up with the development of peer-led activities. Gabrielle reported ongoing exploration of peer learning, peer support, and pathways for CPO clients, including potential involvement of organisations such as Men Matter Scotland and the Mankind Project.	34. Continuing development of proposal (KF/GB) 42. CJP/JSW RJ meeting (KF/MC) 43. Ongoing development of LE activities, links with mentoring (GB/ JSW)
8.	Strategy Group a. Appointment of Vice Chair Judy is willing to take on the vice chair role, and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the role be reviewed annually to ensure resilience and continuity. b. Self-Evaluation	

	A self-evaluation exercise was undertaken in February to review progress against the improvement indicators. The meeting focussed on the areas which were marked as red in the indicator report. c. Delivery Planning The self-evaluation had been helpful, and was used to update the delivery plans for the strategic and delivery groups. A number of clear actions are now identified for action in 2026-27 and these had been further discussed and agreed by the delivery groups. Further refinement of the plans was required (timings and responsibilities), this would be completed over the next few weeks. It was agreed that the exercise had been helpful but that next year the exercise should be allocated a half-day session to allow for more in-depth discussion and coverage of key topics. James highlighted that the report of the Sentencing Commission contributed valuable insights to the discussion, particularly regarding fiscal work orders and the use of existing mechanisms. James discussed the importance of demonstrating the Partnership's added value and proposed more detailed self-evaluation to assess impact.	
9.	Delivery Groups a. Diversions and Interventions Delivery Group The note of the last meeting had been circulated. The continuing challenges highlighted were around the needs of young people in custody, especially around the delay in cases being dealt with by the courts on the day, and problems with transport. Numbers continue to be small, but a recent case in the far north highlighted the challenges faced. The other continuing issue was around Bail Supervision. Communications with the Police had improved, with a single point of contact established. Judy updated the group that an inspector and a sergeant have been reviewing bail supervision issues, with recent concerns about court outcomes for breaches to be raised at a joint meeting with fiscal service. Sarah had reported that the trial screening process of the daily custody list hadn't seen any significant change. Maria suggested that it could be raised at the Court Advisory Group, as well as reviewing the remand population (particularly women) to identify opportunities for increased bail supervision assessments. James confirmed that the June HCJP meeting at the Justice Centre will seek to focus the agenda on issues pertaining to partners operating within the IJC setting. b. Transitions and Communities Delivery Group Kerry outlined some of the key discussions from the last meeting, which had been well attended and very positive. Regarding the prison population, Inverness has regularly exceeded capacity, with recent admissions reaching 143	

	(against a capacity of 93). There are real challenges in managing transfers and maintaining service engagement for those moved to other facilities. The recovery wing at Inverness prison has been reestablished, with a dedicated recovery officer and support from Scottish Recovery Consortium and Scottish Drugs Forum, alongside new training initiatives for staff. Opportunities for Transitions Group development this year are focussed on improving liberation planning and processes. This includes better engagement with housing partners, ensuring throughcare services (statutory and voluntary) have a stronger place in the processes, as well as the range of employability partners who are active in Highland. Consideration will also be given to how positive links can be developed with Crossreach who have a residential recovery facility in Inverness, potentially looking at options for Prison to Rehab pathways. There was positive networking at the last group meeting amongst employability partners around improving pathways into employment for individuals on liberation as well as individuals completing community orders. Lesley reported on the quarterly employability event that had recently taken place in the prison, with strong prisoner engagement and support from multiple organisations. James welcomed Karen Watson to the meeting, Karen manages the North Pod for the Upside throughcare service. She shared a short video, which gave some helpful background information and then updated the partnership on Upside's work in Highland over its first year. Karen explained that the Upside service covers the entire Highland area, providing face-to-face support supplemented by telephone and digital contact, except for individuals subject to MAPPA conditions. 50% of supported individuals were accommodated in prisons outside the Highland area, which impacts pre-release relationship-building and resource allocation. All 40 homeless individuals supported by Upside who have been released from custody were successfully accommodated on release, with ongoing collaboration with housing colleagues. Since 1st April 2025, the Upside service in Highland received 101 referrals, with 75% males and 25% females. The various tranches of Early Release had inhibited some aspects of service delivery, but this wasn't just a Highland issue. Upside maintains strong links with Justice Social Work to avoid duplication of support and ensure clear plans for individuals receiving assistance from both services. Partners were able to confirm the strong partnership working which had developed over this past year.	44. Upside video to be shared with partners (KF/KW)
10.	Justice That Works A summary of the Report of the Scottish Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission had been prepared and circulated, with a focus on aspects	

	of the report which were most pertinent to CJPs. James opened the meeting up for comment and observation. One of the drivers for the commission at this time was the need to address the growth in the prison population. Richard highlighted that early release of long-term prisoners was identified as one of the main levers to address the prison population crisis, where increased prosecution of gender-based violence has placed additional strain on resources. James noted that the commission report lacked clear guidance on funding and implementation, and suggested that reconstituting the Criminal Justice Board into a strategic oversight group chaired by the Cabinet Secretary could improve coordination and decision-making. Kevin observed the shift towards prioritising prevention and early intervention in justice services, aligning with local priorities and recent conversations with HADP partners. Whilst it was recognised that a number of the recommendations had been within the system for some time, it is hoped that fresh impetus may be given to some of these. It is likely that there will be a response following the formation of a new government post-election.	
10.	National Communications A number of papers and reports had been circulated for information: • CJS Q4 Newsletter • CPP Health Inequalities report • Victim-centred approach Report (VSS) • CJ Peer Network Lunchtime learning sessions 17 March 2026 – NOVA Scotland (supporting veterans) 12 May 2026 – SOLD Network (supporting people with Communication support needs) The National Alcohol and Drug Strategy had also recently been published, which Kevin will send out to partners.	
11.	AOB Victim Support Scotland have recently moved to new premises in Bank St, Inverness and are planning an open day in April. They are also developing a new service to support male and trans people who have been impacted by domestic abuse. Advance-D Lucia Dahlby, Research Fellow from the University of Edinburgh's Department of Clinical Psychology introduced the Advance D intervention. • It is a cluster randomised controlled trial addressing substance use and intimate partner abuse, with Highland and Orkney currently participating. • The intervention targets men with substance use issues who perpetrate intimate partner abuse, using a blended delivery model of group sessions, individual goal setting, and coaching calls over 14 weeks.	

	• The trial is taking place across several UK areas, collecting outcome data from both men and their current partners at four and twelve months. • The programme includes structured online and in-person group sessions, coaching calls, and risk management to support men with substance use issues. • Technology is available to support the programme, including tablets and headphones provided to participants for online sessions, with website content available in Romanian, Urdu, Punjabi, and Polish, and interpreters available for coaching calls and group sessions. • Women partners receive their own version of the website and weekly support calls, with ongoing risk assessment and case management. • Certified staff training for the programme is delivered online, in person, or via Teams. It takes 20-30 hours, and includes risk assessment, mock group sessions, and coaching calls. • The programme is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), with additional funding being sought for wider delivery and research evaluation. Lucia confirmed that Highland and Orkney are part of the trial, with Argyle and Bute and East Dunbartonshire preparing to deliver outside the trial, and other sites expressing interest. Maria described how the programme can integrate within the justice system, for example as a requirement for Community Payback Orders. Further conversations are to take place with sheriffs, and facilitators are ready to deliver. Eligibility • Lucia clarified that trial participation is post-conviction for IPV or IPV-related offences, but eligibility criteria are flexible and can be defined by individual sites. • The Advance D programme could serve as a precursor to the Caledonian system for individuals with high substance use or lower motivation, based on discussions with Caledonian representatives. • The programme is also being delivered in substance use settings (e.g. Tameside in Greater Manchester) and could be considered for residential rehabilitation contexts. • The trial is funded for three years, the intervention lasts four months, and there is a 12-month follow-up, with the trial ending in 2027. Lucia will send a link to the video which Kevin will circulate.	45. Video link to be shared with partners (KF/LD)
12.	Next Meetings 2026 Dates (all Wednesdays): 10 June 2026, 1530-1730 <u>(Please note change in venue and timing)</u> (in person, Inverness Justice Centre) 09 September 2026, 1000-1200 (Please note, this date may be revised)	

	(in person, Brodie Room, New Craigs Hospital) 02 or 09 December 2026 (TBC – coordination with HCPP Board required) (TEAMS)
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Meeting Actions

	Description	Responsible	Completion
4.	Finance MoU between JSW and HTSI to be finalised	Maria Cano/ Janet Miles/ Kevin Flett	
25.	Kevin to pick up with UHI regarding the potential project (JM discussion with Lyndsay Snodgrass)	Kevin Flett / Louise Martin-Theyers	
34.	Continuing development of RJ proposal. Finalise by June 2026 if possible	Gabrielle Buist/ Kevin Flett/ RJ group	10/06/2026
39.	Finance meeting TBA	Kevin Flett/ Janet Miles/ James Maybee	
40.	Complete actions agreed by partners, including convening working group to take forward commissioning processes for Custody Link service	Kevin Flett/ James Maybee/ JSW/ HADP/ Police	28/05/2026 ongoing
41.	Circulate recent CLink internal evaluation report	Kevin Flett	25/03/2026
42.	CJP/JSW RJ meeting	Kevin Flett / Maria Cano	19/03/2026
43.	Ongoing development of Lived experience / Peer support activities, exploring links with mentoring	Gabrielle Buist/ JSW	ongoing
44.	Upside video to be shared with partners	Kevin Flett/ Karen Watson	25/03/2026
45.	Video link to be shared with partners	Kevin Flett/ Lucia Dahlby	25/03/2026