

COMMUNITY PAYBACK SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

The Power of Language in Justice: Building Bridges, not Barriers

Our previous edition raised awareness about the challenges service users often face when trying to rebuild their lives in a community where they may have done wrong - acceptance, stigma, opportunities for change. A thought-provoking message, asking us – the public; to look within ourselves and value each and everyone's contribution to make communities more inclusive and ultimately, a safer and better place.

Social work is grounded in values of dignity, respect and self-determination. These principles extend to how we speak about those involved in the justice system. Terms like “offender” or “criminal” may be legally accurate, but they often reduce a person to their past actions, ignoring their capacity for growth and change. Instead, using language such as “individual completing Community Payback” or addressing the person by their name — acknowledges humanity before circumstance. It aligns with the social work ethos of seeing people in their full context: as parents, workers, neighbours and contributors to society.

In the justice system, words carry weight. They shape perceptions, influence outcomes, and either reinforce or dismantle stigma. For individuals engaged in Community Payback, the language we use can mean the difference between exclusion and empowerment.



Reframing Narratives to Reduce Stigma

Stigma thrives in silence and stereotypes. By consciously choosing inclusive language, we challenge the narrative that justice involvement defines a person's worth. Community Payback is not punishment alone; it's a platform for building skills, restoration, and reconnection

Highlighting stories of transformation — where individuals gain confidence, learn trades and contribute meaningfully to local projects; helps communities see beyond labels. These narratives shift the focus from deficit to potential, from shame to pride.

Promoting Inclusion Through Everyday Words

Inclusion begins with everyday interactions. Justice Services can foster belonging by using strength-based language: emphasising what individuals bring to the table such as resilience, creativity and commitment. Avoiding jargon and making communication accessible to all, especially those unfamiliar with legal or institutional terms and encouraging dialogue; invites feedback from those with lived experience to shape how services are described and delivered.

When communities hear about “restoration work at the local cemetery” or “garden maintenance led by Community Payback participants,” they see value, not violation. Language becomes a tool for connection.

By choosing our words with care, we uphold the values of social work, reduce stigma and build inclusive communities where everyone has a role in shaping the future.

Community Payback Success: Growth through Giving Back

A service user subject to a Community Payback Order has made remarkable progress through their placement with the 'Environmental Work Squad'. During their time on the squad, the individual developed practical skills in gardening and grounds maintenance, contributing to the transformation of residential and community gardens across the local area. Their dedication and enthusiasm quickly became evident, and they expressed a personal interest in continuing this work beyond their required hours. Recognising this motivation, the team facilitated a connection with WEA; a local charity with a community garden initiative. The service user is now actively volunteering with WEA Kilmarnock, not only fulfilling their unpaid work requirement but also contributing additional hours towards the 'Other Activity' component of their Order. This engagement has provided the individual with a meaningful and constructive routine whilst supporting their efforts to remain drug and alcohol free. The overall experience has helped foster a sense of purpose, community connection and personal growth.



"The most enjoyable part is learning how to grow food from scratch and taking it home to make healthy home cooked meals on a budget. My partner is a chef and loves it when I bring home fresh produce that she can use to cook up a storm!"

Service User

"This is a great example of how Community Payback can be a turning point. By supporting individuals to learn new skills and engage with local organisations, helping to re-build a more positive future"

Community Payback Supervisor

Logan Community Pathways

Overgrown trees and shrubs can quickly become more than just an eyesore; they can obstruct pathways and pose real challenges for people using wheelchairs, pushchairs or mobility aids. The Community Payback Team stepped in and tackled this head-on in the community of Logan; cutting back foliage, removing weeds from edging stones and clearing unsightly litter; making the pathway safer and accessible for everyone to use.

"Many thanks for this, it's looking good we really appreciate the job the Community Payback Team have done"
Logan Community Council



Take A Bow Centre, New Farm

Take A Bow is a vibrant charitable organisation rooted in community connections. With weekly activities spanning all ages, from baby groups to lunch clubs for older adults; they offer inclusive programmes such as Performing Arts, Youth Development, Tots Sessions, Youth Clubs and Holiday Programmes. Following a recent refurbishment of the centre, the Community Payback Team played a key role in revitalising the outdoor space. Their efforts in grass cutting and weeding have helped create a welcoming environment for all who visit. This collaboration highlights the value of shared responsibility, and the positive contributions individuals can make through unpaid work.

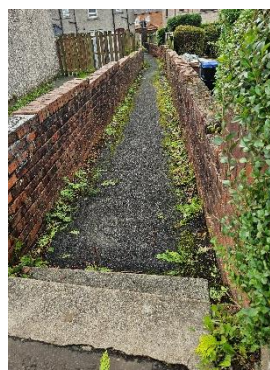
"The contribution from the Community Payback Team has been a great help to us in getting our outdoor space up to scratch! The supervisor and the team were approachable, and straight on the job from the get go. We really appreciate the input as it has alleviated our pressures of transforming this space and they have done a remarkable job. The team were friendly, hardworking and paid great attention to detail! The support has been truly appreciated!"

Natalie Ewing – Youth & Communities Manager, Take A Bow



Revitalising Newmilns

The Community Payback Team recently rolled up their sleeves to support a major clean-up effort in Newmilns. Their work focused on restoring public car parks, removing overgrown weeds and repainting railings; bringing fresh life to shared spaces that benefit everyone. This hands-on contribution not only improves the town's appearance but also promotes civic pride and connection among residents. It's a powerful example of how restorative justice can create visible, positive change in our communities.



"What a difference this has made. Thank the Community Payback Team very much, they have carried out an amazing job and the entrance to Gilfoot and the car parks look a lot more tidier and cleaner"

Emma Milloy Neighbourhood Coach

Stewarton Youth & Community Centre

The Annick Centre, is a non-profit organisation offering everything from recreational sports activities, wellbeing events and community cafés, after school care, events and functions. Recently the centre received a vibrant refresh thanks to the Community Payback Team, who repainted the main hall, breathing new life into the space ensuring it remains a welcoming venue for local groups, meetings and celebrations.

"We are incredibly happy with the work the Community Payback team have done in our community centre. They came in to repaint our main hall and it now looks brand new and much more welcoming and attractive. As we are a charity that's run by a small committee, this work greatly helps us create a welcoming environment for our community. The difference is incredible and we're very grateful for all their hard work"

Stewarton Annick Youth and Community Association / Committee



"This is just a wee note to say how pleased we are with the work that was done in our Centre in Stewarton. We have received lots of compliments as many of our users have noticed the difference already. Word has spread and we are receiving bookings for parties and other events. The team has helped us tremendously" **Elected Member**

Enhancing Wildflower Habitats

As the rewinding season draws to a close, the Community Payback Team is lending vital support to Cleaner and Greener Communities by carefully strimming back wildflower areas such as the London Road car park area in preparation for next year's bloom.

Wildflowers play a crucial role in sustaining biodiversity. They provide essential nourishment for bees, butterflies and other pollinators, offer shelter to wildlife, improve soil health and help absorb rainwater; reducing the risk of flooding. By maintaining these spaces and supporting the wildflower initiatives, the team is helping nature thrive whilst contributing to a healthier, more resilient environment.



East Ayrshire Carers Centre, Dalmellington

To help raise the profile of young carers and enhance the emotional and practical support available, the Community Payback Team offered their assistance at the Dalmellington Young Carers Centre. The organisation provides vital support to young people who care for family members living with illness, disability, frailty, or mental health challenges and is the chosen charity this year for Councillor Claire Leitch, Provost of East Ayrshire.

The team's efforts focused on transforming the outdoor space into a more accessible, play-friendly environment. Undertaking a range of tasks including weeding and removing intrusive shrubs, strimming overgrowth, levelling uneven ground in preparation for grass seeding and installing weed suppressant and bark in designated areas to ensure low-maintenance upkeep. This collaborative project not only improved the physical environment but has also reinforced the value of community-led support for young carers.



"The Community Payback Team in East Ayrshire worked extremely hard to improve the garden facility at Dalmellington House for young carers, creating a safe and welcoming space where they can play, relax and recharge. The team's dedication and hands-on effort transformed the area with thoughtful landscaping to ensure easy maintenance. This will make a lasting difference to the wellbeing of young carers who support family members living with an illness, disability, mental health condition, or problematic substance use living in the Doon Valley"

Fiona Pirrie – Co-Chief Executive Officer EA Carers

Restoring 'The Foxes' Woodland for Young Learners

'The Foxes' woodland, a valued greenspace supporting outdoor learning for Mount Carmel Primary School, Onthank Primary School and the Early Childhood Centre, had become overwhelmed by litter and fly tipping. The Community Payback Team stepped in to restore the area, clearing debris and making the space safe and welcoming once again. Their efforts transformed the wooded area into a vibrant environment for education, exploration and play; benefiting children, educators and the wider community. Helen Cowan, Principal Teacher from Onthank Primary said "WOW! What a difference. We will definitely be using this space now!"

"Thanks to the Community Payback Team for clearing the litter, junk and overgrown vegetation. The Foxes woodland is now a safe and inviting space for local schools to use. The pupils can learn all about how to protect the nature and wildlife they have on their doorstep"

Christine Strong – Development Co-Ordinator Countryside Activities



Random Acts of Kindness

In a thoughtful gesture, the Community Payback Team harvested a crop of potatoes grown by individuals completing unpaid work at the polytunnel and allotments. These fresh, locally grown vegetables were gifted to partner organisations and local residents, offering a welcome food source and reinforcing the spirit of giving. This act of kindness reflects the team's commitment to supporting the community in meaningful, practical ways



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The **Main Objectives** of an unpaid work requirement as part of a Community Payback Order are:

- To provide courts with a community based penalty which has the potential to achieve a positive outcome in respect of the individual's likelihood of reoffending.
- To ensure the courts have access at all times to a community sentence for use as a first response which requires the individual to undertake unpaid work for a specified number of hours in the community (from 20 hours to 300 hours).
- To provide a high quality community based intervention which balances pay back to the community with opportunities to address offending behavior whilst supporting individuals towards positive change; and
- To provide individuals with an opportunity to gain the skills and to access the supports required to lead positive lives and desist from offending.

When considering a project for Unpaid Work it must meet the following criteria ...

- It must benefit the local community.
- It must not deprive others of employment opportunities.
- It must be worthwhile and constructive for the individual/team.
- There cannot be funding available for the task.
- No individual can profit from the work.

Every project will be individually assessed for its suitability and health & safety implications. If you have a project you would like to be considered, please contact the Unpaid Work Co-Ordinator.

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Responsible for the Provision, Co-Ordination & Delivery of Unpaid Work Placements across East Ayrshire

Justice Services

EAST AYRSHIRE

**Health &
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