

Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership

Annual Report 2024-2025
Part 1

Introduction

The Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership (CJAP) brings together statutory, public and third sector organisations working together to reduce reoffending and improve outcomes for people affected by the justice system.

Our new Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) was published in April 2024 and sets out how partners will collaborate to deliver community justice across North, South, and East Ayrshire.

The new plan mirrors the National Strategy for Community Justice, ensuring a clear strategic focus on the aims and priority actions to be achieved across Scotland.

Work within the partnership is now driven by three pan-Ayrshire delivery groups, with each group assigned a set of deliverables from the CJOIP to progress, allowing more focussed work to take place.

We continue to link with the other key strategic partnerships across Ayrshire to work together on a range of shared outcomes.

The second part of our annual report will be published later in the year and will cover the data in relation to the national indicators.

This annual report outlines a range of action taken by community justice partners in Ayrshire over 2024 - 2025 towards each of the priority actions as outlined in our CJOIP.

www.communityjusticeayrshire.org.uk





Community Justice

Ayrshire **Partnership**

Working together to break the cycle of offending

Priority Actions

The national strategy sets out four national aims for community justice, and 13 priority actions sitting underneath these, which the Scottish Government and community justice partners should seek to deliver over the duration of the strategy. Effective coordination and collaboration are key to achieving these aims.

National Aim 1:

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

Priority 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

What does this mean?

Diversion from prosecution is one of the options available to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) after receiving a police report of a person's alleged offending. A 'Direct Measure' like Diversion allows the person to be diverted away from formal justice proceedings and into support from local Justice Social Work (JSW) teams to address the issues and needs contributing to their offending behaviour. This enables intervention to take place at an early stage, rather than waiting for a court process to take place.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

Work has commenced on the diversion from prosecution 'Achieving Community Justice Outcomes' targeted resource. The draft document was initially shared and discussed with the DIAC group in March 2024, and has been discussed and progressed throughout the year. Initial work has centred around identifying relevant data from COPFS and JSW in each local authority area. Both quantitative and qualitative data has now been sourced and gathered, and a draft document containing all available data is in development and will be discussed at the next meeting to progress the targeted resource.

Discussions have taken place around gathering feedback from people on Diversion. South Ayrshire JSW worked on a new exit questionnaire form for all services to better capture this. NHS Health Improvement colleagues facilitated a discussion about best practice for gathering qualitative data. JSW engage with partners who are already working with people on Diversion, therefore potentially avoiding duplication of work by taking a back seat – CJAP support team met with local diversion team managers to discuss how we can capture this information, and the use of case studies was considered to be the most effective and manageable.

It was identified that there was a need to develop the current data collection mechanism to support future diversion from prosecution planning. Contact has been made with various data sources to try and establish what data can be incorporated. This data was also discussed at COPFS/Police/CJP sheriffdom meeting in our area; a data dashboard tool which captures annual published stats for diversion and FWO, and local COPFS data, has been finalised and agreed. Benchmarking figures for all areas in south west sheriffdom are included. This will be updated and discussed at sheriffdom meeting on an annual basis.

The CJAP Data Hub also includes all published info related to diversion, and partners have been encouraged to review this and offered support to do so.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

The point of arrest and court appearance are crisis points in a person's life. Evidence has shown that people involved in the justice system often have higher levels of vulnerability and complex needs than the general population. Arrest referral schemes can successfully capitalise on a 'reachable and teachable' moment to help people engage with support services and address any underlying health or social issues contributing to their offending, such as substance use or mental health issues. In practice, in Ayrshire, this would be achieved through police custody staff, or a third sector agency talking to people who have been arrested and are in Kilmarnock or Saltcoats custody suite and, if the person agrees, making a referral to a support agency for them.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

A new service commenced in Saltcoats police custody suite this year, with the aim of reducing re-entries into custody following arrest. The Custody Navigator service is provided by Sacro through joint funding from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and involves a worker going into the custody suite on a Sunday afternoon to speak to people about their needs and then meet the person at court on the Monday to address any presenting needs via signposting and support to access services. Initial presentations were made to relevant partners, and an independent evaluation is underway with support from the VRU. Through the partnership, links have been made between Sacro and local services. From April 2024 to February 2025 Sacro received 119 referrals and attended 147 appointments. The most common service signposted to was to drug and alcohol supports, but there were also some to Shine, to SAMH/Mental Health service and to housing & energy advice. The service gathered feedback from the navigator and from individuals who were supported, with the quotes and case studies demonstrating the positive impact the service has had.

Police Scotland's Criminal Justice Services Division (CJSD) are responsible for custody related matters. Local partners have collaborated to embed the new national Police process, along with relaunch and education piece to raise awareness. Including:

- updated and ongoing training opportunities for staff
- increased ongoing engagement with current support services (more regular meetings to assess/ monitor services provided (on a 1:1 or geographical area basis)) and where possible / appropriate looking to support the use of more link workers coming into the cells
- further mapping of services and seeking to work with all local authorities / CJ partners to identifying and then fill gaps in provision
- further recruitment of a cohort of Custody Support and Intervention Champions to promote service

National Aim 2:

Ensure that robust and high-quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available across scotland

Priority 3 - Support the use of robust alternatives to remand by ensuring high quality bail services are consistently available across Scotland

What does this mean?

The bail supervision scheme is designed to minimise the numbers of accused people held on remand in custody where appropriate. This could be prior to trial / conviction or following conviction where the Court are waiting on reports. It can be used where a level of supervision, monitoring and support may help someone to adhere to bail. It involves:

- **Monitoring** – There will be a minimum number of times a person must see their Bail Supervision Officer or another worker outlined in their plan.
- **Support / Advice** – The Bail Supervision Officer will offer support and advice and refer into partner agencies where needed (e.g. substance use and housing).
- **Reporting** – Information will be provided to the Court on the person's compliance with the conditions of Supervised Bail. Non-compliance will result in warnings being issued immediately followed by a breach report being submitted to Police Scotland swiftly.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

Robust bail services continue to be delivered in Ayrshire. Strong partnership working ensures tight processes across both Ayrshire courts and specialist delivery of service at both assessment and monitoring stage. Regular working group meetings and staff meetings take place to monitor progress and ensure full awareness of national activity or obstacles.

Through the DIAC delivery group, partners are preparing to support the implementation of the bail elements of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act. Information relating to the Bail elements of the B&R Act were shared and discussed while awaiting implementation of that part of the act (Part 1 Sections 1-7).

CJAP support team have progressed initial stages of reviewing the availability of services supporting the needs of people appearing at court, including signposting and referral pathways. Court social work staff will regularly provide support to people attending court, and conduct assessments/provide reports on request. A concern has been raised around people being released from court with no means to travel home, or where people have been released from remand when they had expected to be returned to custody. We are now exploring options to form a 'Safeguarding from custody' working group similar to Dumfries & Galloway CJP.

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

What does this mean?

Electronic monitoring (also known as tagging) is a system that uses technology to monitor curfews and conditions of an order or licence from a court or the prison service. Monitoring assists with ensuring a person remains in a specific place for a particular time, be excluded from a specific location, or expected to attend a specific location within a timeframe. Electronic monitoring can be tailored to specific conditions related to the person (e.g. restrictions only at evenings / weekends or to avoid people / places which may be detrimental to them). It can be imposed as a standalone option of Bail or as an addition to Bail Supervision.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

Electronic Monitoring (EM) bail has been established within Kilmarnock Sheriff Court and Ayr Sheriff Court since 2022, with specialist staff in place to undertake assessments for EM/ Bail supervision. The Partnership continue to monitor and contribute to national developments in relation to electronic monitoring, as well as explore available data in relation to electronic monitoring assessments and disposals to support future delivery.

Partners have discussed resource issues with EM Bail - a reduction in ring-fenced funding makes it more challenging to increase and widen the use of the service. There will be real limitations to what can be done, a lot of time can be spent undertaking assessments with not a lot out output.

The CJAP support team have access to national benchmarking figures, and these are available on the Data Hub. These stats have been shared with the DIAC group, and discussions have taken place with CJS around obtaining further data. EM Bail data is presented on the CJAP Data Hub alongside data from other areas to allow benchmarking. Partners have been encouraged to view the data on the hub to inform future service planning.

We know from 2024 figures that North Ayrshire had the highest rate of EM Bail orders in the country. East Ayrshire had the third highest rate, and South Ayrshire were also above the national rate.

A Community Justice Scotland Improvement Lead attended the DIAC in March 2025 and provided an update on some of the national developments around Electronic Monitoring.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

We know from evidence and research that community interventions are more effective than short prison sentences. After a person is convicted of an offence, one of the options available to the court is to impose a Community Payback Order (CPO). Using a CPO where appropriate, allows a person to serve their sentence in the community rather than in prison. A CPO will contain one or more of 10 requirements including unpaid work, alcohol / drug treatment and supervision, delivered by JSW. Unpaid work provides people with a constructive means to repair harm caused by their involvement in offending. It involves 'making good' to the victim and / or the community via engagement in rehabilitative work. Reparation via unpaid work supports the strengthening of relationships with others in the community, improves employability where appropriate, and supports the development of a new pro-social identity.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The new Community First delivery group is responsible for the local deliverables under priority five. This group includes membership from local authorities, HSCPs, NHS, Police, SDS and third sector. The first deliverable for this group is to review the support wider partners are able to provide to people serving community sentences.

A workshop was held in June 2024 to launch the new delivery group and associated work within the CJOIP. Over 40 partners from across Ayrshire attended the workshop, with the aim of increasing partner's understanding of the role of justice social work. Partners learned more about the impact of community sentences and interventions, what they are, how they're delivered, some facts and figures around community sentencing in Ayrshire and looked at opportunities for further collaboration with wider partners and services. This included an input on CPOs and Unpaid Work, where JSW colleagues explained what they involve, how they are managed, and the strengths and challenges, as well as some case studies. Partners were asked to consider within their own services if there were ways they could support people on CPOs and/or UPW.

The CJAP support team have made the offer to visit any teams to provide an overview of CJ and encourage teams to think about how they can contribute to support for people on community sentences. A presentation has been made to East Ayrshire Community Health Activity Team, and a further input to East Ayrshire Elected Members is arranged for April 2025.

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

Activity continued -

NHS A&A Health Improvement staff have facilitated 'Healthy Eating and Active Living' and 'Stress Awareness' courses as part of Other Activity in East Ayrshire. These courses will soon also be undertaken in North Ayrshire and are available in South. A feedback form was revamped for these courses to measure how successful they were. This will capture any suggestions of how courses need to be amended, and also to ask people on orders what else they'd be keen to do as part of Other Activity. There is the potential to facilitate suicide prevention course, naloxone and defibrator course, as part of OA.

In the Partnership we are aiming to work with the Trauma Leads to increase roll out of trauma informed training for all stages of the community justice process, including frontline partners, courts, and prisons.

North Ayrshire Council have introduced new mandatory training about trauma for all staff, covering: Understanding what trauma-informed practice is, identifying trauma-informed principles, realising the widespread occurrence and nature of trauma, identifying the different ways in which trauma can affect people, how to look after yourself so you can look after others. There is also Trauma Skilled Level 2 training for anyone who has direct and/or substantial contact with individuals who may be affected by traumatic events. The aim of this training is to support you when you are working with people who have experienced psychological trauma and adversity in line with the Trauma Skilled Practice Level 2 of the Scottish Transforming Psychological Trauma Framework. NAHSCP is also one of the first organisations to deliver SQA accredited PDA qualification 'Approaches to Trauma Informed Practice Level 7'. To date, 55 NAHSCP Justice staff have completed level 1 training, and 8 staff have completed level 2.

South Ayrshire Council have 'Trauma Informed: L1' as part of corporate induction package, and 'Trauma Skilled: L2' and 'Trauma Enhanced: L3' available for all staff and partners to access. Nearly all JSW and council officers have been trained to L3. The CPP signed up to the NES Trauma Leadership Pledge - a commitment to support the development of trauma informed systems and services, across South Ayrshire. There is a pilot roll out of Trauma Responsive Communities training with The Resilience Learning partnership, potentially to begin within the Ayr North area. There is a new agreement with the police, across Ayrshire, that they can access SAC training and one of their learning and development wellbeing officers are co-ordinating this. SAC also have a comprehensive staff wellbeing project called 'Be Well Live Well' that can support staff reduce the risks of vicarious and secondary trauma.

In East Ayrshire Council, 76 Vibrant Communities staff members have completed Trauma training. A total of 154 trauma courses/training sessions have been attended and completed by staff. 21 Social Workers have completed Level 3 enhanced training, 29 staff from UPW, support assistants, business support and admin staff have completed Level 2 trauma skills training, and 7 managers have completed the managers trauma course.

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

Activity continued -

Funds were used from an underspend from the Corra grant to commission the MINDS (Mentoring Individuals for New Destinations & Support) of Recovery Group to deliver a programme for DTTO service users in each Ayrshire area. The purpose of these groups is to provide a supportive environment for individuals to engage in recovery strategies, develop coping mechanisms and focus on self-development within a supportive and community-based environment. These groups have now been completed, and the work was well received by the service users that participated.

Prior to attending the group, most participants reported feelings of anxiety regarding their participation. Post evaluation measures indicate that the majority of participants felt improvements in their mental health and cited a motivation and willingness to continue to attend recovery groups. Feedback was positive and some quotes following participation include:

“Being in a room with people in the same situation and the way the group was conducted felt supportive.”

“Connecting with people I normally wouldn’t see. I loved this group and everything we talked about.”

The pan-Ayrshire Partnership Delivery Team recently won a bid for funding from the North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). This bid was placed jointly with MINDS of recovery who will use this to run recovery groups specifically for DTTO service users throughout the next year. The groups held previously have been well received and it is hoped that the new block of groups can provide additional support, increase the chances of sustaining their recovery and improve successful exit routes from the order.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

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.

Restorative justice has many, evidence-based benefits for those who experience harm and those who cause harm, their families and communities. This includes choice, empowerment, voice, recovery, improved wellbeing and desistance from causing further harm.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The CJAP support team continue to share national updates including links to the Community Justice Scotland (CJS) quarterly update and any relevant training/documentation in relation to Restorative Justice. CJS and Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) colleagues attended the Community First delivery group in March 2025 to provide an overview on Restorative Justice. The input covered what Restorative Justice is, who is involved, how it takes place, referral processes, the Scottish Government Restorative Justice action plan, and some local examples.

CJS and CYCJ have been working with colleagues in South Ayrshire to try and arrange Restorative Justice for someone open to Justice Services. This has not been a straightforward process, trying to navigate social work systems and the demands of that, as well as issues around capacity, information sharing, etc. JSW also spoke of their experience of trying to progress this test case noting the main difficulty was the data requirements. CJS had drafted a very thorough information sharing protocol, but JSW still had to navigate local authority processes and protocols which caused delay and then meant other forms were then required. It meant having to draft these forms for the first time and then get these agreed by the data protection team. JSW also felt it would have been more beneficial if they had someone in the team who had capacity to undertake this work and be a point of contact as she was not able to prioritise this work the way she would have liked too.

Colleagues at CYCJ advised they were also progressing a children's case in East Ayrshire as one of the test cases. Staff from the Youth Justice Team had identified a case that had a need for Restorative Justice. It is early days, but they were able to link the Youth Justice Team in with a third sector organisation who were already operational in East Ayrshire, had workers trained in RJ, had local premises and local relationships, but they didn't have an RJ service up and running. They were able to knit that together, and start the case, which has been running successfully since November 2024, and they are hoping to reach an RJ conference soon. CJS and CYCJ were able to provide RJ supervision, as this wasn't available in-house as well as obtaining feedback on the new policy in practice framework that is being developed.

NATIONAL AIM 3:

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

Priority 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

What does this mean?

There are many complex needs for which individuals require person-centred support on entering and leaving custody. Collaborative working across multi-agency partnerships is required 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. An example of this is working to ensure all people released from prison are registered with a GP in their local area and helping to facilitate this if necessary.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

HMP Kilmarnock facilitate a Community Reintegration Meeting every week which allows all partners, including DWP, Housing, Justice Social Work, and third sector agencies to work with the prison to map out a liberation plan. This means everyone involved with the same prisoner is up to date on where the prisoner is going on release and who they will be working with in the community. The weekly CRM happens on a Tuesday, and the previous Thursday all services involved with a prisoner being discussed on the Tuesday will meet that prisoner to discuss supports with them. The partnership delivery group has been looking at the coordination of these weekly meetings to see if they can be expanded, encourage attendance, and further improve outcomes for people.

Additionally, Link Centre Officers hold a shortened plan for individuals, these are then put into liberation packs and given to men on release. Through the delivery group, which has representation from SPS, JSW, Health, ADP, Housing, and Third Sector organisations, work around pre-release planning is being prioritised and progressed. One of the areas this group will look at is the pre-release plan and how it can be developed and shared.

Following the Scottish Government announcement that a proposal for the emergency release of prisoners would take place. The Partnership re-introduced the 'Early Release Planning Group' which was formed during the first period of emergency release during the Covid pandemic in 2020. These weekly meetings took a pan-Ayrshire approach to supporting partners who are working with people being liberated, to help share information and support collaboration and coordination. At these meetings, partners had an opportunity to discuss any issues around the increased number of releases which were upcoming. We were also able to provide national updates as the Co-Chairs of the Community Justice Peer Network attended a weekly meeting hosted by Scottish Government in relation to emergency release and circulated updates following each meeting. Partners fed back that the help, communication and coordination via these meetings throughout Emergency Release were effective in maximising the help being afforded to those facing vulnerabilities.

Priority 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

Activity continued -

From an in-person lived experience event in 2023, there was strong support for a 'departure lounge' type model in Ayrshire. This would be where prisoners upon release could immediately engage with all relevant support services before leaving the prison grounds. Though some delays were experienced (including due to the transition from Serco to SPS at HMPK), the idea was further explored this year and a soft launch with some services, including housing, and thereafter tying in with DWP and Addiction Services was trialled in June 2024.

From this soft launch, a small working group was established and met to try and iron out issues coming through the test of change. Several issues were highlighted through the group regarding the suitability of the location (lack of privacy and confidentiality, opening hours, available technology), the prison not being able to stagger liberation times, as well as men still having to report to a Housing Office to collect keys following their release. Whilst there is a will from partners to support this work, the barriers identified made it difficult to progress in the current model. A conclusion was reached that the departure lounge idea was not going to be able to be developed as initially hoped. As this has been a consistent theme and a clear message coming through from the lived experience work, plans commenced around how best to look at alternative models of delivery. Partners agreed to support attendance at an in-person workshop for stakeholder partner agencies. We had hoped to gather data to inform the planning of any new process (for example number of individuals released each week with e.g. a housing need, DWP need etc) but this data could not be obtained. We completed a mapping exercise of support available at time of release by area and type of support and published on CJAP website.

The group also look to raise awareness and monitor the implementation of the prison to residential rehabilitation pathway. Anecdotal feedback told us there was low use of the pathway in Ayrshire, which may have been at least in part due to no capacity within the prison-based health team to undertake the necessary preparatory work with individuals prior to release. The healthcare team within HMPK see all individuals, and unlike other prison establishments, it does not have harm reduction teams or SPS recovery officers.

The East Ayrshire residential rehab co-ordinator called a meeting including prison-based health care, We Are With You, East NHS Addictions, and met on teams then had a follow up meeting in the prison. The discussions centred around an offer from We Are With You to provide workers to go into prison to undertake the prep work with individuals in an effort to increase use of the pathway. We have developed a draft flow chart to capture this new local process, identified what information needs to be shared at each stage, discussed communications which need to go out, and what data we could capture to evidence improvement. The pathway was promoted to staff and prisoners at a health and wellbeing day in HMPK on March 26th.

Priority 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

Activity continued -

As we await enactment, the group considered implications of proposals in the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act to introduce a pre-release planning duty on named partners by baselining current activity against proposed minimum standards. This information was used in drafting a Partnership Pre-Release Support Pathway. This document outlines the multi-agency process for pre-release support planning and liberation within HMPK for men returning to Ayrshire. This process should allow us to meet the throughcare standards element of the Act, as well as the pre-release planning duty element.

The draft pathway lists the agencies based within the link centre, and when the routine offer of pre-release support is made, it then lists other prison-based services and third sector organisations and details a timeline for when interactions will take place. There is some additional information on bank accounts, the CRM process, liberation packs and family involvement. There is a need to be able to measure the impact and report annually on certain things, as well as trying to put mechanisms in place to gather information / feedback from men in HMPK and staff working there.

As part of this, the Partnership will consider the role of Prison Link Officers and the weekly community reintegration meetings delivered from HMP Kilmaronock and explore options to develop this into a wider multi-agency process. SPS advised an appointment checklist was developed nationally during the early release period and they will adopt this going forward, partners are exploring how it will be used and if we could make local amendments to help address local needs. Currently men do not receive any physical communication regarding community reintegration process, it's all word of mouth. For staff, there are regular briefings to channel information, or they would speak to managers in key areas to pass on information.

As part of the early release period, the CRM was widened to include other partners. However, a data sharing agreement does not go beyond this period and the meetings have now returned to original invites.

Other areas to be discussed are around people not taking up appointments offered and then being faced with challenges on release, challenges bringing people down to the health centre due to staffing.

We will have to explore how information can be shared from across the prison estate to support rehabilitation planning for all those returning to Ayrshire from custody. HMP Kilmaronock are going to access and review the national liberation lists to look for people returning from other establishment to Ayrshire and then reach out to Link Centre staff in these establishments and ask them to complete the relevant paperwork.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

We know that people who have access to stable housing are less likely to offend, and that people who are leaving prison are often without a permanent address and in need of support from local housing services to find accommodation. The SHORE standards were developed to ensure that everyone has access to sustainable housing when they are released which will in turn reduce homelessness and re-offending rates.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

During 2024/25, the Community Reintegration delivery group have been exploring opportunities to increase justice peer support for housing services. NAC Housing now have a new Housing First Officer sitting within Justice Services who will be supporting people coming out of prison. The group also considered prison 'life skills', 'how to be a good tenant' classes which ties into the housing strategy. SFRS offer home fire safety visits which are another way to support people in their tenancies, and the group will consider how to maximise the use of these.

The Wise Group are launching a pilot in Perth for those on remand going back to Fife who are homeless, and info will be shared with group. Ayr Housing Aid Housing advisors give advice to those on remand prior to court so they know the process to follow if released at court that day and not seen again.

To support housing partners in local authorities to embed the SHORE standards, initial work will include awareness raising around SHORE for CJ delivery groups. Refreshed SHORE Standards were published at the end of 2024 - Housing are looking at what the revised guidance means for Ayrshire. We have asked for someone from SG to provide an update on revised standards at future CR delivery group.

We will look to undertake the housing 'Achieving Community Justice Outcomes' targeted resource and develop improvement actions. The CJS targeted resource document was shared with support team in March 2024. Initial work is centred around gathering relevant data. Contact has been made with local housing services regarding availability. Most of the data points required for the initial stage of this targeted resource have not been sourced. CJS have stated they will work with national partners around provision of data, which will be needed here as many of the data points would come from SPS.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

Having a job has been shown to reduce someone's likelihood of offending. Therefore, supporting 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 critical.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The Partnership planned a 'Positive Pathways' employability event which took place January 2025 within HMP Kilmarnock. A multi-agency planning group met regularly to support the development of the event, with representation from SPS, Employability teams from the three local authorities, NHS Health Improvement, DWP, SDS, Ayrshire College, Third Sector Interface (TSI) from the three local authorities, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, and Fife College. The event aimed to showcase a range of employment, training, volunteering, and education opportunities available to people following liberation from custody. There were also a number of prison-based services in attendance to outline the learning, skills, and employability opportunities whilst in custody. Stallholders attending on the day were presented with the opportunity to:

- Engage with and inform prisoners of employment, training, volunteering, and education opportunities that may be available to them on liberation
- Take a tour of the industries area within HMP Kilmarnock and learn more about the work taking place
- Increase staff knowledge of employment, training, volunteering, and education opportunities available so they can better inform prisoners

A total of 18 stalls were part of the day including local and national businesses, third sector organisations and statutory partners. There were 91 men in custody who attended on the day. 22 feedback forms from stallholders were received which highlighted a positive reaction to the day, and 100% expressed a desire to have more events, with some suggestions on potential ways to improve them. We received 51 feedback forms from men in custody who attended the event, and all 51 responders said that they would recommend future Positive Pathways events to other prisoners, and that they would attend a future event themselves. Responders also provided useful suggestions for additional stallholders who could be invited to future events to speak to them.

The day included a tour of the work sheds for stallholders to get an idea of what types of work and learning goes on for men in the prison. There is an opportunity to further shape these to reflect local labour market.

Priority 10 - Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services

What does this mean?

Throughcare support exists to help people re-engage with communities and public services they may have disconnected from while in prison. Throughcare is delivered on either a statutory basis (people who have served a long term (4+ years) prison sentence or were convicted of a sexual offence must work with throughcare services, usually delivered by Local Authority Justice Services) or a voluntary basis (people who have served a sentence under 4 years are eligible to receive voluntary support from JSW or from third sector organisations).

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The Community Reintegration delivery group will take forward local actions in relation to throughcare set out in the CJOIP.

To ensure pathways into support are available for people returning from prisons outside of Ayrshire, HMPK are engaging with other prison establishments to allow data to be shared about people coming back to Ayrshire from other areas. These individuals can then be discussed at the weekly community reintegration meetings. As part of the early release process in February and March 2025, prisoners released early from other establishments coming back to Ayrshire were to be discussed at the CRM in HMPK, however information was not received in a timely manner from other establishments, which has been fed back to CJS.

The commissioning of the new national throughcare was regularly discussed at the Community Reintegration delivery group in advance of the application process opening to ensure there was a high level of awareness amongst local third sector organisations and that the sector would be ready to participate in the process. When new national throughcare service comes into force in April 2025 we will need to consider how we build working relationships with the service locally. Partners reviewed and updated the information on Scottish Prison Service SharePoint site which details the support services available in each area to ensure the most up to date, useful contacts are given to those liberated from prison coming back to Ayrshire.

Partners are working to deliver throughcare support events within HMP Kilmaronock. CJAP were represented at the NHS-led health and wellbeing event held within HMPK in May 2024 and were able to engage with individuals and share information in relation to release planning. At the event on 8th May 2024, 130 men attended and there were 24 different stall holders. Feedback was very positive, and partners advised there may be the potential to theme events as they progress, always having a wider remit around the health and wellbeing agenda but having a more focused area, i.e. employability, housing, and social care or throughcare.

NATIONAL AIM 4:

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

Priority 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

What does this mean?

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 names a range of statutory services who are responsible for progressing local efforts towards the national aims. The outcomes which the National Strategy for Community Justice is aiming for can only be achieved by these services working together. 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.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The CJAP CJOIP which was published in April 2024 and will last for five years, mirroring the national strategy and reporting framework. Local deliverables set out in the plan align directly to the national aims set out in the National Strategy. Each year we will review the deliverables we are working towards, adding new ones where required to focus on emerging priorities as they arise. A full Participation Statement is available on the CJAP website which details engagement with third sector partners involved in community justice and relevant local community bodies in the preparation of this CJOIP. The Equality Impact Assessment for this plan is also published online, as are our previous annual reports for people to view.

The partnership have ensured partners have been identified to lead and report on CJOIP deliverables. The revised structure of CJAP delivery groups ensures each of the priority areas, and deliverables aligned to them, are the responsibility of that group: DIAC group for priorities 1-4, Community Reintegration group for 7,8 and 10, and new Community First group for 5, 6, 9, 12 and 13. Priority 11 will be progressed by the support team and CJAP Board. We continue to develop local performance monitoring arrangements. The CJAP Data Hub is now live. All partners have access and have been offered support to use tool from Planning and Performance Officer. The hub brings into one place:

- Monitoring the progress of the deliverables set out in the CJOIP
- Measuring the impact of those deliverables through performance indicators
- Narrative and data points set out in the CJS Improvement Tool
- Data points set out in the CJS Targeted Resources
- Other relevant partner / demographic data e.g. prison figures and JSW stats

All partners will then be able to view and interrogate this info and it will be discussed at future CJAP meetings. This will hopefully inform annual reviews of our CJOIP and highlight areas to prioritise.

Priority 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

What does this mean?

It is vitally important that the services delivering community justice are planned with the thoughts and experiences of the people impacted by crime. 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 to help inform policy development, implementation, and the design and delivery of services.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The Participation Statement which is available on our website details how we engaged with communities, victims and witnesses, and people with lived experience of the justice system, in development of the CJOIP.

The CJAP includes representatives of these groups, and we will continue to build on this throughout the life of the CJOIP. The CJAP Manager sits on Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWP) within each local authority to support joint working on cross cutting issues and to continue to raise awareness of the impact of crime on victims and gain perspective from partners and communities affected by these issues. Women's Workers for Caledonian are continuing to provide initial assessment to Case Managers at JSW Report writing stage to provide victim perspective to allow the sentencer to obtain a clearer holistic picture of the crime and the impact.

The Partnership support the continued development of the justice service user involvement groups in Ayrshire – MAD, PING and CVN. CJAP contributed to each group including towards an outdoor activity on Arran for the MAD group in North. As is set out in the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2024-29, the partnership has committed to engage with people who are, and have been, involved in the Justice system. The service user involvement groups in each area are an identified method of doing so. North Ayrshire Justice Services' Making a Difference (MAD) service user involvement group continue to meet, organise events, and send out their bi-monthly newsletter to keep people up to date with what's going on. The newsletter also includes stories that service users have submitted detailing their own experiences and what advice they have for other people. They also include handy recipes for people in each edition and collate these into a cookbook.

The Family Strategy Group at HMP Kilmarnock has now reconvened will be meeting every two months. They are looking at how they can work together to progress areas of the SPS Family and Parenting Strategy locally, and there will be crossover with the aims of the CJAP. For both strategies there is a need to consult with prisoners and their families.

Priority 13 - Support integration and reduce stigma by ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice

What does this mean?

Despite around 1 in 5 adults in Scotland having a criminal conviction, people involved in the justice system can experience significant levels of stigma, particularly if they have been in prison. This stigma can adversely impact someone's employability, social ties, housing stability etc. By increasing the knowledge of the effectiveness of community justice, and the various underlying needs which can impact someone's criminal behaviour, we can reduce stigma and make it easier for people to re-integrate with communities.

What partnership activity took place in 2024-25 towards this priority?

The CJAP have been working with MAPPA colleagues and the CJP Lead in Dumfries and Galloway to produce an awareness raising video for MAPPA. Following meetings with CJ and MAPPA colleagues for South West Scotland, a procurement process was initiated, and bids were received, and a draft script and ideas to be included were discussed. A first draft was shown and discussed at MAPPA SOG in December, with feedback provided to producers and an amended, updated version was produced and currently going through required governance routes. A full roll out is being planned and the video will be used as an internal training resource for staff and partners. Arrangements will also be made to provide input at a selection of meetings, such as Community Safety Partnerships, Violence Against Women Partnerships, and Tennant Participation Teams and Housing colleagues. Police Scotland colleagues have advised they would also like to use the video across the Ayrshire Division. An awareness raising event to coincide with the roll out of the video will be organised for summer 2025.

As previously mentioned, a new Communication and Engagement Strategy 2024-29 was published this year. The plan contains its own list of commitments for partners, channels and methods to be used for engagement, and evaluation/measurement metrics which will be used to measure success. The strategy:

- Identifies our stakeholders and who we will communicate and engage with
- Identifies the ways in which we'll communicate and engage.
- Outlines the measurements we will use to evaluate our success.
- Will help us to plan and deliver actions within our CJOIP

The Partnership discussed the idea of developing an E-learning module to increase partner awareness, knowledge and understanding of community justice. Over the year we scoped out the development of e-learning and had discussions with IT colleagues about these types of resources. Feedback from IT was that e-learning may not be the best way to achieve our objective, and partners fed back that webinars were seen as a more useful method.

Priority 13 - Support integration and reduce stigma by ensuring the community and workforce have an improved understanding of and confidence in community justice

Activity continued -

The CJAP Support Team worked with South Ayrshire Council's Equality and Diversity Forum to deliver a webinar in October which provided an overview and introduction to Community Justice to 65 attendees from across Ayrshire, with the aim of increasing knowledge and awareness amongst the workforce and the community. It included some community justice facts and figures, an explanation of the national aims and priorities, and some examples of local work going on in Ayrshire. The webinar included videos and case studies of people with lived experience of the justice system. We looked to gather feedback following this webinar and 24 out of 25 responders to a short survey said it had increased their knowledge of CJ.

92% of responders agreed that "People should help their community as part of a community sentence rather than spend a few months in prison for a minor offence". And 100% respondents agreed that "People serving community sentences should be given support, such as help with addiction or mental health problems, or numeracy or literacy difficulties, to reduce the likelihood of them committing more crime in the future".

We also gained some valuable suggestions for future topics, and any ways we could improve the webinars. Building on this and following some discussion at the last round of delivery groups, the CJAP Team have confirmed several topics for webinars to take place throughout 2025-2026 (General Awareness of Community Justice, Community Sentences, MAPPA and Prison Liberation). These webinars will be co-delivered with a partner who is working in that area, and once the partner has been confirmed, dates will be finalised and a flyer circulated advertising the events.

The CJAP Team have also made an offer to attend team meetings, and development days to provide an input. An input was provided to the Community Health Activity Team in East Ayrshire in March, and other sessions are due to take place in the coming months including the Social Work Governance Board in North Ayrshire. Arrangements have also been made for an Elected Member Briefing to take place in East Ayrshire in April, and this will be taken forward in North and South Ayrshire as well. We also produced a new/refreshed induction sheet for new members to the partnership.

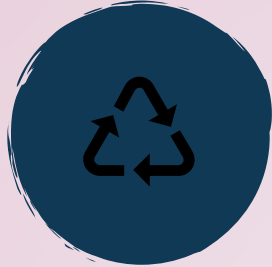
The Partnership launched a biannual newsletter, publishing the first edition in December. This short document provided brief updates on the latest news for the partnership and what's coming up soon. This was shared over email to our various colleagues and partners, and also on social media to reach communities. In East Ayrshire UPW there are established relationships with local communities and groups to identify work and projects that are of benefit to communities. Information on the positive impact of the work being undertaken is shared through a quarterly newsletter that has been developed and contact details for people to discuss a potential project. This includes unpaid work teams supporting the local foodbank and larders. The team link in with local communities through their planning groups and community leaders.

Next Steps



Legislation

Awaiting implementation of elements of Bail and Release from Custody Act, which will bring changes to practice in courts and at release from prison



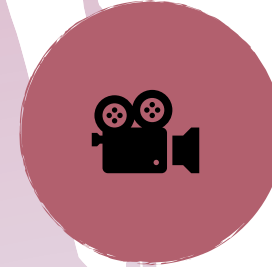
Review Deliverables

Partnership will review deliverables within the CJOIP to check for new or emerging priorities



Employability

Emerging priority around how we support people with convictions to access education, training and employment opportunities



MAPPA Video

Continued roll-out of the MAPPA video to raise awareness on the role the arrangements play in community safety



Feedback

Carrying out a range of engagement work to gain feedback from people at different stages of their justice journey



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