

Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership

Newsletter No 4 – Summer 2026/27



Latest News

We have designed veterans' information resources to support anyone working with, or alongside, veterans who are involved in the justice system. Anyone who has served in the Armed Forces or Reserves for even one day is a "veteran" and entitled to supports for veterans.

On the 'Resources' and 'Local Initiatives' pages on the website staff can access best practice guidance for engaging with veterans, links to specialist organisations offering dedicated assistance, and key findings from research in this area. The aim of this is to help practitioners, partners, and communities deepen their understanding of veterans' experiences and the factors that can influence their journey through the justice system. See the resources here: [Veterans in the Justice System](#).



In June, partners undertook two targeted development sessions around specific National Community Justice Outcomes. These were around increasing readiness for employment, and arrest referral support. These sessions were a chance for key staff to consider current delivery and identify areas for improvement. Actions generated from these sessions will be progressed by the relevant delivery groups.



Following on from the webinars delivered at the end of last year, the Partnership are continuing to promote partner's awareness, knowledge and understanding of community justice via a series of seven minute briefings. These briefings are a quick way to raise awareness and get key messages out about a particular theme. The first three briefings have been published and circulated (themes were the Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership, Diversion from Prosecution, and The Vision for Justice). We will produce briefings regularly throughout the year, hosting a library of briefings on the website and circulating to the mailing list. You can see the briefings here: [7 Minute Briefings - Community Justice Ayrshire](#).

On the CJAP website you can also see various communication and engagement resources. The CJAP Team have started a new series of articles called 'Inside the Role' which help deepen the understanding of partnership working and highlight the individuals behind key services. The first issue showcases the work of a Social Work Assistant in North Ayrshire who works across Justice and Housing services, supporting people who have a housing need who are also involved in the justice system. You can read the article here: [Inside the Role](#).

Work has concluded on a pre-release pathway document which maps out the process of what happens at the time of liberation from HMP Kilmarnock. This is available on the CJAP website [here](#) and was circulated to partners through email. We will consider how best to share this with other partnerships like ADP and Community Safety. Partners may look to create a summarised document for men in prison and their families to understand the process – views from those in prison will be sought to see if this would be welcomed.

A small group continues to work on refreshing the liberation information pack given to men on release. They are looking to produce new one-page resources with emergency contacts and an appointment checklist, as well as a more detailed information pack which has tips and links relating to a wide range of issues which may affect people coming out of prison. There will be different information given to people depending on which area of Ayrshire they are returning to, allowing local groups and support services to be highlighted.



Reconnect Scotland (formerly Recovery Enterprises Scotland) have rebranded following a period of planning and development. They continue to support individuals, families and communities affected by imprisonment, addiction, trauma and social exclusion.

As part of their continued work to support those affected by imprisonment, drop-in support is available to individuals following a release from prison. This is available from their premises in Kilmarnock town centre where people can get support on various issues like housing, benefits, getting into work, or linking to other supports.

Similar drop-in support for people who have been released from prison is available in North Ayrshire (at The Recovery Hub in Irvine) and South Ayrshire (at Compass in Ayr).

Find out more about post-release supports on our website [Community Reintegration - Community Justice Ayrshire](#).

The CJAP have funded training from Families Outside which was delivered over three sessions during April-June, with three more dates to be arranged for later in the year. Families Outside is a national charity who support families affected by imprisonment.

The purpose of the training was:

- For learners to understand the impact imprisonment has on the whole family to reduce stigma and social isolation
- To learn ways to improve the overall experience for families, including children and young people, navigating through the criminal justice process from arrest to release



The training provides the practical tools to help professionals to feel more confident when supporting families in their own role.

A series of neurodiversity awareness training sessions is set to be delivered to justice social work staff. This training will be funded through the CJAP and is intended to strengthen workforce knowledge and capability when working with neurodivergent people across the justice system, in support of our strategic priorities and deliverables. Evidence indicates that neurodivergent people within the Scottish justice system are frequently unrecognised, under-supported and experience poorer outcomes (Scottish Government, 2026). This training has been developed to support practitioners by strengthening staff understanding, confidence, and practice when working with neurodivergent individuals.

The session will separate myths from facts around neurodivergence and provide practical, evidence informed learning that can be applied across justice settings. While the primary focus is on Autism and ADHD, the principles explored will support accessibility and inclusion for a broader range of neurodivergent people. The training is designed and delivered by neurodivergent people and integrates research evidence, practice wisdom and lived experience, ensuring relevance, credibility, and practical application.

National Updates

The Scottish Government have started the statutory review of The National Strategy for Community Justice. The strategy provides the national direction for community justice across Scotland. It recognises that while prison will always be necessary for those who commit the most serious offences or who pose a risk of significant harm to others, in many cases community-based interventions and sentences can be more effective than custody in

reducing reoffending and improving rehabilitation. CJAP partners will get the chance to contribute to this review and the Scottish Government lead for the strategy will attend a future partnership meeting to speak with us.

In May, there was a change to the release point for some short-term prisoners meaning they will be released after serving 30% of their sentence, instead of 40%. This does not apply to all prisoners, for example those serving a sentence for sexual offences or domestic abuse - they will continue to be released after completing 50% of their sentence. This was deemed necessary to ensure the prison service can maintain the security and good order of prisons and the health, safety and welfare of prisoners and prison staff. Though it is hoped that this will provide a sustained reduction in the prison population, Community Justice Partnerships must strengthen alternatives to custody and reduce reoffending to achieve long-term change.

Updated [guidance](#) on diversion from prosecution has been published providing enhanced clarity on decision-making, inter-agency roles and operational processes across Scotland's justice system.



Did you know Only around 34% of court convictions are for individuals with no previous convictions. This means that two thirds of people charged have had a charge before. Reducing reoffending is a main aim of CJ - it's usually the same people committing offences and helping them address the underlying needs of their offending behaviour is more effective and sustainable than continually sending them to prison.

Performance and Reporting

Our Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP), which sets out the work partners will undertake towards the National Priorities, was launched in April 2024 (read the plan in full [here](#)). In March this year, the Leadership Group received their latest 6-monthly update which detailed progress of the deliverables which showed 73% sitting green/completed, 8% amber and 4% red, with 15% on hold.

Up Next

- Now that the new national guidance for Diversion has been published, planned work can progress around awareness raising.
- Progressing the actions raised at the two development sessions which took place in June.
- CJAP statutory annual reporting will be completed with Part 1 published late summer and Part 2 towards the end of 2026.
- The working group will look to finalise liberation pack documents and put things in place to ensure all people returning to Ayrshire from prison can benefit from them.
- CJAP funded training will continue – final sessions of Apex training around disclosure of convictions for people looking to get into work will take place, as will three further dates with Families Outside on the impact of imprisonment on families. The training around neurodivergence delivered by Three Sisters Consultancy will also begin soon.

Visit our website - [Homepage](#) - [Community Justice Ayrshire](#)

Follow us on X - [@CJAyrshire](#)

Email the team - communityjusticeayrshire@north-ayrshire.gov.uk