

Community
Justice
Ayrshire

Annual Report
2019 to 2020



Contents


Introduction

Community Justice Ayrshire

What we need to do

Key Local Priorities for 2019
to 2020

Next steps



*Working
together to
prevent and
reduce re-
offending and
to promote
inclusion and
equality for all
in Ayrshire*

Introduction

Beginnings Belongings Belief

Community Justice Ayrshire is a pan-Ayrshire partnership approach to reducing re-offending. We want to involve everyone affected by crime. That includes people with convictions, their families, victims, communities and those working in support services. We need everyone to work together to succeed.

We recognise that there is much work to be done to raise awareness of community justice amongst local organisations, and people who live in our communities. We are committed to working with partners to break down barriers and reduce the stigma faced by people who have been involved in the justice system, so that they may move on with their lives.

Throughout this year there has been a range of innovative work progressed and a number of highlights achieved as a partnership. This report outlines the work undertaken by Community Justice Ayrshire partners, either collectively or individually throughout 2019 to 2020 to contribute towards community justice outcomes.

Our partnership is committed to working closely together to improve the life chances of all who live in our communities, to make Ayrshire a safer place to live and work.

*Together
We are
Community
Justice
Ayrshire*

Community Justice Ayrshire



What we need to do

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 is a law which means that statutory agencies must work together to plan their work to reduce re-offending, and report on how they are performing. The National Strategy for Community Justice and the Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework was published to help partners with this task. It explains the aims of community justice and provides national outcomes and indicators to measure achievement.

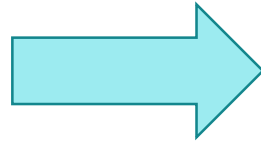
The Ayrshire Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) 2018 to 2021 was published on 1 April 2018, outlining key local priorities on a pan-Ayrshire basis. This annual report shows actions and improvement for the year 2019 to 2020. A reporting template has been developed by Community Justice Scotland, it will measure achievement against both national and local outcomes and will be published alongside this report.



National Outcomes

What we deliver as partners

- **Communities improve their understanding and participation in community justice**
- **Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way**
- **Effective interventions are delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending**
- **People have better access to the services they require, including welfare, health and wellbeing, housing and employability**



Changes to those who use our services

- **Life chances are improved through needs, including health, financial inclusion, housing and safety being addressed**
- **People develop positive relationships and more opportunities to participate and contribute through education, employment and leisure activities**
- **Individuals resilience and capacity for change and self-management are enhanced**

Key Priorities

Community Justice Ayrshire aims to:

- Tackle the causes of offending and prevent it happening
- Work with people who are at risk of re-offending
- Support people who have committed crimes to move away from offending
- Work with partners to break down barriers to ensure that all affected by crime in our communities have equal access to services and support

Work is driven forward through the following thematic groups:

- Whole Systems Approach for Women
- Health and Justice
- Children and Families Affected by Justice
- Inclusion

The key local priorities within the Ayrshire CJOIP 2018 to 2021 were identified through our strengths assessment and our interaction with Stakeholders.

Keeping Out of the Justice System

We know:

When people get caught up in the formal justice system, it is very difficult to get back out, particularly if they get a criminal conviction.

We said:

We will continue to promote and champion all efforts to stop people being drawn into and escalated up through the formal justice system. We will work with people who find themselves involved in the justice system, to find ways to build resilience and capacity to move on from offending.

We did:

We took part in a Diversion Pilot Study in North

Ayrshire. The Ayrshire Diversion Forum became involved in this pilot following the publication of revised National Guidelines for Diversion From Prosecution. The document highlighted that the role of the Police could be developed to appropriately target those suitable for Diversion, where officers would focus on an individual's presenting needs. This pilot also involved Community Justice Scotland, Community Justice Ayrshire (CJA) and Police Scotland. Training schedules were agreed for police officers and this work will continue throughout 2020 to 2021.

Supported the introduction of the Community Navigator Project within HMP Kilmarnock. The project provides support in a person-centred and trauma informed way. It involves delivering practical, bespoke interventions and links are made with a wide range of networks. This includes our local recovery communities and service user involvement groups, which ensure prisoners are supported throughout the liberation process and back into our communities.

A Community Links initiative was established. A wide range of services and organisations, both statutory and third sector are invited into HMP Kilmarnock to take part in Community Links. Prisoners are able to speak directly with services and get the help they need during these sessions.

Pre-liberation Healthcare Workshops were developed. The programme aims to provide those who are nearing liberation, with information to support their transition back into the community. It covers a wide range of topics which were identified by prisoners as important to them. Information provided ranges from housing, medicine management, health improvement, drug and alcohol awareness, through to money matters.

Gender Specific Approaches

We know:

Evidence tells us that those who have had the most difficult start to life are more likely to have poorer outcomes in later life, including involvement in the criminal justice system. We also know that men and women often have very different 'journeys' into the justice system. We are aware that the evidence around the value and benefit of gender-specific and trauma-informed approaches is clear.

We said:

Whilst recognising that there are common issues across genders, where appropriate we are committed to finding gender specific approaches to help both men and women avoid / move on from involvement in the justice system.

We did:

Progressed the work of the Whole Systems Approach for Women Thematic Group. We are aware of the challenges faced when supporting someone who is involved in justice services. The language used within the justice world is often very specific, with a range of terms, acronyms and jargon. To help support partners and build their knowledge and capacity in this area, we produced a short document outlining some of the key terminology often used. We also provided information regarding the different types of community sentences available. This resource can be found on the Community Justice Ayrshire website.

Our Justice Services Occupational Therapy (OT) service has been improved. This service provides support with several issues e.g. overcoming anxiety, home management skills, training and employment advice and self-management, amongst others. As well as OT skills and training, an understanding of the vulnerability of most women presenting, particularly with alcohol / drug dependency and mental health issues, has contributed to the success of the service. Links between services have been improved benefitting both staff and women, leading to improved outcomes.

Victims and Witnesses

We know:

Victims and witnesses of crime can feel invisible in the justice system and that their needs and experiences are overlooked. We want to make sure that victims' voices are heard and are championed at local and national level. This includes understanding that some people involved in offending have also been victims of crime.

We said:

We are committed to ensuring that victims and witnesses receive the support they need, that their voices are heard and their opinions are taken into account.

We did:

We hosted a 'Gender-Based Violence in the Modern World' Conference. During the 16 Days of Action Campaign we worked with our Violence Against Women partners to plan and deliver a conference to explore various forms of gender-based violence across the life course. All speakers shared their experiences to raise awareness about the different 'guises' that violence against women and girls can take, and our varied responses. Participants felt that this helped to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

We supported the delivery of a series of one-day sessions based on the 'Safe and Together' domestic abuse model. The Safe and Together model focuses on creating a domestic violence informed child welfare system. The principals and components of the Safe and Together model are competency in knowledge and skills related to overall domestic violence informed practice and specific techniques related to perpetrator, survivors and children. These sessions delivered throughout East Ayrshire, benefitted people to make changes in their lives.

Families

We know:

Families can be a big support when people are trying to move on from offending. We also know it can be stressful having a family member involved in the justice system. Family members often have to deal with issues around rejection, stigma, and victimisation by neighbours and the community. For families 'left behind' while a loved one is in prison, they can often feel as if they have had a bereavement.

We said:

Family members may need support to help them deal with a variety of overwhelming feelings of grief, anger and worry and to help them to readjust throughout the course of arrest, trial, imprisonment and release.

We did:

We organised for 'Out of the Shadows' training.

Families Outside delivered a special session of their 'Out of the Shadows' training within HMP Kilmarnock. The session aimed to increase awareness of the impact of the justice system on families and what practitioners can do to support them. Delivering the training within a prison environment, provided an unique opportunity for participants to experience first-hand how it feels to take part in a visit. It also gave them a chance to hear about the work of the Family and Friends Hub and the support they can provide.

We held our 'Not My Crime, Still My Sentence' Conference. We wanted to raise awareness about the impact having a family member in prison has on children and young people, and highlight research which shows that in most cases it is beneficial for a child to retain contact when a parent is in prison. The conference covered some of the practical support available to help the estimated 27,000 children across Scotland and their families cope when a loved one is in prison. It allowed delegates the chance to look at some of the approaches and initiatives in place locally, and raised awareness of the stigma that families face, and the financial challenges imprisonment can bring.

We are working to develop a Whole Family Approach. Many women exhibiting offending behaviour present with complex issues, not only including experiences of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and how these impact on their own alcohol / drug use and poor mental health which often underline offending behaviour, but also how these impact on family relationships, particularly in caring for children. We therefore cannot address offending behaviour in isolation, nor approach women as a single entity, but need to provide support to address the full range of complex issues.

A proposal was drafted around a service which would be specific to women. This was based on the analysis of diversion data between April 2018 to March 2019, which showed a large proportion of the cases were female. Findings demonstrated a wide variation and complexity of presenting needs among the women referred. A 'whole family approach' in working with these women has been agreed by the CJA Board, and will be progressed by the partnership going forward.

Inclusion and Equality

We know:

People who are involved in the justice system can be socially excluded and face many inequalities. This includes inequalities linked to both offending and to being a victim of crime.

We said:

We want people in Ayrshire to experience safe and inclusive communities; have equal opportunities to access and shape public services; have the opportunity to fulfil their potential throughout life; and for public bodies to be inclusive and diverse employers.

We did:

We carried out research on barriers to banking and Identification for those leaving prison. As a partnership, we became increasingly aware of the significant challenges faced by individuals in trying to open a bank account either whilst in prison, or following liberation.

Having access to a bank account is one of the foundations of successful resettlement and provides a positive contribution towards reducing re-offending. Opening even a basic bank account provides access to employment opportunities, as well as to government benefits and charitable grants.

Additionally, bank accounts can make it easier to secure stable accommodation and provide a structure which can facilitate responsible management of personal finance.

Sessions were held where partners were able to share information, identify barriers and learn about some of the processes already in place to overcome these issues. This enabled us to come up with new ideas and potential solutions, in how we can work together to mitigate these problems. Work on this project is now underway and will be progressed in the 2021 to 2022 plan.

We introduced a Welfare Rights Officer within our Partnership Delivery Team. To support staff and ensure that service users have access to Welfare Rights advice. Many have previously been referred to Money Matters but have not engaged. This means people are often missing out on money they are entitled to if claims are not made in time or negative decisions not challenged. Having a worker based within the team means joint appointments can be easily arranged and workers can feedback any issues with benefits straight away.

Hearing Service User Voices

We know :

People are the best experts in making changes to their own lives. Sometimes organisations and services don't listen to the people who are most affected by what they do. We have been working with the University of Strathclyde on a Service User Involvement Project for community justice.

We said:

The overarching objective is to work together to inform and support the design, development, implementation and review of a multi-layered service user engagement strategy / plan and practice across Ayrshire community justice services.

We did:

We commissioned our ['Inclusive Justice; Co-Producing Change' Project](#). Community Justice Ayrshire is committed to ensuring that the voices and experiences of service users are considered when developing policy and strategy; recognising that there is much to be learned from people with 'lived experience' of the justice system. To allow us to do this in a meaningful way, a team from the University of Strathclyde and the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice were commissioned to establish three service user involvement groups and to support and document the process of implementation and the resulting activities, outputs and outcomes.

Our 'Inclusive Justice; Co-Producing Change' event acted as the formal launch of the final project report and good practice guide, which gave the opportunity to listen to some of the key contributors. The three local groups, led by development workers with lived experience, created a range of methods for engaging with those involved in the justice system and developed opportunities to be involved in the planning, development and delivery of services.

PING Throughcare Survey was carried out. One of our local service-user-involvement groups 'PING' was tasked with developing a survey to be carried out with people who were preparing for liberation or had recently been liberated from prison. The research aimed to increase our understanding of individual's experiences of returning to the community from prison and identify good practice and gaps in support needs. Following several rounds of service-user and partner input, the survey was finalised and looked at issues including support received prior to leaving custody, concerns when preparing to return to the community, delivery of support services and challenges experienced when back in the community. The findings of this survey will be used to help ensure the service user voice is heard in developing services and changes are made in improving current processes.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma

We know:

Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has been found to have a strong and graded association with a range of health behaviours and outcomes, including: early onset of alcohol use; alcohol addiction; illicit drug use; depression; low life satisfaction; unintended teenage pregnancy; HIV risk behaviours, as well as a range of non-communicable diseases and premature death.

We said:

Although these experiences are surprisingly common in the general population, certain vulnerable groups such as people involved in offending are known to have experienced higher levels of adversity than others.

We did:

Continuing on from our 'Adversity is Not Destiny' Conference.

We acknowledge that many of the recognised ACEs and other adversities, impact on the justice system. Children and adults with experience of ACEs may come into contact with the justice system – both as victims or witnesses and perpetrators of crime. The justice system therefore has a key role in preventing, and in particular, mitigating the impact of ACEs. Research has shown that people who experience multiple ACEs are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviours which are harmful to health and potentially associated with criminal behaviour.

Knowledge and awareness of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma has been growing across Ayrshire and beyond for some time now but the links between adversity and the justice system are potentially less well understood.

The conference provided the opportunity to showcase a range of trauma-informed work that has been developed across Ayrshire. Delegates were able to learn about innovative approaches being used in courts, restorative practices and across the justice system. They were able to hear about upcoming developments linked to the NHS Education Scotland Knowledge and Skills framework for Psychological Trauma. People felt that we can collectively work together to ensure adversity is not destiny.

Our local Scottish Fire and Rescue Service provided mentoring and positive pathways for young people.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continue to work in partnership with Ayrshire Education Departments and MCR Pathways mentoring programme to provide positive role models for young people to help them overcome adverse experiences, build resilience, promote wellbeing and encourage individual confidence.

Strength In Recovery

We Know:

Most people involved in the justice system move away from offending behaviour through time with many going on to help others in similar situations. Often, we hear accounts of how one significant person has fostered a sense of belief in those who are ready to change, which helps that change to start to happen.

We said:

We believe that people with lived experience of the justice system have a wealth of knowledge and understanding that is unique to their circumstances

We did:

We supported the introduction of a Police Custody Suite Pilot in South Ayrshire. South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Police Scotland have been undertaking a Police Custody Pilot, where Peer Workers (with 'lived experience') visit people affected by alcohol or drug use while in custody at Ayr Police Station. The pilot provides an opportunity for Peers to make an initial point of contact, build relationships and share information on local recovery services and support. The pilot project began in September 2019 and 122 referrals were received from September 2019 to March 2020, an evaluation of the project is currently being undertaken.

Our Service User Involvement Group Achievements.

Throughout the year, our three service user involvement groups delivered a wide range of activities. These have included free or discounted leisure activities, sourcing volunteering opportunities, development of a drop-in space for service users, weekly football sessions and development of a community magazine to name just a few. Rationales for service user involvement tend to refer to the impacts and effects that a co-productive approach to service design, delivery and development can support. Aside from the benefits that participation can produce for individuals, the key reasons for 'doing' service user involvement are that it:

- Can support recovery, desistance and social integration;
- Promotes citizenship and social justice;
- Enhances the effectiveness, compliance, credibility and legitimacy of services

Evidence suggests that involvement in activities that contribute to the well-being of others (e.g. mentoring, peer support and volunteering initiatives) can alter the way people see themselves, their own potential, as well as how others see them. Such changes in people's personal and social identities are often associated with the process of desistance. Evidence also suggests that being involved in such activities can support the development of new social networks and more caring and other-centred attitudes.

Restorative Justice

We know:

There is growing evidence that restorative justice offers a powerful alternative to the traditional criminal justice system in some circumstances. Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward. This is part of a wider field called restorative practice.

We said:

We are aware that work is being done at a national level to promote Restorative Justice through the Scottish Governments 'Restorative Action Plan' which was published in June 2019.

We did:

We will continue to promote the new national statutory guidance on Restorative Justice, to help those who have caused harm and those who have been harmed to communicate about what happened and find a positive way forward. We will look to identify training / networking opportunities to learn more about the application of restorative justice.

Community Justice Ayrshire are committed to learning from the experience of other areas in Scotland who deliver restorative justice practices, and to consider the feasibility / applicability of developing a local model.



Next Steps



Community Justice
Ayrshire.

We will continue to progress all the key local priorities from the Ayrshire CJOIP 2018 to 2021. They will be programmed into the action plans for each thematic group throughout 2020 to 2021, to ensure we fulfil our commitments.

To hear more about Community Justice Ayrshire or for more information, please visit;

www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk

