



# National Strategy for Community Justice



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# Ministerial Foreword

**In the past fifteen years we have made great strides in improving the effectiveness of our justice system - recorded crime remains at one of the lowest levels in nearly 50 years. The previous National Strategy for Community Justice set out a clear vision of a Scotland where people are rightly held to account for their offending, but are supported to be active and responsible contributors to their community. Partners have worked hard over the past five years to help achieve this vision. However, we recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that we can all live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.**

Protecting victims and the public from further harm is our absolute priority. And we see this as being entirely consistent with our aims for community justice – the evidence shows that community-based interventions and sentences can be more effective in reducing reoffending and assisting with rehabilitation than short-term custodial sentences, while protecting the public and robustly managing risk. We firmly believe that while prison will continue to be the right option for some, in many circumstances, keeping individuals out of custody is the best way to prevent further offending, reduce victimisation, and keep our communities safe. We are determined therefore to shift the balance between custodial and community disposals, and to address the fact that Scotland's prison population is still amongst the highest per capita in Western Europe.

This revised National Strategy for Community Justice sets the national direction for community justice by building on progress made to date. It is designed to provide a clear roadmap for future improvement work,

by highlighting key areas for partners to focus on – as we recognise that no one has unlimited capacity and prioritisation of work is required.

The strategy sets out four national aims for community justice, and 13 priority actions which the Scottish Government and community justice partners should seek to deliver over the duration of the strategy. To achieve these, partners must work closely together. Effective coordination and collaboration are key and community justice partners must ensure they have a clear focus on delivery.

This is why the strategy will be accompanied by a delivery plan to ensure implementation and drive towards actions at a national, as well as local level. Community justice partners have a statutory duty to have regard to the strategy and work collaboratively to improve community justice outcomes across Scotland.

The strategy will not work in isolation and takes account of and signposts other key pieces of work that are being led by this Government and is fully aligned with the Vision for Justice in Scotland. In particular, we recognise and the strategy acknowledges that many communities and services across Scotland are still being impacted by the consequences of COVID-19.



**Keith Brown**  
Cabinet Secretary  
for Justice and Veterans  
June 2022

# What is community justice?

Community justice is principally about organisations working together to ensure that people who have offended address the underlying causes of their behaviour, and pay back to the community where appropriate. It aims to encourage rehabilitation, reduce reoffending, and protect the public, leading to fewer victims and safer communities.

This requires a strong partnership-working approach at each point of the justice system, from the point of arrest, through to integration into the community.

Public protection remains our first priority, with robust risk management systems in place to ensure that, where appropriate, those who have committed offences can be managed safely and effectively in the community. In the long term, our ambition is to use prison only for those who pose a risk of serious harm.

A legal definition of 'community justice' is provided in section 1 of the [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the Act). In addition, Community Justice Scotland has produced a [framing toolkit](#) to support people and organisations shape how they speak, write and communicate about community justice in ways that can increase public awareness and confidence in it as a sentencing option.

## Delivery of this strategy

Working towards each of the four aims in the National Strategy for Community Justice (referred to throughout as 'the strategy') is vital for achieving our ambitions for community justice, and improving community connections and wellbeing. The [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) contains evidence that underpins our approach to community justice, and as with the Vision, ensuring that all parts of the justice system deliver person-centred services, embed trauma-informed practices and take account of the needs of victims of crime is central to the strategy.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the associated delivery plan (expected later in 2022), and links closely to the Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (the OPIF) (section 17 of the Act). The OPIF determines the outcomes which are to be achieved in the area of each local authority and indicators to be used to measure performance in achieving the outcomes, and is a tool designed to support improvement across the community justice landscape.

The delivery of community justice services requires appropriate resourcing, but can also support prevention and deliver improved outcomes for individuals and communities. Decisions about funding and investment will be considered as part of the ongoing work to deliver the strategy. Consideration will also be given – in close collaboration with a range of partners – to how the strategy and model of community justice can support and work effectively with emerging proposals for a National Care Service.

## Community justice partners

A broad range of partners contribute to the achievement of community justice outcomes, including statutory partners, as defined in the Act, communities and the third sector, who play a vital role both in the planning and delivery of services.

The statutory partners for community justice as outlined in the Act are:

Chief Constable of Police Scotland  
Health Boards  
Integration Joint Boards for Health and Social Care  
Local Authorities  
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Scottish Ministers (i.e. Scottish Prison Service, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service)  
Skills Development Scotland

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 does not require statutory partners to carry out their duties in a way that would conflict with existing statutory duties.

Community justice partners acting jointly at a local level are frequently referred to as a 'community justice partnership', this term is therefore used in this strategy.

Community Justice Scotland is the national leadership body for community justice in Scotland, and has a statutory duty to promote the strategy. Community Justice Scotland also holds a statutory duty to monitor the performance of each local authority area in the achievement of nationally and locally-determined community justice outcomes. It also has powers to identify and promote good practice; provide advice, guidance and assistance to the community justice partnerships; and to make national and local improvement recommendations where appropriate.

We also recognise that collaborative working across other partnerships, including Community Planning Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) and Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnerships, is key to improving outcomes and reducing duplication. Given the wider work being undertaken in other forums, the focus of this strategy is from the point of arrest onwards and we would encourage community justice partnerships to focus their action from this point onwards, as opposed to on primary prevention.

## Strategic context

The strategy complements the [Scottish Government's Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) published in 2022, which sets out our vision for a just, safe and resilient Scotland. The vision is aligned with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF).

The Vision for Justice in Scotland is based on evidence of what we know works to achieve the long term outcomes set out. The two key transformation priorities apply to the approach to community justice in Scotland, these are:

- ensuring justice services embed person-centred and trauma informed practices, and
- working across public services to improve outcomes for individuals, focussing on prevention and early intervention.

Specifically, the National Strategy for Community Justice supports and drives forward action in relation to the outcomes set out under the aim to 'support rehabilitation, use custody only where there is no alternative and work to reduce reoffending and revictimisation'.



The delivery plan for the National Strategy for Community Justice will contain time-limited deliverables, detailing the responsibilities of the Scottish Government and community justice partners, to drive improvement nationally towards the aims in the strategy and ultimately what is detailed in the Vision for Justice in Scotland. There are other priorities being progressed across Government and by community justice partners, operating alongside this strategy, which relate to community justice that the strategy will not necessarily focus on but will reflect, including the following:

### **Victims of crime**

The strategy will reflect the ongoing work to deliver person-centred and trauma-informed services to victims and survivors of crime. As set out in the Vision for Justice in Scotland, this will see victims take a more prominent role in cases, experiencing fewer delays and being supported in their recovery. The strategy and delivery plan will also support the commitment in the [Restorative Justice Action Plan](#), published in 2019, to ensuring restorative justice services are available across Scotland by 2023.

### **Youth Justice**

The number of young people going through the justice system has reduced dramatically in recent years – and community interventions have played a key role. The strategy will not focus on youth justice but will take account of the [Scottish Government's Vision for Youth Justice](#), and its accompanying Action Plan. This represents a shared foundation between the Scottish Government and partners to continue to support the agenda to keep children out of the justice system and promote the use of the Whole System Approach and community-based interventions.

### **Violence prevention**

Our overall aim for Scotland is to reduce the number of people affected by crime, including violent crime, and reduce the number of people ending up in the justice system. We want to prevent violence from happening in the first instance, and when it does occur, to reduce the harm as soon as possible. The aims of this strategy will play a crucial role in helping us achieve this and will complement the National Violence Prevention Framework to be published in 2022. This framework will consider the available evidence and identify policy priorities for our violence reduction partners to work towards, to prevent violence and repeated incidents, to help make Scotland's communities safer.

### **Women in justice**

The strategy will reflect [Equally Safe](#), the joint Scottish Government and COSLA strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls in Scotland. In addition, and in common with the Vision for Justice in Scotland, the strategy will respond to the strategic examination that the Minister for Community Safety is currently undertaking, supported by a Women's Leadership Panel, to address gender inequality and improve women's experiences within the justice system. It is anticipated that the Panel will report in 2023.

### **Trauma Informed Practice**

The strategy will reflect the Scottish Government's ambition for a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive workforce and services across Scotland. Embedding trauma-informed approaches will ensure that our services recognise the prevalence of trauma and adversity, realise when people are affected by trauma, and respond in ways that reduce re-traumatising. Since 2018, the Scottish Government has invested in a [National Trauma Training Programme \(NTTP\)](#) to support all sectors of the workforce to further progress and embed trauma-informed systems and services. Relationship-based practice that respects resilience, prevents further harm and supports recovery is intrinsic to trauma-informed approaches.

# Table of National Aims and Priority Actions

National aim	Priority action
<b>1. Optimise the use of diversion and intervention at the earliest opportunity</b>	1. Enhance intervention at the earliest opportunity <b>by</b> ensuring greater consistency, confidence in and awareness of services which support the use of direct measures and diversion from prosecution
	2. Improve the identification of underlying needs and the delivery of support following arrest <b>by</b> ensuring the provision of person-centred care within police custody and building upon referral opportunities to services including substance use and mental health services
<b>2. Ensure that robust and high quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available across Scotland</b>	3. Support the use of robust alternatives to remand <b>by</b> ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available and delivered effectively
	4. Strengthen options for safe and supported management in the community <b>by</b> increasing and widening the use of electronic monitoring technologies
	5. Ensure that those given community sentences are supervised and supported appropriately to protect the public, promote desistance from offending and enable rehabilitation <b>by</b> delivering high quality, consistently available, trauma-informed services and programmes
	6. Ensure restorative justice is available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it <b>by</b> promoting and supporting the appropriate and safe provision of available services
<b>3. Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence</b>	7. Enhance individuals' access to health and social care and continuity of care following release from prison <b>by</b> improving the sharing of information and partnership-working between relevant partners
	8. Ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed consistently and at an early stage <b>by</b> fully implementing and embedding the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards across all local authority areas
	9. Enhance individual's life skills and readiness for employment <b>by</b> ensuring increased access to employability support through effective education, learning, training, career services and relevant benefit services
	10. Enhance community integration and support <b>by</b> increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services
<b>4. Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners</b>	11. Deliver improved community justice outcomes <b>by</b> ensuring that effective leadership and governance arrangements are in place and working well, collaborating with partners and planning strategically
	12. Enhance partnership planning and implementation <b>by</b> ensuring the voices of victims of crime, survivors, those with lived experience and their families are effectively incorporated and embedded
	13. Support integration and reduce stigma <b>by</b> ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice

# Aim 1

## Optimise the use of diversion and intervention at the earliest opportunity

Where appropriate and relevant, effectively diverting people away from prosecution – or away from the justice system entirely – can allow individuals to address a range of issues, behaviours or needs which have contributed to their alleged offending at the earliest opportunity. This improves outcomes for both individuals and communities, and can lead to less offending and reoffending and, ultimately, fewer victims and harm to society. We also recognise that those who come into contact with the justice

system often present with higher levels of vulnerability than the general population and often have complex needs. We therefore want to ensure that, wherever appropriate, people are diverted away from the justice system at the earliest opportunity following arrest, and that suitable, appropriately informed and tailored opportunities, which reflect the nature and severity of the alleged offence, are provided to address underlying needs and causes of offending behaviour.





**Over the duration of this strategy community justice partners will:**

**1. 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**

The effective and appropriate use of police and fiscal direct measures, including diversion from prosecution, can allow individuals to address a range of issues, behaviours or needs which have contributed to their alleged offending at the earliest opportunity – including allowing beneficial interventions to individuals who do not enter police custody. This may be particularly effective in supporting those with dependence on substances or a mental health need. We must optimise the mechanisms for direct measures, for example by enhancing information pathways and supporting consistency of use by Police Scotland and COPFS. We must also ensure that effective services, provided by justice social work and the third sector, are in place across Scotland for individuals to be diverted into, recognising the differences between rural and urban geographies. These services should be available in a timely manner and allow individuals to meaningfully engage. Decision-makers should also have an understanding of, and confidence in, the schemes which are available locally.

**2. 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**

The Scottish Government takes seriously the responsibility of ensuring those going through the justice system are appropriately supported, treated and cared for, while ensuring their rights are maintained, especially during challenging times that may have a significant impact on people's mental wellbeing.

In line with Police Scotland's commitment to a public health approach to policing, we want to ensure that those who are entering police custody (who, partly due to structural and systemic barriers, are often less engaged with community health, social care and other services and who often experience poorer health outcomes than the general population) have their needs identified. We want to ensure these people can access trauma-responsive healthcare and/or a pathway to appropriate support or interventions, reducing the likelihood of involvement in offending behaviour in the future.

Arrest referrals and referrals from health partners are key to this process, ensuring best use of the 'contactable moment' during a person's time in police custody. We want to ensure that individuals can immediately be referred to a full range of services, irrespective of their location. Services should be available at the point of need and individuals should have choice and control in relation to their own support and, where appropriate, be supported to attend services.

There requires to be a focus on the provision of support for mental health and substance use issues, including both drugs and alcohol. [There is evidence](#) of a high prevalence of substance use in individuals coming into contact with the justice system. Many people who have died a drug related death have been in recent contact with the justice system. Community justice partnerships should collaborate with Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships (ADPs) on the full implementation, embedding and mainstreaming of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards across Scotland, especially in justice settings.

Substance use and mental health problems often go hand-in-hand – and many people need multi-faceted support simultaneously. Support may also be available from healthcare professionals, such as nurses, who are situated in police custody. Where appropriate, immediate crisis support should be provided, and we recognise the importance of the [Distress Brief Intervention \(DBI\) Programme](#) which is to be rolled out to all NHS Board areas by 2024.

Addressing homelessness is also key and proposals being taken forward in relation to new Prevention of Homelessness Duties envisage a duty on public bodies to ‘ask and act’ about an individual’s housing situation. The proposals are based on the principles of shared public responsibility and earlier intervention to prevent homelessness and include proposals for the involvement of partners including Police Scotland, health and prisons.

Those with communication support needs, including autistic people and people with learning disabilities, should also be proactively identified and supported. This can include the use of reasonable adjustments and communication support from an appropriate adult during police investigations, where applicable.e.

# Aim 2

## Ensure that robust and high quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available across Scotland

While we are committed to shifting the balance towards greater use of trauma-informed and person-centred community interventions which reflect the appropriate level of risk – and our long term ambition is that people should only be held in custody when they present a risk of serious harm – public protection is our first priority. Therefore, we must ensure that there are robust and high quality community-based interventions, which support rehabilitation and help to reduce the number of future victims, including alternatives to remand, electronic monitoring and community

sentences. The awareness of, and confidence in, these interventions must also be improved, particularly among the judiciary, prosecutors, victims of crime and the general public. Restorative justice, which, in the majority of cases, must be led by those who have been harmed, can also provide the opportunity for safe communication between people harmed by crime and offending, and those responsible for that harm. This will improve outcomes for individuals who are able to remain within more supportive environments and ensure that victims and communities feel safe and protected.



**Over the duration of this strategy community justice partners will:**

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

The safety of the public and people affected by crime is a priority and remand will always be necessary in some cases. However, time on remand can disrupt families and communities, and adversely affects peoples' health, employment opportunities and housing – the factors that are associated with reoffending. With the remand population rising to around 30% of the overall prison population in April 2022, there is a need to further strengthen community-based alternatives to remand to ensure bail services are consistently available where courts decide that bail is appropriate.

Statutory community justice agencies, along with local third sector partners, should work collaboratively to ensure the appropriate provision of robust alternatives to remand across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. This includes providing a bail supervision service which meets the standards of provision set out in National Guidance, and enabling access to electronically monitored bail. In light of the increase in the numbers of individuals accessing bail supervision in the two years before the COVID-19 pandemic, partners must ensure that operational capacity is strengthened and that all staff delivering bail services are appropriately trained.

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

Electronic monitoring is an integral part of the justice pathway. Its expanded use creates opportunities to help people integrate into the community, and allows for management of individuals in the community. To support its use, partners should continue to improve information sharing and reporting to allow for appropriate assessments and provision of services for individuals.

The approach to development and to gathering robust evidence on the uses of electronic monitoring, including from communities, victims of crime and service users, will be a collaborative one led by Scottish Government. It will involve a range of justice partners and help inform future development.

To widen the availability of electronic monitoring, it is anticipated that new technologies, such as satellite tracking (also known as GPS) and remote substance monitoring will be introduced. These will provide more opportunities for managing and supporting individuals within their communities. Strong engagement between health and justice partners will be required to underpin any use of remote substance monitoring. All the while building, maintaining and strengthening relationships with third sector organisations, to ensure victims of crime are represented.

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

Recovery of capacity in the justice system and community justice services following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains a priority. Our ambitions are however greater than returning the system to pre-pandemic levels. We want to see a greater availability of high quality community orders which are as effective as possible and which improve outcomes for individuals, families and their communities. Effective interventions require proactive involvement across community justice partners and the third sector, and the consideration of the local needs and priorities of different communities. Individuals can have complex needs and a range of support has to be considered, including from a whole family perspective. This requires collaboration across services and partners.

Working both within existing resources, where possible, and with any additional funding available, community justice partners should take steps to increase the quality and range of interventions. These should include support aligned with assessment of need, including support in relation to addiction, mental health and wellbeing, with interventions focussed on the causes of offending and opportunities to improve transitions to positive destinations such as employment, training and further education. Partners should also work with the Scottish Government to develop plans to better support people with substance use issues in community justice, which will be informed by the recommendations of the Drug Deaths Taskforce.

Community justice partners, when they come together as part of community justice partnerships, should ensure that partnership work has appropriate links to MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) and MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) to understand areas of mutual interest. This does not mean duplicating functions, rather it is about ensuring local services are not developed in isolation. Our ambition also is to expand the coverage of existing national programmes that support public protection (MF2C and Caledonian), that match the risk and need profile identified nationally, and reduce the prospect of further harm. A partnership approach should be taken to programme roll out and redesign and partners will contribute, including through data held, to their evaluation and development.

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

Restorative justice supports the exploration and delivery of safe, voluntary and facilitated communication between people harmed by crime and offending and those responsible for that harm. Consistent, high-quality, trauma-informed restorative justice can empower individuals and communities impacted by harmful behaviour and assist in their recovery, and can encourage those who have caused harm to reflect on the impact of their actions, helping to reduce recidivism.

We recognise that people harmed may request access to restorative justice in sensitive cases involving sexual harm and coercive control. We are working with partners to design services to respond appropriately to these requests. Restorative justice will only be offered in such cases where the request comes from the person harmed and they can stop the process at any time. A trauma-informed and comprehensive risk framework will be created for facilitating these cases that will have the individual needs and safety of the person harmed at the centre.



The vision of the [Restorative Justice Action Plan](#) includes a commitment to having restorative justice services available across Scotland to all those who wish to access it, at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. While the achievement of this commitment is ultimately the responsibility of the Scottish Government, the model for delivery of restorative justice in Scotland requires an effective link with community justice partners and local communities to support implementation. Community justice partners should support the aims and objectives of the Action Plan, by raising awareness of restorative justice services which are available locally, ensuring that staff in relevant services are attending national awareness and facilitation training, and that any restorative justice service within the area is supported to make contact with relevant local support services to help address the needs of those accessing (or wishing to access) restorative justice.

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# Aim 3

## Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence

When an individual is in contact with the justice system, there is an opportunity to ensure that they are able to engage with the services that they will require in order to support their basic needs, to rehabilitate themselves, and not reoffend. We equally recognise the need to prioritise victims' safe recovery from harm and trauma. While justice services and specialised throughcare services can plan and support the transition of individuals through and out of the justice system, effective integration and reintegration can only be delivered through the engagement of our universal public

services (such as healthcare, employability support, benefits, and housing). These services must ascertain and be aware of the needs and circumstances of people with convictions (particularly those serving a custodial sentence) and those on remand, and be prepared to meet those needs in a timely fashion. We recognise wider ongoing work to improve the provision of universal services and the ability that community justice partners have to take action to improve engagement with services, particularly in the transition from custody to community.



**Over the duration of this strategy community justice partners will:**

**7. 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**

Prisons should be health promoting environments which support good health and wellbeing. There are many complex needs for which individuals require person-centred support on entering and leaving custody, including: rising social care needs as the population ages, neurodivergent people, those with learning disabilities, those who have experienced trauma and adversity and those who may experience complex physical and mental health needs, and substance use difficulties. We are clear that early intervention, person-centred, trauma-responsive, rights-based and collaborative approaches are key to improving outcomes.

Partners should work together to ensure that both relevant information is made available on admission to support the healthcare needs of individuals while they are in custody and that transition from custody to community is seamless, with health needs supported to ensure successful reintegration where people do not experience stigma and discrimination upon accessing services. This is particularly the case when an individual is being released from prison to a different location in Scotland, and it is key that all health boards commit to having robust arrangements in place which facilitate the appropriate sharing of health information across geographical boundaries. This will involve collaborative working across multi-agency partnerships, digitalisation, ensuring that there are information sharing agreements where required, and shared support plans, including, where appropriate, care packages, and ensuring that there is shared awareness and understanding about what each organisation involved in health does and that guidance and training is in place. For example, the Scottish Prison Service should,

where appropriate, issue individuals with a liberation letter, which provides a proof of identity (which can be used to help register with a GP practice) and GP practices should ensure that they comply with the relevant guidance. The [relevant NHS Circular](#) notes that no documents are required to register with a GP and that the inability by a patient to provide identification or proof of address is not considered reasonable grounds to refuse or delay registering a patient.

**8. 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**

Evidence suggests that people who have access to stable housing are less likely to reoffend. The [SHORE standards](#) promote a nationally consistent approach in meeting the housing needs of individuals in contact with the justice system – this approach is person-centred, trauma-informed, and prevents homelessness at liberation. SHORE should ensure that everyone who needs housing support is appropriately engaged in the process with their individual needs identified at the earliest opportunity. Subsequently, individuals should receive timely housing advice and support which identifies and secures suitable and sustainable housing for their release into the community, no matter, where they are serving their sentence.

SHORE outlines the processes which should be followed from admission to post release, these are:

- co-ordinate efforts to maintain existing tenancies and possessions;
- minimise instances of emergency homelessness upon liberation; and
- provide suitable and sustainable tenancies on release that individuals are supported to maintain, including Housing First, if appropriate.

In order to fully implement and embed SHORE, partners should develop and engage within multi-agency protocols that address the needs of relevant individuals (including employability, homelessness and health and social care needs; including substance use and mental health) and describe the local processes between community justice partners and prisons. In addition, the Scottish Government/COSLA's [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) promotes Housing First as the default response to homelessness for people with multiple and complex needs. This covers addictions, mental health and repeated interactions with the justice system. We know that several Scottish local authorities have adapted their Housing First services to support people leaving prison, to ensure that those who would benefit from Housing First support are allocated a permanent tenancy with suitable wrap around support upon release where possible.

The main focus of SHORE is on people entering and leaving prison, however, as reflected in the SHORE standards, we recognise the potential to consider the wider justice pathway, including at the point of arrest, and those who are released directly from court. We recognise that this further work may be assisted through the envisioned future introduction of the Homelessness Prevention Duties.

## **9. 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**

Being employed has been shown to be associated with reduced reoffending. The way we support individuals to undertake training and education pathways with a view to accessing, retaining and sustaining employment before, during and after they are involved in the justice system is therefore critical. Community justice partners should take a person-centred approach, recognising that individuals are at different stages of the employability pathway and that not all individuals serving community sentences, in custody, or leaving custody are 'employment ready'. Additional needs such as addiction, healthcare, benefits and housing support may need to be addressed before an individual is ready to develop skills to sustain employment. Individuals may also require opportunities to develop skills in a supported work environment and individuals with additional support needs including communication support needs may require reasonable adjustments to be made, in order to bridge the gap between employability support and sustainable employment. However, some employers are speaking out to highlight that when appropriately selected and given support where appropriate, individuals with previous convictions can not only secure and sustain employment, but can prove to be committed and successful employees.

We also recognise the beneficial changes made by the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 to reduce the Disclosure periods for certain past criminal convictions. We would encourage partners (with an interest in employability) to help to ensure that people with criminal convictions are aware of these changes and their positive impact when seeking employment.

No One Left Behind is the Scottish and Local Government's partnership approach to an all age employability service working with partners at a local, regional and national level to deliver a person-centred, place-based design and delivery approach. In implementing this commitment, community justice partners should ensure that there are direct pathways between the justice system and employability services, in particular with Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) which operate in every local authority area to provide support to individuals to progress into and sustain quality jobs. We also recognise the strong links between work to improve employability outcomes and work to widen access to higher education. Additionally, engaging families and family learning are critical components in the ["theory of change"](#) which underpins the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Employability leads should engage with SPS, justice social work and others to continually develop and enhance relationships, policy and processes, enhance community links, and ensure that the pathways to employability are supported at each key stage. In particular Skills Development Scotland can champion issues relating to community justice and assist, with other local partners, in improving the employability outcomes of individuals who have criminal convictions within LEPs.

Leading by example, statutory partners should also examine their own recruitment processes to ensure that people with unspent criminal convictions are not, in practical terms, being unnecessarily excluded from the possibility of employment.

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

When an individual is released from custody, they are likely to have been disconnected from mainstream public services, and will potentially need additional support to re-engage. This is a vulnerable time, where any gaps or failures in the delivery of support can have severe consequences for the individual, leading to an increased demand for emergency support services, or potentially a return to offending and a return to custody. To support individuals, there are a range of statutory and voluntary throughcare services available, as well as third sector and specialised services which engage with individuals, depending on their individual circumstances. On release, individuals can request voluntary throughcare assistance provided by local authorities – either from a justice social work officer supervising them after release, or from local authority / justice social work if they are not subject to supervision. Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to offer voluntary throughcare, which consists of advice, guidance and assistance to individuals who request such a service either before release from custody or within 12 months of their release.

Partners should work together to ensure that effective throughcare support services are in place and consistently offered, working in co-ordination with the activities of the SPS, justice social work and other public services supporting individuals and meeting the specific needs of different groups of individuals interacting with the justice system. This will involve robust co-ordination and planning processes being in place across justice, public and third sector services, to plan those activities in co-operation with individuals. There is also a need to ensure that public services are aware of the particular needs and challenges faced by individuals in the justice system, and for them to pro-actively engage with that population at the earliest stage, to ensure their needs are supported.



# Aim 4

## Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners

It is necessary for community justice partners to work together to adopt a strategic approach to planning and delivering improved outcomes, and lasting change for individuals and communities. This includes ensuring the active involvement of the third sector, relevant community-based organisations, communities and people who use local services (including people with convictions, victims and families) in the planning and delivery of community

justice within their areas. Ensuring that victims feel supported, that their voice is heard and that they are empowered to participate effectively in their justice journey is critical to achieving an inclusive justice system. Central to the strategy is also the need to ensure that the Scottish public, communities and workforce have an improved understanding of, and confidence in, community justice.



**Over the duration of this strategy community justice partners will:**

**11. 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**

It is the collective responsibility of statutory partners to ensure the achievement of community justice outcomes, and the legislative requirements within the Act, rather than partnership chairs or coordinators. Community justice should be embedded as a key consideration within the priorities of each community justice partner. Implementation of the delivery plan should be prioritised, and roles and responsibilities must be understood, with staff empowered to become leaders within their organisations. Strong, inclusive and innovative leadership is required, at both local and national level, with effective accountability and communication mechanisms between national organisations and their representatives driving community justice partnership activity locally, in addition to collective local partnership accountability arrangements. Community Justice Scotland will support partners by providing advice, guidance and assistance to the community justice partnerships and making national and local improvement recommendations where appropriate, supporting strong governance and accountability.

The effective provision of data is vital to the success of strategic planning and to allow the measurement of progress against outcomes. Statutory community justice partners must work with both Community Justice Scotland and partnerships to ensure that all partnerships receive necessary information in a regular and systematic way.

At a local level, community justice partnerships should:

- clearly define their remit, and ensure effective collaboration with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), and alignment to Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs), and other community planning groups (and vice versa). As previously stated, the focus of this strategy is from the point of arrest onwards and we would encourage community justice partnerships to focus their action from this point onwards, as opposed to on primary prevention. The Violence Prevention Framework for Scotland, due to be published later in 2022, will include a focus on primary prevention given the importance of preventing violence from happening in the first instance. However, community justice partners will play a crucial role in secondary and tertiary prevention to help people access the support they need to help stop further offending and more people ending up in the justice system.
- carry out strategic planning, monitoring and reporting activity to ensure the identification of local priorities. This will include maintaining a current evidence base and an understanding of local needs and service provision. Identified local improvement priorities should be clearly presented within the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP). These activities and a robust use of programme and project management (PPM) methodologies (with SMART actions) should underpin the targeting of resources to improvement activity identified in CJOIPs. This may include targeting engagement with partners in line with topics where they can add value.
- seek to secure the contribution of partners and other stakeholders, including the third sector (and reflect this in their participation statements), to help bolster community justice resources. This can include information sharing, co-ordinated planning and joined-up services, as well as contributing staff and other resources (including across local authority boundaries), as required to meet the community justice outcomes noted in local plans.

- work across boundaries, to coordinate and allocate resources strategically so that, with a proportional input, they can collectively deliver services which have a larger impact on outcomes. This is in recognition of the different populations of community justice partnership areas.
- work across regional and operational boundaries to facilitate peer learning, share best practice and enhance co-ordination of improvement activities.

## **12. 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**

Ultimately, we want victims of crime and families impacted by the justice system to feel heard, understood and empowered to participate in their justice journey.

In order to understand what is important to our communities and to promote inclusivity, community justice partners should ensure that those with lived experience of the justice system, including victims of crime, have the opportunity to appropriately and effectively participate. Their experience should be represented in order to inform policy development, implementation, and the design and delivery of services.

Community justice partners also need to have an awareness of, and effectively promote, the support that is available for victims of crime and families impacted by the justice system, both nationally and in their area complementing the work of third sector organisations and other local planning partnerships, for example ADPs and VAW Partnerships.

This should help identify how partnerships can contribute towards the achievement of improved outcomes for victims of crime and families impacted by the justice system, through the signposting and provision of information and inclusive person-centred and trauma-informed support, and helping to ensure they are safe and well.

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

Partners should work to improve the visibility of community justice and ensure it is positioned as an important part of the local and national justice landscape. Specifically, partners should work collaboratively to improve understanding and confidence in community justice amongst the Scottish public and the local justice workforce. Senior leaders of community justice partners, in particular, should seek to champion community justice within their organisations and across community planning. In particular, they should clearly communicate what their organisation is seeking to deliver towards the achievement of the community justice priority actions. Partners should ensure their communications are trauma-informed, utilise the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) and the [resources provided by Community Justice Scotland](#). Community Justice Scotland have a statutory duty to promote public understanding of community justice and the benefits associated with it. Partners can then build on this foundation to shift attitudes and increase support for community justice as an approach, for example through communicating the benefits of unpaid work to local communities. This can in turn support integration and reduce stigma, leading to improved community justice outcomes.



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