

MAY AND JUNE 2025

THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement Project



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Lots of challenges for Justice Services over the last few months. There are changes to how we consider options for Bail for those who are appearing in Court charged with a new offence. Ultimately this is to reduce the number of people being held in custody however it is also to give options for those permitted Bail to be monitored whilst in the community. It is hoped that this can reduce the risk of them cause further harm whilst they await their trial or sentencing. The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 encouraged the use of Electronic Monitoring whilst on Bail or the provision of Bail Supervision where the individual must attend Bail clinics each week to ensure that they are engaging with Justice Services social work whilst on Bail. These are welcome changes but have meant a great deal of extra work for those providing social work support in Court. Are there changes like this happening in your area? We'd love to hear from you if there are!



SUPPORTING DESISTANCE FROM OFFENDING



So in this edition we wanted to tell you more about the role of our Desistance Officer and share some of the positive feedback we have received from two people he has been working with. This role was developed from listening to the feedback of our service users who stated that they often felt quite isolated and didn't have the connections with their community that might help them to feel more included. Some of them also admitted that they would like to have positive activities to do each week but didn't know how to go about exploring these options. Our Desistance Officer works on reducing those barriers to people accessing activities and looks to help people feel less isolated and build their confidence. We have had lots of positive feedback from those involved with this service and we wanted to share this feedback with you.

"I have been working with the Desistance Officer since October when I was released from prison. I cannot thank him enough for the support he has provided me – it has been second to none. He has helped encourage me to live independently and eased me back into the community. Nothing is too much for him, from assisting with forms to even helping me move home."

The Desistance Officer is a credit to yourselves. I would really be lost without his help, he is always there when needed even just to reassure and guide me with the simplest of tasks. His knowledge is extensive with all aspects of modern day living and again I cannot thank him enough".

"I met the Desistance Officer first of all at a walking group I used to go to in Stevenston which was to do with the supervision order I was on. After continuing to go to the group when my supervision order was finished, I found out from the Desistance Officer about a cooking class and an IT class which he told me all about and even when I wasn't sure, he told me he could pick me up and take me home from the groups which was a massive help. I continued to go to the groups which I felt were helpful in my life at a point where I felt a bit lost after a lifetime drug addiction that I am coming up on 3 years abstinent. I have been involved with many services over the years and some have been good and recently not so good. In the last year while working with the Desistance Officer he has been a massive support to me and has been helping me to set a purpose and path for my new future which I don't think I could have done without his help and support".



LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



In June we made a chocolate and walnut cheesecake.

Ingredients

100g Digestive biscuits (crushed)
40g Unsalted butter (melted)
150ml Double cream
200g Full fat soft cheese
175g Chocolate and hazelnut spread
25g Walnuts

Method

Combine the crushed digestive biscuits with the melted butter and press into a tin, pan or container. Chill in the fridge while you make the topping.

Pour the double cream into a bowl, add the cream cheese and chocolate spread.

Whisk until it's very thick – almost the consistency of ice cream.

Remove the base from the fridge and add the cheesecake mixture, smoothing the top.

Pop into the fridge for at least 4 hours (or overnight is much better if you don't need it until the next day).

When the cheesecake is well chilled, warm the chocolate spread very gently in a pan on the hob or in the microwave. (Don't let it get hot, it just needs to soften very slightly.)

Remove the cheesecake from the fridge and, while still in the tin, pour the melted chocolate spread over the top. Smooth it out very gently with the back of a spoon, until the top is completely covered. (Take care not to touch the cheesecake mixture.)

Sprinkle the walnuts around the edge.

Return the cheesecake to the fridge for at least a further 1 hour.

